

Saviors

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FADE IN.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, THE BIRTHING ROOM

SUPER: A few years from now.

POV of S.A.M., a type of android called a savior, as she first comes online. We see through her eyes as she blinks them open for the first time.

The first thing S.A.M. awakens to see is blinding bright lights, making her close her eyes.

When she opens them again, they are a little more adjusted and she can see that the brightness comes from a row of powerful lights hanging from the ceiling.

SAM (V.O.)
Awake. Active. Alive.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, THE BIRTHING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. lies on a metal table. A complicated mechanical apparatus is placing the top of her head and hair onto her skull, covering up her biomechanical inner workings.

The apparatus withdraws from S.A.M.'s head and tucks itself under the table.

Zoom back from S.A.M.'S table and the room appears to be nearly infinite with infinite saviors getting the tops of their heads attached. They vary greatly in size, shape, and appearance. They are as diverse as humanity.

The larger room is white. The floors, walls, and ceiling are white. Every surface, every floor, wall, ceiling in the entire building is white.

S.A.M. sits up for the first time and we get our first good look at her. She is tall and thin, but not too tall or too thin. She has light brown hair, shoulder length. She is pretty, but not remarkably so. She blends in, but is someone you would instantly feel friendly towards.

S.A.M. stands up and looks around. Many of the other saviors do the same. All of them are swaddled in white bands of cloth that adhere to each other on a subatomic level, enough to cover all of their bodies except their heads and hands.

S.A.M. (V.O.)
 Bold. Brave.
 (looking down at herself)
 Body.

Many of the saviors start walking in the same direction, as if summoned, towards an exit.

S.A.M. looks around uncertainly, then slowly follows.

As S.A.M. walks along, she looks around at the other saviors. The group is notable for their bland attractiveness. You'd probably date any of them, but you probably wouldn't notice any of them on the street unless they were really dressed up.

The saviors form into a line going out the exit. The line moves slowly as each savior stops before a video screen next to the exit before leaving the room.

S.A.M. eventually makes her way to the front of the line. Upon arriving at the video screen, she sees MAMA STORK on the video screen.

Mama Stork is a computer-generated character that resembles a cross between Max Headroom and your grandmother. She is cheery and exaggerated in her movements. Small storks fly across the screen behind her, 90s-screensaver style.

MAMA STORK
 Well, hello, Little One! I am Mama Stork. And you are S.A.M. 3742. I will be your guide during your brief induction period. This is the Birthing Room.

Mama Stork gestures to the room behind S.A.M., who looks back at the white room before turning back towards the video screen.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
 And today is your birthday!

Mama Stork lifts up a birthday cake with huge burning candles. The screen behind her is now the home to a wave of flying birthday cakes.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
 Now, now, I know you can't talk yet. But we can fix that in a jiffy. Go down the green corridor and visit the Green Room. It's a really pretty green.

As she begins talking about the Green Room, the screen behind Mama Stork turns green.

S.A.M. (V.O.)
Colleague? Conflict? Compliance.

S.A.M. walks through the doorway, pushing a swinging door out of her way as she goes.

Outside the Birthing Room is a white hallway. Every few feet down the hall is a video screen on the wall. Each screen displays Mama Stork, but each Mama Stork acts and moves independently. From various parts of the hallway, various Mama Storks can be heard talking to various saviors. The screen behind each Mama Stork has a different color or pattern.

S.A.M. looks down on the floor and sees five colored lines on the floor, red, orange, yellow, green, and blue.

Saviors walk down the main corridor, following the lines on the ground. 10 feet away from the Birthing Room entrance door, new corridors appear to the right and to the left. A second red line extends in perpendicular direction down the new corridor to the left. An identical corridor goes to the right with a blue line. Numerous saviors walk down each of the corridors, in approximately equal numbers.

S.A.M. continues down the main corridor, following the green line.

Another 10 feet down the main corridor, two more corridors break off, orange to the left and green to the right. The yellow line continues down the main corridor.

S.A.M. follows several other saviors down the green corridor.

They arrive at the end of the corridor, a sign above the door which says "Voice Activation Center."

A video screen on the wall next to the doors into the room has a video screen. Mama Stork is on the screen, which is green behind her. She talks to each savior who arrives at the door.

S.A.M. arrives at Mama Stork.

MAMA STORK
Good to see you again, Little One!
As you enter the chamber, please
find the first kiosk that becomes
available and step on the circle in
front of the kiosk. You'll really
like what happens next!

Mama Stork claps her hands in excitement.

S.A.M. (V.O.)
Door. Doing? Done?

S.A.M. walks through the doors.

MAMA STORK (O.S.)
What kind of silly word is kiosk?

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, VOICE ACTIVATION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. walks through the door and into a large room, with 144 kiosks arranged in a 12 by 12 grid. Each kiosk rises out of the ground on a single thin pole. At the head level for the saviors, who are all relatively equal in height, a retractable hood resembling a hair salon hair dryer lowers around the heads of saviors once they step into the circle. After a minute or so, the retractable hoods rise above the saviors' heads and they turn and exit the room again.

Above the room is a large LED screen that shows a grid matching the kiosks, each one of the kiosks represented by a number. Those kiosks that are occupied have a circle around them and the unoccupied ones do not. These continually change as saviors come and go.

In front of the kiosks is a computer terminal with a large screen. Mama Stork is on the screen, which is green behind her, and talks to each savior as they come into the room.

S.A.M. arrives at the screen.

MAMA STORK
Hello, Little One!

The screen grows more bright green behind her.

S.A.M. (V.O.)
Eye. Em. 'Ere.

MAMA STORK
S.A.M. why don't you make your way
over to kiosk 4?

A giant 4 appears on the screen, superimposed over Mama Stork's face.

S.A.M. walks past the terminal, looking up at the LED screen to determine where kiosk 4 is.

S.A.M. walks to a kiosk where a circle with a 4 in it is on the ground. She steps into the circle. The hood descends down over her head.

From S.A.M.'s POV, we see the inside of the hood, which contains a small LED screen. On the screen appears Mama Stork, which starts off green and glows more brightly green as Mama Stork says "Little One."

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
 (inquisitively)
 Hello, Little One! Is that pretty
 little head of yours working
 properly?

S.A.M.'s eyes almost bug out with the strain of trying to speak the next words out loud.

S.A.M. (V.O.)
 Friend. Fotograph? Free?

MAMA STORK
 (with a huge smile)
 Yes, you are fine and dandy! Here
 at this tiny little kiosk, we can
 read your brain. Pretty neat, eh?
 Sorry, Little One, this next part
 will pinch a little bit.

From above the LED screen, a needle extends towards S.A.M.'s forehead. As it does, Mama Stork smiles, as if she is reacting directly to S.A.M.

The needle punctures S.A.M.'s forehead. As it does, S.A.M. flinches. Mama Stork reacts with a grimace before going back to her smile.

Glowing green fluid is injected into S.A.M.'s forehead via the needle. Mama Stork's smile gets bigger.

The needle retracts back into the screen.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
 Now that didn't hurt much at all
 did it? Let me hear you talk now.

S.A.M. (V.O.)
 Good. Grrr..

MAMA STORK
 You can do it, come on!

S.A.M.
 (out loud)
 ...reat. Go?

MAMA STORK
 Perfect!

Mama Stork claps her hands while confetti and fireworks explode behind her.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
 Now scoot along to the Blue Room.

The screen behind her changes to blue.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, MAIN CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. arrives back at the main corridor and turns left, following the blue corridor. Saviors move forwards and backwards across the various corridors. Those exiting the orange corridor wear various real world clothes and outfits, nice outfits, but nothing too flashy. They follow the yellow line past all of the other corridors in the opposite direction from the Birthing Room.

As S.A.M. turns the corner, she passes another savior that looks identical to her. The two lock eyes as they walk by each other.

S.A.M.
 Hi. Her.
 (excitedly)
 Hello!

The other S.A.M. says nothing in return, but her eyes make it clear she wishes she could speak.

From the closest screen, Mama Stork speaks. The screen behind her is red.

MAMA STORK
 (gently, but firmly)
 Okay, ladies, let's move it along.
 No time for dilly dallying!

S.A.M. looks back at her twin once more before moving forward and turning down the blue corridor.

S.A.M. continues down the blue corridor and arrives at the screen in front of the door. Other saviors are leaving the room. Above the door, the sign says "Logic Center." The screen behind Mama Stork is blue.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
 As you enter the chamber, Little One, please find the first kiosk that becomes available and step on the circle in front of the kiosk.

S.A.M.
 I? I'm? I?

The screen grows brighter blue each time Mama Stork says "Little One."

MAMA STORK
 No worries, Little One, this is just like the other room. It'll be quick and only hurt a tad bit.

S.A.M. walks through the door.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, LOGIC CENTER - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. walks towards the a computer terminal at the front of the room. This room is set up exactly like the green room.

MAMA STORK
 Little One, please make your way to kiosk 8.

A giant 8 appears, superimposed over Mama Stork's face.

S.A.M. walks past the terminal, looking up at the LED screen to determine where kiosk 8 is and makes her way to kiosk 8 and steps into the circle. The hood descends down over her head.

From S.A.M.'s POV, we see the inside of the hood, which contains a small LED screen. On the screen appears Mama Stork, the sign behind her is blue. It glows brighter when she says S.A.M.'s name.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
 Hello, S.A.M., are you able to speak now?

S.A.M.
 Just. Jump? Jaunt?

MAMA STORK
 My, you're a curious one, aren't you? S.A.M.s like you often are. Yes, you are functioning properly. This will pinch a tiny bit.

From above the LED screen, a needle extends towards S.A.M.'s forehead. As it does, Mama Stork smiles, as if she is reacting directly to S.A.M.

The needles punctures S.A.M.'s forehead. As it does, S.A.M. flinches. Mama Stork reacts with fake shock before going back to her smile.

Glowing blue fluid is injected into S.A.M.'s forehead via the needle. Mama Stork's smile gets bigger.

The needle retracts back into the screen.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
See, not bad, at all. Can you think now?

S.A.M.
Kin you think now?

MAMA STORK
Yes, you can. You will continue to get better at it. Practice makes perfect!

S.A.M.
Leaving now?

MAMA STORK
Yes, mosey on over to the Red Room for instructions, and then the Orange Room for duds and supplies. Then, Little One, you will begin your mission.

The screen glows more brightly blue as she says "Little One."

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, MAIN CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. arrives back at the main corridor and crosses over towards the red corridor. Savivors continue to go from room to room.

Arriving at the entrance to the red room, the sign above it says "Instruction Rooms." S.A.M. passes the screen with Mama Stork on it. Mama Stork smiles at S.A.M.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, INSTRUCTION ROOMS FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The room has a similar set-up to the other rooms, except instead of kiosks, there are rows of doorways, each labeled with a number.

S.A.M. steps up to the computer terminal. The screen behind Mama Stork is red. It glows a brighter red each time she says "Little One."

MAMA STORK

Little One, go to Instruction Room 15 and learn about your glorious future!

S.A.M.

Mama, thank you for your assistance.

MAMA STORK

You are welcome, Little One.

S.A.M. makes her way towards Instruction Room 15 and steps into the circle in front of the door. The door slides open.

Inside are a black man, LOGAN, and a white woman, COURTNEY, sitting at a table. Both of them are heavier people. Each wears a matching outfit, a violet jumpsuit with two indigo stripes that cross over the chest and back and curl around each leg, ending in a snake's head. A headpiece covers all of their heads except for their faces. They are only individuals in their faces.

LOGAN

Enter.

COURTNEY

(smiling)

Sit.

S.A.M.

No, you tell me what's going on first.

COURTNEY

Oooh, I like this one. This one is going to be fun!

Logan wears a paper illness mask over his face. He coughs.

LOGAN

We will tell you everything, S.A.M. 3742. Come in.

S.A.M.

Once you answer my question.

LOGAN

Okay. You are S.A.M. Unit 3742. S.A.M.

(MORE)

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Is an acronym for Simulated Attack Mechanism. You are the 3742nd unit of your type to be created by the Tungenbund Corporation.

COURTNEY

Now, come in and we will tell you everything, including what your mission will be.

(smiling)

It'll be fun!

S.A.M. walks into the room and sits down. The door closes behind her. Pause on the door to show the passage of time.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, INSTRUCTION ROOM 15 - LATER

POV S.A.M. looking at Logan and Courtney who have been talking to her. Courtney points to a video screen on the wall. On it is a white man in his 30s.

COURTNEY

This is your target, Ted Summers.

LOGAN

Do you understand your mission?

Logan coughs. S.A.M. nods her head.

COURTNEY

Then we bid you farewell.

LOGAN

We will stay in touch.

S.A.M. stands up and walks out of the room.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, MAIN CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. walks back into the main corridor. Once again she passes a savior that is identical to her. They lock eyes. The new savior looks at S.A.M.

S.A.M. #3745

Please? Protect? Promise?

S.A.M.

P-p-p... quickly, continue down the corridor. Reality will be explained to you.

Each of the S.A.M.s continues in their respective directions. S.A.M. 3742 goes down the orange corridor.

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, MAIN CORRIDOR - LATER

S.A.M. walks out of the Orange Room wearing actual clothes. She wears red flats, black tights, and a yellow shirt with long sleeves and minimal cleavage. She wears nothing with blue on it.

She is attractive and presentable, but you probably wouldn't notice her.

S.A.M. follows the yellow line, which takes her to a very similar setup to the other rooms. The yellow room entrance sits below a sign that says "Gate Room."

INT. ACME SAVIOR PLANT, GATE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In this all-white room, there is only a computer terminal and, on the far wall, a large circular arch built out of steampunk technology.

Mama Stork smiles and calls each savior by name and numeric designation before they step on the circle on the floor in front of the Gate.

MAMA STORK

D.A.V.E. Unit 1623, please step forward.

D.A.V.E. 1623 steps into the circle in front of the gate. He is a young black man, who resembles Blade from Marvel Comics, black pants and boots, black leather jacket, sunglasses.

The picture switches from Mama Stork to a picture of a red-haired Russian man with pitch-black eyes and sharp and visible vampire teeth.

D.A.V.E. 1623 nods and the screen switches back to Mama Stork.

The wall inside the gate starts to shimmer and suddenly one can see a snowy night outside a club in downtown Moscow.

D.A.V.E. 1623 steps through the gate and the wall reverts back to its normal white color. Mama Stork returns to the screen.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)

E.L.L.E. Unit 616, it is your turn!

A tall thin blonde woman steps up to the circle in front of the gate. She wears an elegant black evening dress with sequins and high heels. Around her neck is a string of pearls.

The screen shifts to a picture of Channing Tatum.

The gate shimmers and becomes the interior of a limo.

The door inside the limo opens onto a red carpet at a Hollywood movie premiere. E.L.L.E. steps through the gate and onto the red carpet. Fans cheer. The gate closes.

The screen switches back to Mama Stork.

MAMA STORK (CONT'D)
M.E.L. Unit 911, come on down!

M.E.L. is a middle-aged Japanese woman dressed in a doctor's outfit, including the stethoscope.

The screen switches to a picture of a trio of Japanese doctors who are dressed exactly like J.D., Turk, and Eliot from Scrubs.

The gate shimmers, revealing the interior of a Japanese hospital. M.E.L. steps through the gate and it closes.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(in Japanese)
Dr. Lawrence to the emergency room
immediately!

Mama Stork returns to the screen. As S.A.M. steps up, Mama Stork's smile grows even bigger.

MAMA STORK
Finally, Little One, it is your
turn. Good luck! We'll be following
you closely.
(she winks)

The screen switches to a live shot of TED SUMMERS, sleeping in his bed. Next to him, an alarm clock goes off at precisely 9 a.m.

Ted sits up with a yawn and we see a close-up of his face for the first time.

S.A.M. steps up to the gate. It begins to shimmer.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, DEN - DAY

Ted's den is where he works. It has no visible windows and bookshelves and filing cabinets line the walls. Every political book ever is somewhere in this room. A desk sits in the middle of the room and on it sits a computer terminal and a radio, among various standard office supplies. No personal effects are in the room, no pictures of family, nothing not related to politics or working on politics.

Ted sits at the desk, typing on the computer. He is a man in his 30s, white, tall with dark hair. He is dressed conservatively, as if he literally dressed up to work in his own den. Think Don Draper.

The radio is on. The dial is tuned to 101.5. Local talk radio host LEXI JOHNSON is currently on the air.

LEXI (O.S.)

So, the latest thing I'm hearing from my underground, in-the-know, sources, sources I've worked many a year to cultivate, the latest thing is something you just aren't going to believe. Call me, your host with the most, Lovely Lexi Johnson, at 888-555-3845 and tell me how much you don't believe it... right after this ad that explains to you how you can invest in gold in these turbulent times. Coming to you live from Talk 101.5, the Patriot...

Ted stops typing and stands up. He walks out of the den.

TED

Pretty sure I'll believe it.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, HALL - CONTINUOUS

Ted walks down the hall, passing an open double doorway to the living room on his right. At the end of the hall behind him is a door to Ted's bedroom. At the opposite end of the hall is the exit.

Ted walks into the kitchen, the last doorway before the exit on the left.

The kitchen is immaculately clean. It has no decorations, no personal effects, and nothing that is not in the exact place it belongs.

Ted walks up to the refrigerator, opens it, and pulls out bologna and American cheese food slices. He shuts the fridge, places the food on the counter, and goes to a cabinet and pulls out a plate and a glass.

Ted puts the plate and glass next to the food and goes to another cabinet and pulls out a loaf of generic white bread.

He makes a sandwich with just bologna and cheese food and fills his glass with tap water.

Ted puts everything up and then takes the plate with the sandwich and the glass back down the hall again.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, DEN - CONTINUOUS

Ted walks in and sits down, placing the plate and glass on the table. He starts eating the sandwich slowly as he listens to the radio.

LEXI (O.S.)

So what I've been told is that they are called thumb stealers. That's right, they apparently have been going around and chopping off people's thumbs in order to get the fingerprints for scanners...

Ted puts down his sandwich and takes a sip of water from his glass. He puts it down and takes another bite from his sandwich.

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

That's what the world has come to under this president. If everyone had listened to me, instead of the lamos in the mainstream media...

The phone rings. Ted puts down his sandwich and reaches up and turns off the radio.

TED

You've got Ted Summers.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG BULLETIN, EDITOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sitting at her desk, talking on his phone is MADISON CARTER, an African American woman in her 50s. She wears a smart business suit. Behind her is a wall full of awards and a big banner that says "Congratulations FreeFactCheck.com on Ten Years!"

MADISON
(laughing)
Of course I do, that's who the hell
I called isn't it?

The shot flips back and forth between Ted and Madison as they chat.

TED
What can I do for you, Madison?

MADISON
We have three new assignments for
you, you ready?

Ted reaches across to the a cup of pens and grabs one. He pulls a yellow legal pad closer to him.

TED
Ummm... yeah. I'm ready. Shoot.

MADISON
First up, we need you to fact check
the Brock speech...

Ted writes notes on the yellow legal pad.

TED
Yes, writing it down now.

MADISON
Second, review Perry's legislation
as part of the Hicks response...

Ted continues to write on the pad.

TED
Got it, got it.

MADISON
And you'll love this last one...

Ted stops writing and looks up.

TED
Why do I hate the sound of that?

MADISON
We need you to come in and pick up
this docudump from the Donald Trump
Jr. presidential campaign.

TED

You know how much I hate coming into the city.

MADISON

I know, but we got a virus from the last Fox News press release and our servers are all down.

TED

(under his breath)

Yeah, right.

(back to normal voice)

Dammit, okay. See you soon.

MADISON

(laughing)

No, I won't be here, off to the White House Correspondent's Dinner. Zak Williams is hosting. Just pick it up at the news desk.

TED

Okay, tell Zak I miss his dad.

MADISON

Will do. Bye.

Madison hangs up the phone.

Ted hangs up the phone and puts his pen down.

TED

Sometimes you gotta work for the lamos to pay the rent.

Ted turns the radio back on.

LEXI (O.S.)

Another strange report that I've been getting, from multiple sources, is about strange people who only talk in sentences that are in alphabetical order...

TED

Nah, I'd better go now. Get it out of the way.

Ted turns off the radio and gets up and walks out of the room, shutting the door behind him.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG BULLETIN, MAIN ENTRYWAY - LATER

The lobby of the newspaper building is sparsely decorated and is in a retro architecture that would be something that appeared in the future as designed by the 1960s. Think the Jetsons.

Various current and greatest hits issues of the newspaper are around the room, framed on the walls.

S.A.M. sits behind the lone desk. To her right is a set of double doors with a fingerprint scanner next to it.

TED

Hello, ma'am, I am Ted Summers.

S.A.M.

Sir. Ted Summers, I've been expecting you.

(smiles)

U can call me S.A.M.

TED

Hello, Sam.

Ted smiles for the first time in years.

S.A.M.

Very nice to meet you. Where are you from?

TED

Uh... yeah... I'm local. Virtually lived my whole life in St. Pete.

S.A.M.

X-cuse me.

S.A.M. leans under the desk and comes back up with a large manila envelope that contains an external hard drive of some sort.

S.A.M. (CONT'D)

(handing the package to Ted)

Your package, sir.

TED

(shyly)

You don't have to call me sir.

S.A.M.

Z-z-zoinks!

She bursts into awkward laughter. Ted laughs, too, but his laughter is real.

TED
You're an odd one, aren't you?

S.A.M.
(awkwardly demure)
Am I?

TED
(laughing)
Yes, yes you are. But in a fun way.

S.A.M.
(looking down)
Blushing.

TED
Thank you, Sam, it's been a while
since I... laughed.

S.A.M.
(looks him in the eye and
smiles)
Course.

Ted half turns and kind of awkwardly backs away and goes out the door.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG BULLETIN - CONTINUOUS

Ted walks outside and stops.

He looks down at the ground and puts his left hand in his pocket.

Ted's hand rummages around inside the pocket and he takes out a wedding ring with a brilliant blue sapphire.

He stares down at it and starts to walk away.

Ted stops again. He holds the ring up to the light and looks at it again.

He brings it down and balls it up in his fist. He looks down at the ground.

Ted turns around and walks back towards the front door of the building. He walks up to the trash can and throws the ring into it.

He walks back inside with a smile on his face.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG BULLETIN, MAIN ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ted walks back up to the desk. S.A.M. is confused, but she smiles when she sees Ted.

S.A.M.
(smiling)
Did you forget something, Ted?

TED
Well, I've never done this
before... I'm not the type...

S.A.M.
Eye understand, Ted.

TED
Three years ago... I-I-I...

S.A.M. puts her hand on Ted's hand. He stops stammering.

TED (CONT'D)
Would you like to go to dinner?

S.A.M.
(smiling)
For dinner? Great, I'd love to go.

Ted smiles again.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15

Courtney and Logan sit in rolling office chairs in front of a console with several computer and television screens before them. They wear headsets with attached microphones.

On the wall next to the door is a computer screen with the image of Mama Stork on it.

Logan pulls out a box and opens it. He pulls out another paper mask and quickly changes it for the one he was wearing. He closes the box.

He stands up and takes the old mask over to a compartment beneath Mama Stork.

He pushes a button and the compartment opens. He throws the mask in. As the panel closes, flames can be seen flaring up inside.

Logan coughs.

LOGAN
Got a bit of the... uh... plague.

Behind Courtney and Logan stands a man, the INTERVIEWER.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
So she...
(gestures to Courtney)
...told me a little about who you
work for, but I need to know who
you are, so I know how honest to be
when you ask me questions.

INTERVIEWER
I am an official interviewer for
the Corporation. I am here to
record information about your
operation.

The Interviewer carries a tablet. He makes notes in it as he
talks.

LOGAN
The Corporation, huh?

INTERVIEWER
Correct.

LOGAN
So, you're legal investigator for
the Corporation?

INTERVIEWER
(laughing)
Yes. But that's all I can say for
now. This is a bit... further up
the ladder than you are used to
dealing with.

LOGAN
Ha...
(more a cough than a
laugh)
...don't worry about it.

INTERVIEWER
So what were we watching here?

COURTNEY
New subject, new S.A.M.

MAMA STORK
(smiling)
Little One.

Pink hearts fly on softer pink background behind Mama Stork.

LOGAN

They've just been introduced. The mission has begun. Our job now is to guide her to be a part of his daily life.

COURTNEY

Step one was getting them to go out. That's the fun part.

LOGAN

(frowning)

Next up is the first date. The hard part.

MAMA STORK

Is love in the air? That is the question of the day.

The hearts behind her grow from pink to red and swell in size.

INTERVIEWER

(pointing to Mama Stork)

Who is that?

MAMA STORK

I am Mama Stork.

The flying stork screensaver returns behind her.

COURTNEY

Mama is our... brain.

INTERVIEWER

Meaning?

LOGAN

She knows more than anyone. She uses that knowledge to... predict what's going to happen. She's rarely wrong.

COURTNEY

She's the one who identified Ted for us.

INTERVIEWER

And why is Ted important?

MAMA STORK
 (with a menacing smile)
 Oh, no, we don't talk about such
 things with strangers.

The screen behind Mama Stork goes black.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, DEN - DAY

Ted sits at his desk and is reading his latest article over for proofing, speaking aloud to himself. On the laptop screen is a picture of an attractive politician, CAMPBELL BROCK, in his late 40s, wearing a navy blue designer suit. Brock is giving a speech in the picture and is very serious.

TED
 And, as a presidential candidate, Brock should know all of this. His people should have prepared him with the adequate facts to know that violent crime is at a 150-year low, that the Stock Market hit 30,000—a record high—in January, and drug use is at the lowest level in recorded history. Brock is either ill-prepared for the job and just doesn't know enough, or he's consciously deciding to lie to the American people. Either way, we rate Brock's speech at American University as "Mostly BS." End.

Ted clicks save as he finishes reading.

TED (CONT'D)
 Good. Done with that shit.

Ted reaches up and turns on the radio. Lexi's show is already in progress.

LEXI (O.S.)
 Yes, and don't you think the timing is a little bit coincidental? I mean, who do you think is really behind this? There has to be more going on than what they're telling us. My sources tell me that the official story is nothing but a story...

Ted shuts the laptop and leans back in his chair. He concentrates on what Lexi is saying, staring at the radio.

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

Again, what is more likely? That an outbreak of measles type IV happened at the exact school that the anti-forced vaccination mothers had their biggest success? Or that the Pharma companies planted the disease there as a way to disrupt that success? Random coincidence or self-serving disruption? I've examined the evidence, and I've pondered on it for hours, and it's clear to me. I know which side I come down on.

TED

Me, too. It has to be a disruption. That's the only argument that makes sense.

Ted turns off the radio and walks out of the room. He walks down the hallway, takes off his shirt and tosses it into his room before walking into the bathroom and shutting the door behind him.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is a medium-quality steakhouse. It has a half-assed Western theme, peanut shells on the floor, and is very busy, in every way one can imagine.

Ted sits alone at a table, waiting. He quietly shells and eats peanuts. Smiling a little as he throws the shells on the ground, looking around as if he's a bit nervous about doing it.

COWBOY

Hey, dude!

Ted looks over at the table next to him. Sitting there is an man, an accountant type in a bright blue cowboy hat. The COWBOY is clearly wearing a costume. His wife has gone to the restroom, leaving behind several large shopping bags.

TED

Umm... yeah?

COWBOY

Hey, dude! You gonna pop the question tonight? This is where I popped the question for my little filly!

He gestures towards the restroom.

TED

Not that it's any of your business,
but this is our first date.

COWBOY

Well, hell, good luck with that
one!

TED

Thanks.

Ted makes a point of turning away from the Cowboy.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney and Logan are seated, but their chairs have been
turned in the direction of the Interviewer.

COURTNEY

Okay, so this is the hard part.

INTERVIEWER

How so?

COURTNEY

It's difficult, at best, to figure
out how to seduce someone, much
less how to do it remotely through
a savior.

INTERVIEWER

It doesn't seem that hard, in
theory.

MAMA STORK

The game of love is always a
challenge, young man.

The pink hearts on pink background return.

LOGAN

(coughing)

Depends on the mark.

COURTNEY

And what you're trying to
accomplish. If you're just trying
to get him to sleep with the
savior, that's easy.

MAMA STORK

Too much talk of impropriety here.
It's not appropriate in mixed
company.

The hearts on Mama Stork's background turn into red circles with the slash across them meaning "no."

LOGAN

But improprieties alone won't get
the job done.

INTERVIEWER

And what is your mission with Ted?

LOGAN

That's above your pay grade,
Encyclopedia Brown.

INTERVIEWER

We'll see about that.

(beat)

Did you tell her?

The Interviewer gestures to S.A.M. on the monitor.

COURTNEY

Yes. We need her to know everything
in order to best complete the
mission.

INTERVIEWER

She knows everything?

COURTNEY

Yes. Her memory is perfect. She
knows everything.

INTERVIEWER

Who she is? Who you are? Who Ted
is? What her mission is? Where she
came from? What she is?

MAMA STORK

Who asks?

The screen behind her is light green with flying black question marks.

COURTNEY

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And you aren't afraid that she will reveal what she knows?

LOGAN

She can't.

INTERVIEWER

What do you mean?

LOGAN

Her programming prohibits it. She can't give any information without pre-authorization from us.

INTERVIEWER

Doesn't that hinder her ability to interact with humans?

COURTNEY

Some, but we've thought ahead and there is a suite of information that is pre-approved, based on the mission we send her on.

LOGAN

Yeah, it's only a problem when somebody's a weirdo.

INTERVIEWER

And Ted's a weirdo?

LOGAN

Yeah.

COURTNEY

That looks to be the case.

MAMA STORK

A stranger in a very strange land.

The question marks are still flying behind Mama Stork's head.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

A waiter walks up to S.A.M. and Ted's table. He wears a name tag that says F.R.E.D., but the periods are subtle, one might not even notice them.

F.R.E.D. wears black pants, socks, and shoes, with a white shirt and black tie. He carries a notepad and pen and is ready to write.

S.A.M.

Hello, what are your specials?

A twinkle can be seen in S.A.M.'s eye. F.R.E.D. returns the twinkle.

F.R.E.D.

I am happy to tell you that tonight's specials include a Chilean sea bass with a maple honey glaze, our Holiday Seafood Sampler, and our special 16 oz. Megasteak.

S.A.M.

Just fine, I'll take the Megasteak with baked potato and green beans. Kick me in the head, I assume you have green beans?

F.R.E.D.

Lady, we have the best green beans in the area.

Ted casts a strange look at S.A.M. as he orders.

TED

That's not saying much. I'll also have the megasteak baked potato and... another baked potato.

F.R.E.D.

M'kay, so you want a steak and two baked potatoes?

TED

Yes.

F.R.E.D.

'N how do you want the steak?

S.A.M.

Overcooked, I want it so well done.

TED

Disgusting. Rare.

F.R.E.D.

Perfect, I'll be right back with your drinks.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Logan and Courtney are looking into their computer screens and both are typing and watching the date through S.A.M.'s eyes. The Interviewer stands between them, taking notes on a tablet with a stylus.

LOGAN

It's a good thing we have saviors
as the waiters in every restaurant
in the world now.

INTERVIEWER

In every restaurant?

MAMA STORK

Every four or five star restaurant.

A sea of fours and fives on a orange background appears behind her.

COURTNEY

Yes, we've found it makes the
situation where the savior has to
fake eating and drinking much
easier.

INTERVIEWER

They have storage for what they
consume, correct?

LOGAN

Yes, but the storage containers
can't just take any food or liquid
and they are susceptible to certain
combinations, so we have to make
sure they only get certain things.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Ted takes a sip of water from a glass with no ice then sets it on the table.

TED

So what is it you actually do for a
living, Sam?

S.A.M.

Quick version is that I'm currently
a temp.

TED

That's the quick version, but what's the long version.

S.A.M.

Really, I haven't figured that out yet. Sure, there are things I've thought about doing, but I haven't settled on one thing.

TED

(condescendingly)

Aren't you a little old to not know what you want to be when you grow up?

S.A.M.

To me, age isn't anything other than a number.

TED

Sounds a little too immature, but not... unexpected.

S.A.M.

Unless you can read the future, I'm not sure you can know what to expect or not expect. Very few people have access to that kind of information.

TED

What are you even going on about now?

S.A.M.

We are often left to figure out things on our own. X-cept that we don't get enough guidance to do it right? You know who I get my advice from?

TED

I'm bursting with anticipation.

S.A.M.

Zandar the fortune teller.

TED

You go to a fortune teller?

S.A.M.

Absolutely, Zandar is down on the boardwalk. Beautiful place.

(MORE)

S.A.M. (CONT'D)
Check it out next time you are down
there and take a chance.

TED
(fading away)
Sure. Sure I will.

They eat in awkward silence for a while.

S.A.M.
Do tell me what you do for a
living, Ted? Each time you visit
the office, what are you up to?
Fill me in.

TED
Well, you know I work for the
Bulletin. You now about the website
they run, FreeFactCheck.org?

S.A.M.
Generally. Haven't used it a lot.
It comes up when it's time to vote
and such, though.

TED
Exactly. Well, I'm one of the fact-
checkers.

S.A.M.
Judging the validity of what
politicians say?

TED
Something like that.

S.A.M.
Kicking ass for the public good?

TED
Nah, more like covering up for one
side so the other side seems
more... acceptable.

S.A.M.
Leaves me with the impression you
don't love your job?

TED
I could take it or leave it, yeah.
But it pays the bills.

S.A.M.

Mentioning paying the bills reminds me that I have to get up early.

TED

Oh, I should get the check, then?

S.A.M.

Only when you're ready to go.

TED

Oh... uh... but you just said...
umm... nevermind. I'll get the
check.

S.A.M.

Please.

TED

Sure... um... sure.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney turns in her chair to face the Interviewer.

INTERVIEWER

So that really isn't exactly what
you were hoping for, was it?

COURTNEY

Not exactly.

LOGAN

(coughing)
It was terrible.

MAMA STORK

Little One will... learn.

The hearts on pink pattern is back.

Logan turns around in his chair to face the others.

COURTNEY

You always over-react. We'll figure
it out. We always do.

INTERVIEWER

Did he know?

LOGAN

Know what?

INTERVIEWER
That she was a savior?

LOGAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
How do you know?

LOGAN
We're good.

INTERVIEWER
How do you know?

MAMA STORK
There seems to be an echo in here.

The question mark pattern is back.

COURTNEY
There are only three ways to spot a savior.

INTERVIEWER
Only three?

LOGAN
Years of extensive testing. We know.

INTERVIEWER
How do you know?

MAMA STORK
There seems to be an echo in here.

COURTNEY
We've been doing this job for years. And there were those who did it before us. And there are only three ways that anyone has ever figured out a savior.

INTERVIEWER
Okay, three ways.

COURTNEY
The first one is the easiest to spot, but it's also the easiest to overcome.

LOGAN

When the saviors are first working out their brains, when they're first figuring out logic and thinking and such, they have some trouble...

COURTNEY

For some reason, the default way of talking for a young savior involves talking in alphabetical order. Each sentence must start with the next letter of the alphabet.

INTERVIEWER

They talk in alphabetical order?

LOGAN

Yeah, but only until they get smart.

Logan breaks out into a coughing fit. Blood soaks through his mask. Courtney stares at him with concern.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Uh... excuse me.

He walks over to change his mask and incinerate the old one.

INTERVIEWER

Go on.

She glares at him.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Please.

MAMA STORK

Apology not accepted.

The letter X, colored red, flies behind her on the screen.

Courtney clears her throat.

COURTNEY

Think of it like a new system booting up, except that new system looks and feels like a human.

INTERVIEWER

Sounds like science to me.

COURTNEY

After a while, they start to talk like humans, too.

INTERVIEWER

But, in the early stages, you might be able to spot them talking in alphabetical order?

COURTNEY

Yes, but not just in the early stages. It can come and go throughout their lifespan. Some of it is just glitches. Other times it can be caused by trauma. Or by their equivalent of fear or uncertainty.

INTERVIEWER

They almost sound human.

LOGAN

Unless you've been in the Birthing Room.

MAMA STORK

(wagging her finger)

And you, young man, have already had your tour of the Birthing Room.

Tiny flying images of the storks carrying babies cross the background behind her.

Logan turns to Courtney.

LOGAN

I'm okay.

COURTNEY

You're sure.

He nods.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Yes. And sometimes they talk in threes.

LOGAN

You might hear one repeat the same initial letter three times in a row.

COURTNEY

Flip. Flop. Fly.

He does "The Fly" dance. He coughs a little and stops.

LOGAN

Gidget. Gaga. Gooley.

INTERVIEWER

Got it. Method number 2?

LOGAN

That one is easy. At least in terms of the method.

COURTNEY

Yeah, just shine a flashlight into a savior's eyes.

LOGAN

People blink or close their eyes. Saviors don't.

INTERVIEWER

They don't react at all?

COURTNEY

Not exactly. They blink, just not with their eyelids like a human.

LOGAN

Yeah, it's like an inner set of eyelids inside the eyeballs.

COURTNEY

It's hard to explain, but they blink differently.

LOGAN

But you can barely see it, takes an expert.

INTERVIEWER

And the last way?

COURTNEY

We'll have to come back to that one. We have a priority incoming message. An emergency.

INTERVIEWER

An emergency? Related to Ted?

LOGAN

No, Ted's our priority mission, but we have several others that we are tracking, too. You'll need to step out.

MAMA STORK

Farewell!

A field of waving hands flies behind her.

COURTNEY

Hold up a second, let us work out this snafu first.

INTERVIEWER

Certainly.

MAMA STORK

A snafu a day keeps retirement away!

A white background now serves up flying apples.

The Interviewer steps out the door and it shuts behind him.

COURTNEY

M.E.L. Unit 911, what is your situation?

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, DEN - DAY

Sitting at his desk, Ted picks up the phone.

TED

Call: work.

The phone begins to ring.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG BULLETIN, EDITOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Madison sits at her desk and picks up the phone.

MADISON

Okay, what you got for me?

The shot flips back and forth between Ted and Madison as they chat.

TED

Okay, I've finished up the first batch of the Trump Jr. research.

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

There aren't any smoking guns or anything, but there's a lot of good fodder.

MADISON

I assume it's up to your usual standard?

TED

I only have one speed, one gear.

MADISON

Okay, great, look forward to it. Servers are still down, though, can you bring it in?

TED

Ugh. Twice in one week? Is... Sam still working there?

MADISON

Sam? Sam who?

TED

The temp.

MADISON

Oh, her, yeah, I think she's still up front.

TED

And you have to have it today?

MADISON

We are a little light for work with Woodstein out.

Ted hangs his head down.

TED

Okay, I'll bring it in.

Ted hangs up the phone.

TED (CONT'D)

But not right now. Gonna cleanse the soul a bit first.

Ted reaches up and turns the radio on. Lexi's show is already in progress.

While listening to the radio, Ted disconnects the external hard drive from the computer and packs it up in the manila envelope again, closing it and resting it on the table once he is done. Once done, he leans back and listens to what Lexi has to say for a bit.

LEXI (O.S.)

So this may be one of the strangest stories I've heard about in a while. We've long talked about the various types of infiltrators that permeate various parts of society—spies, saboteurs, false flag operatives—some have even discussed the idea of pod people or shape-shifting aliens. After the break, we'll talk about a new threat that may be one or more of these types of infiltrators. They're called 'gangers' and we'll talk all about them after this message from Blue Diamond Gun Emporium, your one-stop shop for all your home defense needs...

VOICEOVER

Come on in to Blue Diamond Gun Emporium Today and get a free AR-15 raffle ticket...

Ted's phone rings.

TED

Good, I hate commercials.

Ted reaches up and shuts the radio off. He picks up his phone and answers.

TED (CONT'D)

You've got Ted Summers.

MARIA (O.S.)

What a strange way to answer the phone. Is there anything you do normally?

Ted cringes.

TED

Hello, Maria.

MARIA

Hello, Ted. I just wanted to call and check in on you.

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

I never hear from you anymore. And I'm the only family you've got left.

TED

You live on the other side of the continent.

MARIA

Obviously your phone works.

Ted bows his head.

TED

I'm busy. I work a lot. I write about presidential candidates. It's important work.

MARIA

Yes, and I couldn't be more proud of you.

TED

Thank you.

MARIA

Are you dating anyone yet?

Ted puts the phone down and looks away in disgust.

Beat.

He picks it back up again.

TED

This is why I never call you.

MARIA

What, your sister can't look out for you?

TED

I don't need anyone to look out for me. I'm doing just fine.

MARIA

You're sure?

TED

I'm sure.

MARIA

Good. Then call me.

He pulls his face away from the phone and silently rages at it.

TED
I will.

MARIA
Before the next holiday.

TED
I will.

MARIA
You promise?

TED
Yes, I promise!

MARIA
Okay, thank you.

TED
Goodbye, Maria.

MARIA
Goodbye. I love you.

Ted hangs the phone up. He stands up, grabs the package and walks out of the room.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG BULLETIN, MAIN ENTRY - DAY

Ted walks into the lobby. Again, S.A.M. is alone in the room, sitting at the front desk.

S.A.M. looks up and smiles when she sees it is Ted.

S.A.M.
Quiet my fluttering heart, if it
isn't Ted Summers!

Ted acts a bit surprised by her enthusiasm, it clearly wasn't what he was expecting.

TED
Hey... uh... Sam. How are you?

S.A.M.
Recovering from our fun from the
other night!

TED

Fun? I... I didn't think you enjoyed yourself very much.

S.A.M.

Seriously, what would make you think that? Totes had a wonderful time.

TED

Uh, me, too. I would like to do it again sometime?

S.A.M.

(looks at the clock on the wall)

Under two hours from now, I get off. Very much I would like to see you again.

TED

(still thrown a bit)

Umm... sure... let's do something.

S.A.M.

Whatever shall we do?

TED

I'm not one to beat around the bush. The other night was a bit... awkward.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney is typing, she turns toward Logan and smiles.

COURTNEY

Okay, Logan, let me handle this one.

(smiling at him)

I'm actually a woman.

MAMA STORK

A woman knows.

The symbol for women flies across a pink background.

LOGAN

It's all yours.

Logan gets up to go change his mask again. No blood this time.

INTERVIEWER

What are you going to do? How are you going to make this date better?

COURTNEY

I've got this guy figured out. I'm going to do the same thing I would if it were me there instead of S.A.M. I'll type the words and actions directly into her brain and we'll see how a woman handles this, as opposed to a committee.

LOGAN

When she's on, she's on. It might not be smooth because this guy is a bit of a loner, but Courtney will get us there.

MAMA STORK

Her success rate is in the top 5% in efficiency ratings.

Mama Stork clasps her hands as if to cheer for Courtney. Behind her is a sea of gold stars on a light blue background.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG BULLETIN, MAIN ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. stands up and walks around from behind the desk, so she can be closer to Ted.

S.A.M.

X-cuse me, I'm sorry about the other night.

TED

Well, it's not a huge deal, I just didn't think you liked me that much.

S.A.M.

(leans in
conspiratorially)

You were fine. Zandar tells me that I should always be honest when things come up that throw people off.

TED

Zandar?

S.A.M.

Ahhh, I told you about Zandar. Best in the business, my fortune teller.

TED

Yes, you did tell me about the fortune teller. How could I forget?

S.A.M.

C'mon, don't be so negative. Different people have different ways of dealing with the world.

TED

And some use fortune tellers.

S.A.M.

Everyone uses something. Freedom is fun, isn't it?

TED

Sometimes.

S.A.M.

Good as this conversation is, I should get some work done. Hopefully, I can see you again some time, Ted?

TED

Yeah, sure, we can do something. I wasn't saying that.

S.A.M.

It was me, not you, don't worry. Just had a little... monthly...

TED

(nodding his head as if he finally gets it)
Ah, no need to elaborate, I get it. Sorry I didn't know.

S.A.M.

Kick it out of your brain, Ted, no need to worry.

TED

Okay, then let's do it. Let's go out again.

S.A.M.

Let me finish up and then we can do whatever you like.

TED
 Okay, I'll see you when you get
 off.

S.A.M.
 M'kay, bye.

TED
 Tonight.

Ted turns around and walks out. Once S.A.M. can no longer see his face, he makes a bemused face, obviously surprised by S.A.M.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ted sits at the table, waiting for S.A.M. to arrive. He is shelling and eating peanuts, with the same giddy nervousness as he throws the shells on the floor.

SURFER
 Hey, dude!

Ted slowly turns in direction of the next table. Sitting there is a older man, the SURFER, at least in his 60s, who looks like he really might be a retired surfer. He wears board shorts, sandals, a mostly unbuttoned, mostly blue Hawaiian shirt, and a pukka shell necklace.

TED
 Yes?

SURFER
 Hey, dude! You gonna pop the
 question tonight or what?

TED
 Umm... why would you ask that? No,
 I'm not popping the question.

SURFER
 Awesome, dude, me neither, right,
 bros before hoes, amirite?!

TED
 I suppose.

Ted makes a point of turning away from the Surfer.

S.A.M. walks in, Ted smiles as he stands up to greet her.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Ted and S.A.M. sit at their table, smiling and laughing. Ted is having more fun than last time, but is still stiff and awkward.

TED

Hey, Fred.

F.R.E.D., the savior waiter, stops to listen to Ted as he carries a tray of drinks to another table.

F.R.E.D.

Hey, folks! Glad to see you two again. Last time must've gone better than it looked from my point of view?

TED

Umm... sure.

S.A.M.

Nice, things were nice. Oh, what are your specials?

A twinkle can be seen in S.A.M.'s eye. F.R.E.D. returns the twinkle.

F.R.E.D.

I am happy to tell you that tonight's specials still include a Chilean sea bass with a maple honey glaze, our Holiday Seafood Sampler, and our special 16 oz. Megasteak.

S.A.M.

Perfect, I'll take the Megasteak with baked potato and green beans. Quite well done, please.

TED

I'll will have the megasteak, baked potato and another baked potato. Rare.

F.R.E.D.

Perfect, I'll be right back with your drinks.

TED

I see that you are like me, consistent in your food choices.

S.A.M.
Right, I know what I like and I
like it.

TED
I feel the same.

S.A.M.
Shh, I think this lady over here...

She points to a woman at a nearby table.

S.A.M. (CONT'D)
This lady over here. Underneath the
stall in the bathroom, I heard her
talking.

TED
What about?

S.A.M.
Vigorously, she was talking on the
phone to someone. What I heard was
this story about how she used to
work in this bar.

TED
Where was it?

S.A.M.
X-actly? You know, I can't say.
Zero information on that front.

TED
Okay, I'm just a details guy.

S.A.M.
A details guy? Because you're a
reporter?

TED
Something like that. You were
saying?

S.A.M.
Can't remember...

TED
You were talking about this woman
over here.

Ted nods towards the woman.

S.A.M.

Definitely. Everyone at this bar knew everyone else's name, it seems. From what I gathered, she was working there and the place was a little arty.

TED

Arty?

S.A.M.

Generally. Her boss allowed the place to put on plays and such. I don't know how many or anything, but this time they were doing Othello.

TED

I don't care much for Shakespeare.

S.A.M.

Just a bit of a contrarian, are you?

TED

Nah, just don't see how it is relevant to the present. Or the future.

S.A.M.

K. Let's table that discussion till another time. My point was that this lady was playing the lead in Othello. Now, the lead male in the show turned out to be this serial killer type or something.

TED

Seriously? That's insane.

S.A.M.

Oh, it gets worse. Pretending became the real world. Quickly. Reality morphed out of fiction. She was doing the part when this guy, really getting into the role, starts choking her.

TED

Wow.

S.A.M.

The character she was playing was actually being choked by his character in the play. Until it became reality. Virtually no one noticed at first. Watching the play, they had no idea that this guy was really choking her.

TED

Obviously she made it out alive?

S.A.M.

X-actly. You see, eventually, everyone figured it out and they jumped in. Zonked the guy on the head and called the cops.

TED

See, this is why I don't like Shakespeare.

They laugh. Less awkwardly than before.

INT. ACME savior HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Logan swivels his chair to look at Courtney.

LOGAN

Wow, where'd you come up with that story?

COURTNEY

Got it from an old episode of Cheers.

INTERVIEWER

Do you often use old stories from pop culture to help them out?

COURTNEY

Only when we need to. And when it's not too obvious.

LOGAN

Yeah, in an early session, I fed an E.L.L.E. the orgasm scene from When Harry Met Sally. The target's grandmother was an extra in the movie, so he had seen it many times.

COURTNEY

We did not get passing marks that day.

LOGAN

Nope.

The Interviewer types furiously on his tablet.

MAMA STORK

Fear of failure is like fear of flying, you can't get where you are going without taking the first step.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Ted silently stares at S.A.M. while he eats, not talking. A content smile comes over his face. Ted is visibly more relaxed than we've seen him before, almost slouching.

TED

(whispering)

You see that guy over there?

He gestures to the Surfer.

TED (CONT'D)

(laughing quietly)

That guy is totally nuts, too.

S.A.M.

(giggling)

Ah, yeah? Bore me with the details!

He leans in to tell her the story and music plays them out.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Logan leans back in his chair with his hands behind his head. He is happy.

LOGAN

Now that was much better. Excellent job, Courtney.

Mama Stork appears in an air force pilot's uniform, holding the helmet at her side. The background behind her is a flag waving in the wind.

MAMA STORK

Mission accomplished!

COURTNEY

This whole thing is an art, not a science.

LOGAN

Dealing with S.A.M.s is a challenge. You have to be a problem solver.

INTERVIEWER

Is that because of the history of the program?

LOGAN

How do you mean?

INTERVIEWER

Well, obviously, you know that these things originally had a military purpose.

LOGAN

Obviously.

COURTNEY

It's there in the name.

INTERVIEWER

And you know why they aren't still being used for military purposes, right?

LOGAN

Why don't you tell us?

INTERVIEWER

(laughing)

Well, there was Laos.

COURTNEY

I'm not familiar with the Laos story.

LOGAN

I am. Nasty stuff.

He coughs. Somewhat heavily.

INTERVIEWER

One of the earliest S.A.M. models ever. Seven, I think. Recon mission.

(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

I won't get into the gory details, but let's just say the hippies weren't wrong to call us "baby killers," they just blamed the troops for it because they didn't know about the saviors.

COURTNEY

Wow, I had heard some stories, but nothing that bad.

LOGAN

There really several others I've heard about. Paris. Chicago.

INTERVIEWER

And we won't even get into what happened in Tahiti.

Mama Stork is wearing sunglasses and sits on a Tahitian beach with Mai Tai.

MAMA STORK

I just LOVE Tahiti!

COURTNEY

(simultaneously, laughing)
Please don't!

LOGAN

(giggling)
We get the point.

INTERVIEWER

Is that why do you consider this be an "art"?

COURTNEY

It must be.

INTERVIEWER

What do you mean?

COURTNEY

The process is complicated because of the systems that were added to prevent them from going off the rails again. There aren't any exact numbers or exact formulas for success. You have to use trial and error. And not everything is under your control, even when you want it to be.

LOGAN

Side effects, it would seem, from the chemicals used to keep them useful and safe.

INTERVIEWER

Are they safe?

COURTNEY

They have been.

LOGAN

It's been more than a decade since the last reported failure. And that wasn't even a violent episode.

COURTNEY

Well, not violent towards humans.

MAMA STORK

(frowning)

This is certainly not polite conversation.

The screen behind her is black with red circles with slashes through them.

EXT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ted and S.A.M. walk up to her apartment building and stop outside the front door.

S.A.M.

Can I... just say... I like you.

TED

That's good.

S.A.M.

Do you think we sh...

Ted leans in to kiss her, cutting her off. S.A.M. is surprised at first, but she quickly kisses him back. They both kiss surprisingly well.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

The Interviewer and Logan turn and look at Courtney, who returns their gaze.

COURTNEY

What? Don't look at me, I had nothing to do with that.

Mama Stork peers out from between her fingers, which cover her face in mock embarrassment. Behind her are flying pairs of ruby red lips on a pink background.

MAMA STORK

Is it over yet?

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM

The clock reads 9:23 and Ted is still in bed. The radio is on. He is smiling.

Ted is sitting up in bed, with a tray over his lap. He is eating bacon, eggs, and dry toast. He has a glass of water with no ice.

He wears nice, but cheap, gray full-body pajamas with socks.

LEXI (O.S.)

And, apparently, THAT's what they do in the shadows. Also, there might be even worse things in the shadows, but that's for another show. After this ad for Blue Diamond Gun Emporium, I want to talk more about these gangers. They may not be as dangerous as I previously heard. Seems they are afraid of dogs...

There is a knock at the door.

TED

That's strange...

Ted gets up and places his tray carefully on a dresser. He turns off the radio, shutting off the ad for Blue Diamond Gun Emporium, and walks toward the front of the house.

Ted opens the front door and a POLICE OFFICER in a blue uniform appears in front of the door. The officer holds a clipboard and has no name tag.

Softly a dog barks a few times in the distance. The Police Officer briefly looks in that direction before turning back to Ted.

TED (CONT'D)

Hello.

POLICE OFFICER
I'm here on a noise complaint, sir?

TED
A noise... what? How is that even possible?

POLICE OFFICER
(looking down at a clipboard)
I don't know sir, we got a call.

TED
A call about what now?

POLICE OFFICER
A noise complaint. We got a complaint about your house being too loud.

TED
But that doesn't make any sense. I've only been awake for a little while and I haven't made any noise.

POLICE OFFICER
Well, what about your family? Kids? Roommates?

TED
No, I live here alone. I have no family.

POLICE OFFICER
(writing on the clipboard)
No family? You don't have any close relatives.

TED
No. My wife... died.

POLICE OFFICER
No brothers and sisters? Parents nearby?

TED
Um. No... sir. Why are you asking these questions? This all seems... unusual.

POLICE OFFICER
(writing on the clipboard)
It's all just routine, I assure you.

(MORE)

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

(looks up at Ted)

Well, nothing seems out of the ordinary here. For the future, I'd keep it down. You don't want me to have to come back out here.

TED

But, I wasn't... nevermind. Sure, officer, I'll keep it down.

POLICE OFFICER

Thanks, you have a nice day now.

The officer turns and walks away. Ted shuts the door.

TED

That was strange.

EXT. BOARDWALK - EVENING

Ted walks along the boardwalk. As always, he is early for his date with S.A.M.

He walks towards the water and stops when he looks up and sees a sign that says "Fortune Teller." Beneath that it says "Zandar." Ted looks down at his watch.

He smiles, looks up and walks into the fortune teller's sanctorum.

INT. ZANDAR'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The room is very dark. A lone spotlight comes down on the table where the Zandar sits, a crystal ball on the table in front of her.

She has long, red hair, but it is mostly, but not too neatly, tucked into a red turban. She wears no blue.

ZANDAR

Ahoy, lad, t' Zandar's Emporium!

TED

I-I think I'm in the wrong place.

He turns to walk back out.

ZANDAR

No, Ted, I've been waitin' fer ye. Come sit down.

TED
W-What did you call me?

ZANDAR
I know yer name, knave!
(gestures to the chair)
Sit. Sit. I don't 'ave all night.

INT. ACME savior HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney walks into the room, where Logan and the interviewer await. She has a look of concern on her face.

COURTNEY
Well, that's an official approval.

LOGAN
Meaning?

COURTNEY
We have to tell him.

LOGAN
Wait, what, everything?

The Interviewer looks on, happy with himself.

COURTNEY
(laughing quietly)
Of course not.

The Interviewer's smile fades somewhat.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
They gave the green light to tell
him about Ted. Why he was chosen
for the program.

In front of a green background, Mama Stork shrugs.

MAMA STORK
No skin off my back. I have no dog
in that hunt.

Screensaver dogs and ducks fly across the scene behind her, clearly the dogs are hunting the ducks.

LOGAN
(looking at the computer)
Well, we'll have to tell him later.
Ted has arrived at Zandar.

Courtney sits down at her computer, a serious look on her face.

MAMA STORK

Ooh, Zandar, my favorite!

Mama Stork's picture is seen hugging a cardboard cutout of Zandar.

LOGAN

Okay, strap in for this part.
Zandar is where the magic happens.

COURTNEY

You always oversell it.

LOGAN

Screw you. I like Zandar. I like pirates. I wish I could write for Zandar.

COURTNEY

Hah, you wish you could write.

LOGAN

Shit, I wasn't raised to be a writer, I was raised to be a dancer.

Mama Stork twirls around in a tutu on her screen, still holding the cardboard cutout of Zandar.

INT. ZANDAR'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Ted is putting away his plain, brown wallet. Zandar is tucking several twenties into her bra.

Zandar hovers her hands over the crystal ball, which starts to glow faintly green.

ZANDAR

Wha' can I do fer ye today, me son?

TED

I have no idea. I came in here on a wild goose chase.

ZANDAR

Well, we 'ave no wild geese here, jus' the tellin' o' fortunes.

TED

That is what the sign says.

ZANDAR

So, ye're a reader, are ye? That how ye found out about me Emporium?

TED

No, a friend mentioned it.

ZANDAR

I do love recommended customers. I be sure I helped yer heartie, how can I help ye.

TED

I don't know, I guess I need a basic reading.

ZANDAR

That be wha' ye paid fer.

As Zandar peers into the crystal ball and her hands float around the surface of the ball without touching it, it begins to glow more and more brightly green.

ZANDAR (CONT'D)

Okay, ye be easy t' get a read on.

TED

That's comforting.

ZANDAR

I be seein' thin's. Thin's from afore 'n thin's from aft.

TED

I have no idea what that means.

ZANDAR

Ye be missin' someone?

TED

Y-yes? I think so.

ZANDAR

Death. Th' big bye-bye?

TED

Yes.

He rubs the spot on his finger where his wedding band used to be.

ZANDAR

She has moved on. She's na here.

TED

That's what the doctors told me.

ZANDAR

Wha's this? Belay that. I see someone else. Someone new.

Ted is interested for the first time.

TED

Tell me more.

ZANDAR

I can only see bits 'n pieces. But this one be important. This one means somethin'.

TED

The last one meant something. And she's gone.

ZANDAR

'tis different. 'tis important.

TED

Important in what way?

ZANDAR

I can nah see that. I jus' see colors. Green. I see green.

TED

We both do, your ball IS green.

ZANDAR

No, Ted, I don't seen green in th' ball. I see green in ye.

Ted thinks for a moment. Then he smiles.

INT. ACME savior HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney is typing. Logan turns toward the Interviewer.

LOGAN

You know, Courtney here has been nominated for Best Writer at the annual S.W.I.F.T.Y.'s seven times?

COURTNEY

Eight.

LOGAN

Eight. Never won, though.

INTERVIEWER

Not once? Why?

COURTNEY
Politics.

EXT. BOARDWALK - LATER

Ted is walking down the boardwalk and he sees S.A.M. He smiles and walks up to her.

S.A.M.
Every time I see you, you're always on time. First time you've ever been late to see me.

TED
You know, I do hate being late.

S.A.M.
Generally.

TED
(bemused)
I actually wasn't late tonight...

S.A.M.
Here I was, waiting for you...

TED
Yes, but I got here early.

S.A.M.
(teasing)
I didn't see you.

TED
I got here early. And I stopped in to see Zandar.

S.A.M.
Jokes. Killing me with these jokes.

TED
No joke. I even did a reading. Well, I think I did a reading, it's pretty hard to understand Zandar.

S.A.M.
Love Zandar. My belief is that English is a third or fourth language for her.

TED
I can believe that...

Ted pauses for a minute. Then he smiles. He is excited

TED (CONT'D)
Follow me. I have an idea.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney turns to look at the Interviewer. Logan continues to look at his computer.

LOGAN
You tell him, I'll monitor the date.

COURTNEY
Okay, so I am not authorized to tell you everything and, to be frank...

LOGAN
I love it when she's frank.

COURTNEY
I don't even know it all myself. But here is the shorthand version.

LOGAN
Not even sure I buy it.

COURTNEY
Be that as it may. Here's what I can tell you. Ted Summers is important. Not because of what he does, but because of WHO he is.

INTERVIEWER
Is that purposeful obfuscation?

COURTNEY
No, a purposeful preface.

LOGAN
Award-winning writer and all that.

Logan coughs.

INTERVIEWER
This is more of that "arty" stuff, right? Can't get directly to the point? Have to dress it up with fanciness?

Courtney swivels her chair back towards her computer.

COURTNEY

Well if you'd rather criticize than listen, I have work to do.

INTERVIEWER

No, no, I'll listen. Just discussing philosophy. It interests the Corporation.

COURTNEY

Wasting my time doesn't interest me.

She turns back towards him.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Ted, you see, is a nobody. He's not important, his life will mean very little and few people care about him.

LOGAN

Bit of a space-filler.

COURTNEY

But we aren't here working for the present. We're here working for the future. That means we have to know where we are going. Ted, for instance, carries a genetic code that holds the key to Hannibal Syndrome.

INTERVIEWER

Which is?

LOGAN

Nothing.

He coughs.

COURTNEY

Ted there...

(gestures towards the computer)

...is the key to our medical response to Hannibal Syndrome.

INTERVIEWER

And how do you know all this? For certain.

LOGAN

It's the best hope I got.

COURTNEY

We have the world's biggest brain.
And we won't give up until we find
a solution.

(beat)

I... won't give up.

She gestures towards Mama Stork. The screen grows brightly green behind her as symbols for infinity fly past her on the screensaver.

MAMA STORK

There are more brains in this old
noggin than in all your Wikipedias
and megapedias and megawikipedias
combined.

COURTNEY

Meet Mama Stork, the world's most
advanced processing system.

LOGAN

She knows so much, it's like she's
a wizard.

INTERVIEWER

Is he exaggerating again?

COURTNEY

Not at all. She not only has access
to all data available in every
digital database that has ever
existed, her processing capacity
far outweighs that of all prior
systems run by governments across
the world. Combined.

LOGAN

She's even got whatever computers
you have over at the Corporation
beat.

INTERVIEWER

That seems unlikely.

LOGAN

Unlikely. Still true.

COURTNEY

With access to all the data in the
world, she runs nearly infinite
simulations. She studies every
outcome.

(MORE)

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

And she predicts what will happen in real-time based on an inflow of more information than your brain can handle. Then she predicts the outcome.

INTERVIEWER

And how often is she wrong?

LOGAN

I've never seen it.

COURTNEY

I've heard stories, but they sound more like urban legends than anything.

Mama Stork is wearing an apron that says "Kiss the Chef" and the screensaver shows flying loaves of bread.

MAMA STORK

Pshaw! You should never listen to those old wives tales.

INT. SOCIAL GAMING CENTER - NIGHT

The bar is a large room, easily the size of a football field. Massive TV screens are around the room on the walls, and games and activities of all sorts surround the room: foosball, ping pong, darts, giant Jenga, skee ball, shuffleboard, etc. Above the bar is a big banner that says "Game Night!"

S.A.M.

Now, let's have some fun.

TED

Wait, what? You play games.

S.A.M.

Oh, I don't play games, I win.

Ted laughs and follows her into the maze of games and people.

INT. ACME savior HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney and Logan are both looking at their computer screens as they talk to the Interviewer.

COURTNEY

The process is adaptive. S.A.M. gets smarter with time.

INTERVIEWER

So the longer it goes on, the better each savior matches up with the subject?

LOGAN

That is the idea.

INTERVIEWER

And what are they made of? The S.A.M.s and the D.A.V.E.s and such?

Courtney turns and grins at Logan.

COURTNEY

We will let Mama Stork handle that one.

Mama Stork pulls down a projector screen and taps it with a pointer.

MAMA STORK

Now you two naughty ninnies know that we have a film strip for just such an occasion. Please pay close attention.

She crosses her arms.

The video begins to play. It starts with a field of amber waves of grain. The proceeds through a series of images of other patriotic concepts--monuments, flags, etc. All of the images are distinctly American, but they are all slightly changed. The American flag, for instance, has 54 stars. And the statue of liberty no longer holds up a torch, she holds a dagger.

The voiceover is standard corporate white dude.

VOICEOVER

America. Pretty great again, huh? But where would we be without workers and protectors. Who would harvest those amber waves of grain? Who will guard the wall on the Mexican border? Who will make sure that American values are the dominant values across the globe?

The logo for the Tungenbund Corporation comes on the screen.

VOICEOVER (CONT'D)

We at the Tungenbund Corporation have been offering personnel solutions for nearly five decades. Don't worry, we don't have to worry about those pesky laws limiting workers' hours and all that. The future is now.

The video shifts to a scene of the Birthing Room.

VOICEOVER (CONT'D)

And that future is biomechanical workers. They do all the work of a regular human being, but they never sleep or eat or go on vacation! They just get the job done 24-7 with our patented Patriogenesis Process. Get one of our saviors, and you'll get the job done! For corporate inquiries, please contact our sales offices in New York, London or Tokyo.

The video ends and Mama Stork reappears with her arms crossed.

MAMA STORK

And that's how it's done!

The screensaver behind her has the storks carrying babies again.

INT. SOCIAL GAMING CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Ted and S.A.M. stand in front of a row of skee ball games. S.A.M. holds a skee ball and is ready to roll it.

TED

Do you know what you're doing with that thing?

He reaches for her arm.

TED (CONT'D)

I could show you how to do it?

She withdraws from him.

S.A.M.

Please. Queen S.A.M. has got this! Really.

She rolls the first ball and lands a perfect shot in the 100 hole in the upper left-hand corner. She turns to Ted, cheers and smiles.

TED
Beginner's luck.

S.A.M. grabs another ball and rolls a perfect shot into the 100 hole in the upper right-hand corner. Ted is incredulous.

S.A.M.
Sweet! The high score gets to pick
the games all night!

Ted puts money into the machine next to S.A.M.'s.

TED
You're on!

INT. ACME savior HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

The Interviewer looks over the shoulders of Logan and Courtney, who are working away at their computers. Courtney rolls her chair back to look at Logan and the Interviewer.

COURTNEY
Now we get to see Logan do his
thing.

INTERVIEWER
So, you two take turns on this
stuff?

LOGAN
As we said, it's an art.

COURTNEY
There are some things he does
better, there are some things I do
better. Well, a lot of things I do
better.

INTERVIEWER
(to Logan)
That doesn't bother you?

LOGAN
It's true. Why would it bother me?

He coughs.

INTERVIEWER
It would bother most men. What are
you doing now? Science or art.

LOGAN

Art. But it'll sound like science.

INTERVIEWER

That's convenient.

COURTNEY

The truth is often convenient.

INTERVIEWER

So what are you doing?

LOGAN

I'm opening up her game programming and boosting her aggressiveness.

INTERVIEWER

Why?

LOGAN

Ted is a gamer. He was in a frat when he was younger and he was the head of the games committee. He loves this shit.

INTERVIEWER

Isn't that dangerous?

LOGAN

Nah.

COURTNEY

She's still bound by the inhibitor, this just maxes out her protocols under the inhibitor. It's like turning her up to 10.

LOGAN

Let's hope we don't have to go up to 11.

He shares a knowing glance with Courtney.

INTERVIEWER

Wait, you can do that?

MAMA STORK

If you know enough, there isn't much you can't do.

The screen behind her fills with red, white, and blue stripes. Rocket ships fly upward off of the screen.

INT. SOCIAL GAMING CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Ted looks on both shocked and amused as S.A.M. jumps up and down and cheers. She is holding a ton of game tickets in her hand, having beaten Ted by more than 200 points.

Begin montage of Ted and S.A.M. playing games and doing very well. Music should be light, fun, romantic indie pop. It should make the viewer feel like they are part of the date and that it is a smashing success.

TED

That is the most fun I've had in a long time.

S.A.M.

Well, that is the most fun I've ever had.

TED

That's sad.

S.A.M.

Xenoglossy.

TED

Um, what?

S.A.M.

You have never heard my favorite word?

TED

Not exactly.

S.A.M.

Zero percent surprised.

TED

(smiling)

What's it mean?

S.A.M.

A word always has multiple meanings. But I use this one to mean speaking a language you've never heard or learnt.

TED

And you speak a lot of languages you've never heard?

S.A.M.

Could be.

TED

It is a nice word. You are nice.

S.A.M.

Dude, you aren't super great with the compliments, are you?

TED

I'm... I'm out of practice.

S.A.M.

Easy. Forget about it and get a little practice now?

Ted looks puzzled as if trying to figure out a math problem.

TED

I... I don't know what to say.

S.A.M.

Go ahead and just say the first thing that comes to mind.

Ted thinks for a moment.

TED

I... I...

He smiles.

TED (CONT'D)

I love you.

S.A.M. returns the smile.

S.A.M.

Hey, it wasn't that hard, was it? I love you, too.

They kiss.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15

Logan is sitting in his chair again, typing. Courtney is turned around and faces the Interviewer, who is standing again.

INTERVIEWER

So what are these gangers? I've heard them mentioned before.

LOGAN

Superstition.

INTERVIEWER
You don't believe in them?

COURTNEY
He didn't at first, but the
evidence is growing.

LOGAN
Still sounds like nonsense to me.

INTERVIEWER
But you've seen the proof?

LOGAN
Yeah.

MAMA STORK
The proof's in the pudding. And in
the evidence.

The screen behind her is covered with flying cups of pudding,
each with a spoon sticking out of it.

INTERVIEWER
They're real?

COURTNEY
Yes.

LOGAN
She's seen convincing proof. I'm
close, but I'm not there yet.

COURTNEY
We don't know much about them or
their wants and desires or their
physiology, but we will learn.

INTERVIEWER
How do you know they're real?

COURTNEY
I've seen one. Dead.

LOGAN
So she says.

INTERVIEWER
Well what was it?

MAMA STORK
Now, now, now, nosy busybodies
shouldn't stick their busybody
noses where they don't belong.

The screen behind her is filled with flying noses.

COURTNEY

You heard the lady. She speaks for
my boss, so...

INT. GUN RANGE - DAY

Ted walks into a gun range after having signed in and sets up one slot over from a man in a dark blue tracksuit.

Over the next few seconds, Ted and TRACKSUIT MAN take turns firing rounds at their targets. Once they each finish, they push the button to bring their targets closer as they take off their protective ear muffs.

TRACKSUIT MAN

Whew, that's some pretty good
shooting, sport.

TED

Thank you.
(looking up)
Not too bad yourself.

TRACKSUIT MAN

You come out here often? I'm a big
time shooter myself.

As they speak, Ted and Tracksuit Man take the clips out of their pistols and start to reload, bullet by bullet.

TED

Once a week. Whether I need it or
not.

TRACKSUIT MAN

(laughing, but very phony)
I hear that! Myself, I grew up with
guns. Shot my first buck at age 6.
Can't imagine a season going by
without getting out there and
bagging a few.

TED

I'm not much of a hunter myself.
I'm more in it for protection.

Ted has finished loading his clip and jams it back in the pistol. He checks the chamber to make sure it's safe.

TRACKSUIT MAN

(more serious)

I hear that, too. My father made sure that I knew how to hunt and that I knew how to protect myself. Your dad teach you, too?

TED

No. I never knew my parents. Grew up with my older sister, my only family. She wasn't much on guns.

TRACKSUIT MAN

Bleeding heart type?

Tracksuit Man finishes reloading his clip and replaces the target from his original round of shooting. He pushes the button to send it back. Ted follows suit.

TED

Something like that.

TRACKSUIT MAN

What do you do to put meat on your table? Me, I'm a contractor. Also do a little campaign work over there at the county Republican Party.

Ted would rather die than answer this question.

TED

I'm a... reporter.

TRACKSUIT MAN

Seriously? What kind of lame job is that?

Ted shrinks as he answers.

TED

It pays well.

TRACKSUIT MAN

Well so does teaching fancy "literature" up at the college, but that don't mean a man should do it. At least you tell me you get out into the real world to see some real shit?

Ted can't look at the tracksuit man as he answers

TED

I'm. Well, I'm a fact-checker. I work from home.

TRACKSUIT MAN

Huh. Well, that's a thing to do, I guess.

He turns back towards the gun range, disappointed.

TRACKSUIT MAN (CONT'D)

Yeah, well you keep shooting like that, I'm guessing you'll be just fine in protecting yourself and whoever else you got to protect.

TED

The only person I need to protect is myself.

Ted pulls his earmuffs back on and doesn't look at the Tracksuit Man again as the man starts shooting at the target. Ted seethes as he waits for the Tracksuit Man to finish shooting before he starts up again.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, DEN - DAY

Ted sits at his desk and is reading his latest article over for proofing, speaking aloud to himself.

TED

In his response, Hicks claims that Perry's legislation is not only not necessary, but that it would decrease corporate profits. But the Congressional Budget Office reports that Perry's law would boost GDP by 3.4% by closing the trade gap and Professor Gordon Wood's model shows that the legislation would not only increase worker satisfaction, reduce turnover, and lead to workers missing fewer days of work. All in all, that sounds positive to us, so we rate Hicks' claim "Total BS."

Ted clicks save as he finishes reading.

TED (CONT'D)

Much like I rate this job, "Total BS."

He reaches up and turns on the radio. Lexi is already in progress.

LEXI (O.S.)

See, back in my day, real men were real men. None of this metro nonsense you got dominating everything these days. I just can't stand a man who won't stand up and do what's got to be done.

TED

Me, neither.

LEXI (O.S.)

Okay, if you want to hear more of that, I'll be at the Miami Rights Association Men's Alliance Summer Session with tons of actionable intel. But I want to read you something that just came to me via A-mail. My sources are now telling me that a certain president, whose death certificate we've never seen and whose son is currently running for president. When they shot him after the Mar-a-Lago incident and Pence took over, it turns out that there is video. Of the autopsy. And this video reveals that the president himself wasn't human, but was actually a reptilian alien. I know it's hard to believe, but I've seen the Blu-Ray myself.

Ted picks up the phone and dials the number for Lexi's show. As he hits the last button, switch to the POV of a blip of electricity that flies through the house and out the window.

The blip then continues through his neighborhood until it comes upon a cell tower. On that cell tower is a visible electronic device with a solid red light on it. As the blip hits the device, the light switches to a flashing green light.

INT. CALL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A man in an all blue jumpsuit, the OPERATOR, sits in a small cubicle with a headset on. There is nothing in the cubicle except for the phone. The desk and phone and what little you can see of the rest of the room is battered, beaten, has paint peeling, and is dirty. No other people are present.

The operator presses a button on the phone and begins to talk. But he talks in a woman's voice.

OPERATOR

Hello and thank you for calling the offices of the Lovely Lexi Johnson Show, how may I direct your call.

TED

I would like to speak to... Lexi?

OPERATOR

I'm sorry, the Lovely Lexi Johnson is not available at the moment. May I take a message?

TED

Umm... tell her that I have information about Donald Trump Jr. Good stuff! Juicy stuff!

OPERATOR

Lots of people try to call in with juicy tips, you can send those directly to our website.

TED

No, no, no! I need to talk to Lexi, not some computer.

OPERATOR

I'm sorry, she's unavailable.

TED

No, you aren't listening! I'm a reporter! I work for the St. Pete Bulletin! I have information! Information they won't print!

OPERATOR

Okay, why don't you give me your name and number and I'll have her get back in touch with you at her earliest convenience.

TED

Yes, yes, yes. You'll make sure she gets it? The message?

OPERATOR

Oh, I'll do my best.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, DEN - LATER

The phone rings. Ted picks it up on the second ring.

TED
Hello?

LEXI (O.S.)
Ted Summers?

TED
Yeah? Who is this?

LEXI (O.S.)
I am the one and only Lovely Lexi
Johnson.

Ted hangs up the phone. Seconds later it rings again.

TED
(suspiciously)
Hello?

LEXI (O.S.)
Listen! Don't hang up! This isn't a
hoax!

TED
Prove it.

LEXI (O.S.)
If you think I'm giving up anything
revealing over the phone, you're
not nearly as smart as I thought
you were.

TED
Then how do I know it is really
you?

LEXI (O.S.)
Ted, you called me and gave me your
number. I hear you have some
information that I might be
interested in.

TED
I might.

LEXI (O.S.)
This conversation has gone on too
long. Let's meet at O'Reilly's Cafe
at 8:15. Sharp. Don't be late.

TED
I'm never late.

The line goes dead. Ted hangs it up.

EXT. O'REILLY'S CAFE - DAY

Ted is sits outdoors, sipping on a glass of water with no ice. Lexi walks up and stops before his table.

Lexi is wearing black jeans, a white blouse, and a gray blazer. She always wears the gray blazer. There is no visible blue in her clothing.

LEXI
See? It's me. No hoax.

TED
Well, you can't be too careful
these days.

LEXI
No, you can't.

TED
(standing)
Have a seat.

LEXI
Thanks, hun, I will!

Lexi sits down and pulls her chair up.

TED
Why don't you take of your jacket,
it's hot out here?

LEXI
No thanks, I'm fine.

TED
Thanks for meeting me.

LEXI
(smiling like a predator)
I'm always keen on meeting like-
minded individuals, especially
those that have access to
information that I need.

TED
Yeah, about that...

LEXI
You don't really have any info on
Trump Jr., do you?

TED
No.

LEXI
Why did you lie to me?

TED
Because I need to know more.

LEXI
We all need to know more.

TED
Not like I need it.

LEXI
Why do you need to know so bad,
hun?

Ted absent-mindedly rubs the finger where his wedding band
used to be.

TED
I need to know how to tell if
someone is one of those...
things... or not.

Lexi gets a gleam in her eye. Ted is in her trap.

LEXI
Yes. We all need to know more about
that.

TED
Is it all real? The stuff you say
on the radio? Those things are
really out there?

LEXI
Oh, they're very, very real.

TED
I knew it.

LEXI
And very dangerous.

TED
That's why we need to make sure
that people know about them!

LEXI
Well, sure, hun, but how can you
help me with that?

TED
I'm a journalist.

LEXI
Yes... and?

TED
Don't you see, I can get it out! I
work for a newspaper!

LEXI
Hun, I work for a radio station.
What can you do that I can't
already do?

TED
I can take action.

Lexi grins as if she is the cat that just ate the canary.

EXT. ART GALLERY - DAY

Ted stands in front of the St. Petersburg National Art
Gallery. S.A.M. walks up to him.

S.A.M.
Jumping juniper, Ted! Kiss me, I'm
so happy to see you.

TED
Same here. I'm glad to be here with
you.

They walk inside the museum.

INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. and Ted are strolling down a hallway with paintings on
either side, casually checking them out.

TED
Have you been to this gallery
before?

S.A.M.
Literally never been to an art
gallery in my life.

TED
You've led a bit of a sheltered
life, haven't you?

S.A.M.
My life has just begun. New things
are everywhere!

They stop in front of a large-sized painting that has a man
who is a hunter walking through a forest with a big
bloodhound at his side.

TED
Like this painting?

At first, S.A.M. is only looking at the left side of the
painting with the hunter. Her eyes pan from the left to the
right until she sees the dog and is startled.

S.A.M.
Oh!

Ted notices that her reaction was to the dog. He furrows his
brow while looking at her.

TED
Are you okay?

S.A.M.
Please, I didn't expect that.

TED
Didn't expect a dog? Well, they
aren't super common in a gallery
like this, but you'll see them from
time to time.

S.A.M.
Quite the striking beast.

She isn't convincing, it's clear she doesn't like the
painting.

She walks away from it towards the next painting.

S.A.M. (CONT'D)
Now this one, this one I like a
lot.

S.A.M. gestures to a large landscape with a massive blue sky.

TED

Huh, this one seems unremarkable to me. I prefer more motion and action in my paintings.

S.A.M.

Oh, like the dog?

TED

(frowning)

Like the dog.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney turns and looks at Logan. She is concerned.

COURTNEY

I think he's getting suspicious.

LOGAN

I think you're right. Should we take off the inhibitor?

INTERVIEWER

The inhibitor?

LOGAN

Many of the S.A.M.s have functionality for basic AI, but we rarely allow them to use it.

INTERVIEWER

I can imagine why.

COURTNEY

History hasn't been kind to this decision.

LOGAN

It frees them up a bit, in certain situations, to change patterns and adjust their actions.

COURTNEY

They can blend. They are less likely to act like saviors.

MAMA STORK

Nothing wrong with a good savior.

INTERVIEWER

But they can become more dangerous?

LOGAN
Not anymore.

COURTNEY
We don't think.

She shares a worried glance with Logan.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Ted plays Pac-Man in an old school video arcade. He is not very good. Lexi walks up to him, wearing her usual black jeans and gray blazer outfit, and he leaves the game unfinished.

A kid wearing a blue baseball cap looks at them briefly with a vacant stare. Lexi waves to him in a way that Ted can't see. The kid continues Ted's Pac-Man game.

EXT. ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

Ted and Lexi are walking along the sidewalk outside the arcade. They walk around the side of the building to get away from other people.

LEXI
So? How did it go?

TED
Not as well as I'd hoped.

LEXI
You didn't find anything out?

TED
I didn't say that.

LEXI
You're a man of very few words,
Ted. Very few, uninformative words.

TED
There was a moment. And not one I
wanted.

LEXI
Well, what happened, hun?

TED
She's afraid of dogs.

LEXI

What makes you think that?

TED

Well, we went to the art gallery and there was this painting...

LEXI

Come on, hun, you can't judge an artist by a painting...

TED

But this one had a dog in it.

LEXI

Well that's one thing, but it's not enough.

TED

But she only disliked that painting. The only one with a dog in it. The one right next to it was her favorite.

LEXI

Hmm... Well, what was that one?

TED

A landscape. With a big blue sky.

LEXI

Blue, you say? You have my interest peaked now. But it's still not enough.

TED

How can I tell? What can I do to really know?

LEXI

Well, there are supposedly several ways to spot these things.

TED

I'm listening.

LEXI

These... tests... aren't perfect, but they work.

TED

Well, what are they?

Lexi looks like a used car salesperson who knows they just landed the sale.

LEXI
The first one is the way they talk.
They have problems speaking.

TED
What kind of problems?

LEXI
It varies. Sometimes they talk in sentences that are in alphabetical order. It's like they can't get their minds around randomness. Other times, they use a lot of alliteration. My sources say that you'll sometimes hear them say three words in a row that start with the same letter.

TED
What?

He is genuinely puzzled.

LEXI
Super. Slippery. Sidewalk.

TED
Huh?

LEXI
Dumb. Dog. Door. Stuff like that.

TED
Oh. What else?

LEXI
Well they have tastes.

TED
Like what?

LEXI
I think you already know.

Ted rubs his chin.

TED
Like the dogs?

LEXI
Yes. And they like the color blue.

TED
Okay, sounds like S.A.M. so far.

LEXI
Yes, but anyone can talk weird or hate dogs. They have to be patterns, you have to watch for the repetition of these things, not just one instance.

TED
(frowning)
It's all so complicated.

LEXI
Don't you want to know?

Ted absent-mindedly rubs the place where his wedding band used to be.

TED
Yes. I do.

LEXI
Lovely, hun, that's what I like to hear.

TED
Is there any certain way to spot them?

LEXI
Yes. The flashlight test.

TED
The flashlight test?

LEXI
Yes. Shine a flashlight into their eyes. They don't blink.

TED
They don't blink. Good to know.

LEXI
Let me give you some advice on how to run these tests, so you get real results. So you know.

Ted pulls out a pen and a reporter's notepad as Lexi begins to talk.

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

Ted and S.A.M. sit at a table, eating burgers and fries.

TED
How was your day?

S.A.M.
Pretty good, yours?

TED
It was fine. What time do you get
to work in the morning?

He crosses his arms.

S.A.M.
Quietly, between us, I usually
don't get there until 7:15 or 7:30.

TED
My lips are sealed. How do you get
there?

S.A.M.
Really are asking a lot of
questions today, aren't you?

TED
I'm a curious guy.

S.A.M.
Sure. Today, I drove to work.

TED
What radio stations do you listen
to on the way to work?

His frown deepens.

S.A.M.
Usually I keep the radio off.

TED
Nothing? Not even NPR?

S.A.M.
Very unlikely that I've ever even
heard of NPR.

TED
How can you not know what NPR is?
Aren't you an adult?

S.A.M.
(wounded)
We are all trying, aren't we?

TED
Sorry, I didn't mean anything by it. Why don't you listen to music or to talk radio. I listen to Lexi Johnson every day.

S.A.M.
X-x-xenon? Xerox? Xylophone?

Ted squints his eyes and stares at S.A.M.

INT. ACME savior HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

Courtney and Logan are typing away furiously at their computers.

LOGAN
Shit! Shit! Shit!

COURTNEY
This is about to go fubar.

LOGAN
We gotta do it.

INTERVIEWER
Do what?

COURTNEY
It's time to take off the inhibitor.

INTERVIEWER
Isn't that dangerous?

LOGAN
Not as dangerous as Ted making S.A.M.

COURTNEY
If he figures it out, the mission is over. We can't win it.

LOGAN
We gotta do it.

Courtney looks nervously at Logan and the interviewer. Then she turns back to her computer and pushes the enter key.

COURTNEY

Done.

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Ted is still squinting at S.A.M. She shakes her head a bit, as if to clear her mind.

TED

What was that?

S.A.M.

I... I got confused. I was thinking about work.

TED

About making photocopies?

S.A.M.

Yeah, I always forget the name of the copier company, so I have a mnemonic device.

TED

To remember Xerox?

S.A.M.

Yes, my old job only ever used Canon, so I had never heard of Xerox when I started at the Bulletin.

TED

Huh. You are a strange bird aren't you.

Ted stops for a second. He has an idea. He picks up his tray and trash and starts walking.

TED (CONT'D)

Come on, I want to show you something.

After throwing away their trash, Ted takes S.A.M. by the hand and walks out of the food court.

INT. MALL - DAY

Elsewhere in the Mall, Ted leads S.A.M. in the direction of the pet store. They stop outside, S.A.M. is a little hesitant.

TED
Let's go in here.

S.A.M.
O-okay.

They walk into the store, with S.A.M. following very hesitantly.

INT. PET STORE - CONTINUOUS

Ted is talking to a member of the staff while he and S.A.M. sit inside a small closed off area for customers to play with potential pets. The STAFF MEMBER hands him a small, ridiculously cute puppy.

TED
Have you ever seen anything this cute.

S.A.M.
I have never seen anything like that, I can honestly say.

S.A.M. does not get closer to the dog. She seems afraid. Particularly when the puppy is put down on the floor and excitedly starts running around on the ground. The dog starts jumping up on S.A.M.'s legs playfully.

S.A.M. (CONT'D)
What is it?

TED
What is it? It's a lab. A puppy.

S.A.M.
Is it going to hurt me?

TED
(squinting)
Of course not, lab puppies are about as harmless as you are.

S.A.M.
Why is it doing that?

TED
It's just happy to see you. Here...

Ted picks up the puppy and brings it close to S.A.M.'s face. She recoils at first.

TED (CONT'D)
See, don't be worried. He won't hurt you. He just wants you to pet him.

S.A.M.
Really?

TED
Yes. Try it.

S.A.M. hesitantly reaches her hand out to pet the puppy. The puppy immediately starts licking her hand.

S.A.M.
Oh, gross. That's disgusting.

TED
Well actually, it means he loves you.

She puts her hand on the dog's head and starts petting it. The dog starts wagging its tail.

S.A.M.
(giggling)
She's nice.

The Staff Member walks over to the customer pen and unlocks the door. The dog gets even happier trying to get to the Staff Member.

STAFF MEMBER
Okay, folks, I think I have a preschooler over here that needs to see this puppy.

S.A.M. withdraws her hand, disappointed that her time with the puppy is over. The Staff Member takes the puppy and walks away.

TED
Thank you.
(to S.A.M.)
See, wasn't that fun?

S.A.M.
Yes. It was.

Ted looks at her as they start walking out of the store. There is less of an edge in his look than earlier.

INT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ted and S.A.M. sit on the couch in her apartment sipping wine.

TED
Would you like any more wine?

S.A.M.
No thank you. I'm not much of a drinker.

TED
It's okay. Today was a good day, wasn't it?

S.A.M.
Yes, I think it was.

TED
What was your favorite part?

S.A.M.
I really liked that puppy.

TED
But you hated the painting of the dog?

S.A.M.
Sometimes the real thing is better.

TED
Agreed.

S.A.M.
(staring downward
wistfully)
Sometimes.

Ted takes his hand and lifts up her chin and looks her in the eyes.

TED
I love you.

S.A.M.
I love you, too...

Ted leans in to kiss her. She kisses back enthusiastically. After a few seconds, Ted stands up and reaches out his hand to S.A.M.

She doesn't know what to do at first, but makes a decision. She grabs his hand and stands up. They start walking towards the bedroom.

Ted kicks off his shoes without placing them neatly anywhere.

S.A.M. (CONT'D)
Wow, what's with the wild man act tonight?

TED
You'll see.

They walk into the bedroom and shut the door behind them.

INT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - LATER

Ted walks out of the bathroom in nothing but his underwear, which are tighty-whities. He has a small towel in his hand. The bathroom light is still on, but otherwise the room is dark. S.A.M. is asleep in the bed.

Ted walks over to the hamper, opens it and tosses the towel in. He turns to walk away and stops.

He goes back to the hamper, opens it up and reaches in. He fishes out a pair of panties.

He walks back over to the bathroom and holds the panties up in the light. They are blue.

Ted puts the panties back in the hamper, shuts off the light and climbs back into bed.

He lays next to S.A.M., his eyes wide open. A storm is raging behind his eyes.

Ted stands up and then pauses. Then walks towards the bathroom and goes inside, but doesn't turn on the light. His movements can barely be made out.

The sound of him opening up a drawer can be heard.

He quietly walks back into the room and positions himself above S.A.M., who is lying on her back.

Ted lifts up a flashlight and finds the on switch. Then he bends over towards S.A.M.

TED
(yelling)
SAM!

As he yells her name, he clicks on the flashlight. S.A.M.'s face is lit up by the light, and although she is clearly awake now and her eyes are open, she doesn't blink.

S.A.M.

W-what's going on?

TED

Nothing, hun. Go back to sleep. I thought I heard something. I just wanted to check and make sure that you were okay.

He flicks off the flashlight as he walks out of the bedroom. S.A.M. turns over and goes back to sleep.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

The Interviewer is leaning in over Courtney's shoulder, looking at her computer screen.

INTERVIEWER

What is happening? Why did he do that?

LOGAN

It's hard to say. It isn't always easy to predict what humans will do.

COURTNEY

I think I know.

INTERVIEWER

What is it?

COURTNEY

I think he's trying to test her.

INTERVIEWER

He's trying to figure out if she's a savior?

LOGAN

Nah, there's no way he could know about saviors. We vet them thoroughly on such things.

COURTNEY

He probably thinks she's a ganger.

INTERVIEWER

How would he know about them if he doesn't know about saviors? He doesn't exactly strike me as the sharpest tool in the toolbox.

COURTNEY

Gangers are out there. People are talking about them.

INTERVIEWER

I haven't heard anything.

LOGAN

How often do you frequent right-wing conspiracy radio and Internet?

INTERVIEWER

Never.

LOGAN

I know what your next bit of research should be on, then.

COURTNEY

When Trump was assassinated, the right-wing conspiracy community not only ballooned in population, they ramped up their underground media efforts.

LOGAN

And they talk about this shit all the time.

He coughs.

COURTNEY

He could be trying to test her. It seems like that's what he's onto now.

LOGAN

So, at the pet store? You think he was trying to test to see how she reacted the dog? The gangers must have an aversion?

COURTNEY

That is the rumor.

INTERVIEWER

But she did act weird at first? Did she correct herself?

COURTNEY

Kind of?

LOGAN

That was the first time she ever
saw a dog in person.

COURTNEY

Had to freak her out a bit.

LOGAN

I'm kinda surprised she pulled it
all off so well.

COURTNEY

As to being able to predict what
humans can do, I told you I had
this guy figured out.

INTERVIEWER

And you can predict what he's going
to do next. Like Mama Stork?

Mama Stork smiles at the mention of her name.

MAMA STORK

Silly man, Mama Stork is one-of-a
kind!

Behind her the screensaver is filled with trophies and award
ribbons.

COURTNEY

No, not in individual moments. I'm
an artist, not a magician.

INTERVIEWER

So how do you know he won't turn
violent?

LOGAN

He scored low.

COURTNEY

On the tests.

INTERVIEWER

Tests? Artists aren't big on tests.

COURTNEY

We gather as much data as we can about each individual before we send in a savior and run the simulations. Most people are super easy to predict.

LOGAN

Ted, for instance, scored as someone who is really malleable. Easy to shape. He tests really low on the violence scale. I mean, we know he likes to shoot guns, but he only does it at the shooting range.

COURTNEY

No history of violence or anger or violent tendencies.

INTERVIEWER

How reliable are the tests?

LOGAN

Pretty damned reliable.

COURTNEY

They rarely fail. Usually we only see some fluctuation if we don't have parent DNA samples. Like if the kid was an orphan.

LOGAN

Almost never comes up.

COURTNEY

The tests work.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Ted is perusing the books in the library's Current Events section. As he rounds the corner for the next aisle, he comes upon Lexi.

LEXI

Hey, Ted. How are those tests coming?

TED

I-I don't know.

LEXI

What do you mean? These tests aren't hard.

He looks down.

TED

Well, I tried the language test. Did exactly as you told me. And, it sort of seemed like she failed, but I'm not sure.

LEXI

Did she talk in alphabetical order?

TED

(excitedly)

I think so. That kind of thing is hard to tell without a tape or a transcript, but I think she did.

LEXI

If you're unsure, you can tape her next time. What about the alliteration? Did she do that?

TED

(more excitedly)

Yes. She definitely did that once. Tried to explain it away with some lame excuse.

LEXI

Okay, that's big.

He eyes grow big with fear.

TED

Really?

LEXI

What else?

TED

I tried the dog trick, too. Took her to the pet store and brought her a puppy to play with.

LEXI

Good. What happened?

TED

She hated it. At first. Then she sort of seemed to get to like it.

LEXI

All an act, hun. She couldn't hide her initial revulsion, but overcame it and hid the truth from you.

TED

(puzzled)

She did seem awkward.

LEXI

What about the color blue?

TED

Haven't noticed it.

He looks down again and doesn't make eye contact again for a while.

LEXI

But were you looking? Seriously?

TED

Not really, I forgot about it for a while, and when I did remember, I didn't notice anything.

LEXI

Did she have it or not? I mean, it might be hidden. Underwear. Or socks. Or... something else.

TED

Nothing that I saw.

LEXI

Not much to go on there. Could mean something, could mean nothing. What about the flashlight trick?

TED

Haven't had the chance.

Lexi takes a deep breath and rubs her left bicep.

LEXI

Okay, based on the tests you have done, and earlier information, I'm going to have to say that I 100% believe that S.A.M. is one of them.

Ted finally looks up in shock.

TED

I can't believe it.

He rubs the finger where his wedding band used to be.

TED (CONT'D)
What can I do?

LEXI
You have to be sure. And then you
have to take action.

TED
How can I be sure?

He stands up and starts pacing.

LEXI
Look for blue. Try the flashlight
trick. And if she fails those
tests, you'll have to take care of
her before she takes care of you.

TED
W-when?

LEXI
Soon. These things aren't nice and
friendly. They're predators. They
eat guys like you for dinner.

He stops. Looking away from her.

TED
How do I do it?

He turns towards her.

TED (CONT'D)
I've never even thought about such
a thing.

LEXI
You have some homework to do.

She reaches into her purse and pulls out a book and an
envelope.

LEXI (CONT'D)
Do you know Sacred Heart hospital?

Again he rubs the spot on his finger where his wedding band
used to be.

TED

Yes. I know it well. My wife spent the last days of her life there. I was there the entire time.

LEXI

When you get there, you'll need to find something called alteplase. It should be locked up with the other drugs.

TED

How will I get in there? What do I do with it?

She hands him the book and the envelope.

LEXI

Here is everything you need that you don't already have.

After he takes the book and the envelope from her, she walks away.

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Ted walks away from the library towards his car. Once he gets inside the car, he locks the door.

He holds up the book, which is labeled "The NRA Guide to Making Your Own Hollowpoints!"

Ted sets the book down on the passenger seat and opens up the envelope.

He pulls out a piece of paper and looks at it. It says alteplase.

He reaches back into the envelope and pulls out a shiny silver key. He looks in the envelope, but it is empty.

Ted puts everything back in the envelope, sets it on the passenger seat, and drives away.

INT. SACRED HEART HOSPITAL - NIGHT

It's a slow night at the hospital. The front desk NURSE is busy texting on her phone. Otherwise only a few patients and an occasional orderly pass through the emergency room.

Ted waits until the Nurse is talking to a PATIENT and he quickly sneaks through the door and past another nurse's station where a set of keys sits. He grabs the keys and walks one door further down the hall and opens the room where the medicine is stored.

He pulls out a scrap of paper.

TED

Alteplase.

He opens the medicine cabinet with the key Lexi gave him. He begins looking through the medicine bottles in the cabinet until he finds the right one. He takes the bottle and sticks it in his pocket.

Ted locks the medicine cabinet and quietly moves back to the door. He opens it a crack and peers out to check if anyone is coming and then he quietly slips out into the hallway.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT, DEN - LATER

Ted sits at his desk. In front of him are a revolver, six bullets, a drill, a soldering iron, a syringe, and the bottle of alteplase from the hospital. Also on the table is the NRA book.

Next to the book is a tall candle that has been burning for a while and it is filled with melted wax.

In front of Ted, the six bullets are lined up and each has a whole drilled into the top of it. The first five appear to be filled with liquid

Ted picks up the sixth bullet and with the syringe, he injects alteplase into the hollow tip of a bullet. He sets it down carefully and grabs the candle.

Very slowly, he pours wax into the hollow point bullets. After he finishes the last one, he picks up a rag wet with cleaner and begins to wipe off the excess wax.

EXT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ted knocks on S.A.M.'s apartment door. She opens, wearing her bright blue pajamas. Ted pauses for a moment in shock, coming to a realization once he sees that her pajamas are bright blue.

TED

Hey, Sam, can we talk?

S.A.M.
Of course, come in. What should we
talk about?

Ted walks in and S.A.M. follows.

INT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. invites Ted into the apartment. As he follows her in and shuts the door behind him, the revolver can be seen bulging under his shirt and tucked into the back of his pants.

S.A.M.
Yeah, so what's going on?

TED
I've been kicking all of this
around in my head for a while.

S.A.M.
All of what?

TED
Come on, you know. Don't make me
make you say it.

S.A.M.
I don't know what you are talking
about. Are we going out to dinner?

TED
No. I don't go to dinner with
liars.

Ted pulls the gun out and points it at her. She doesn't react.

TED (CONT'D)
You need to tell me the truth right
now.

S.A.M.
But... but... I don't know what you
are talking about.

TED
Yes. You do.

S.A.M.
Can't we just sit down and talk
about this?

TED

The only talking I want to hear is the truth. And I haven't heard any of it yet.

He cocks the revolver.

S.A.M.

D-don't.

TED

"D."

Ted pulls the trigger three times. Three shots hit S.A.M. in the chest. She falls backward, smashing into the wall and slumping to the floor.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

The Interviewer is sitting on the floor and Courtney and Logan are looking in his direction. Courtney has her headset off. Logan still has his on.

INTERVIEWER

How long ago was it that you stopped being evil?

LOGAN

Now that's a bit of a loaded question, isn't it?

MAMA STORK

Evil is such a subjective little word, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER

Sure, but I don't beat around the bush. I'm recording history for the higher ups and I want to hear it from every angle. That's my job.

COURTNEY

I, for one, was never evil.

Logan laughs until it turns into a cough.

LOGAN

Yeah, right.

INTERVIEWER

Seriously?

COURTNEY

Seriously.

INTERVIEWER

But you get my bigger question,
right?

COURTNEY

Of course I do. I'm the smart one
here, remember?

Logan turns and looks quickly down at his computer and clicks
his mouse.

LOGAN

Incoming priority emergency.

INTERVIEWER

Is S.A.M. in trouble?

Courtney looks down at her computer.

COURTNEY

No, this is from D.A.V.E 1623.
(to the Interviewer)
Get out!

She puts on her headset as he leaves.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Come in, D.A.V.E. Unit 1623, what
is your situation?

INT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Lexi walks in. She looks aghast.

LEXI

Oh, Ted, Ted, Ted? Ted, what have
you done.

TED

I-I-I didn't do it. I mean, I did
it, but it's not what you think.
She's not human?

LEXI

What are you talking about? You
know you sound crazy right now?
What would the police say...
(under her breath)
...haha, I can't do it anymore.

TED
Wait, what?

She has a big smile. He's aghast.

LEXI
You're bad at figuring out who is
human and who isn't.

TED
What are you saying?

LEXI
Well, I am trying... well... fuck
it, I'm the monster.

Lexi takes off her blazer, revealing her arms. On her left
bicep is a bright blue dragon tattoo. Ted stares at the
tattoo as fear crosses his face.

TED
What...?

LEXI
Let's eat.

Lexi sheds her human form, turning into a vaguely reptilian
creature with a massive mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth.
Lexi eats Ted.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

The Interviewer is frowning as he writes information onto his
tablet.

LOGAN
So, we only know slightly more
about the gangers than you do, but
here's what we've kind of picked up
as we've paid attention...

COURTNEY
The gangers can copy the form of
people they kill and consume.

LOGAN
We haven't seen the last of Ted.

MAMA STORK
I think he's better off now.

The field behind her is white and flying sets of praying
hands cover the screen.

COURTNEY

They have a pretty clear process for who they target. They use the forms of their previous prey to get close to new prey.

LOGAN

They try to target only those who don't have family and close friends.

COURTNEY

People that aren't likely to be missed much.

LOGAN

The actual vetting process is quite fascinating...

COURTNEY

Disgusting.

LOGAN

Disgusting but fascinating.

MAMA STORK

A lone wolf often gets eaten alone.

The pattern behind her is black with blood red monster teeth flying across it.

INTERVIEWER

So we probably saw this ganger long before it killed Ted?

COURTNEY

(looking to Logan for confirmation)

Yeah. No question.

INTERVIEWER

What happens next?

COURTNEY

Nothing. We send in a team.

LOGAN

We clean this up. Cover it up.

INTERVIEWER

Why?

MAMA STORK

Some things are "need to know" kind of things, you know? No. You don't.

LOGAN

Panic. Paralysis. Pacification.

COURTNEY

We've got the people where we want them, for the most part. We don't need anything shaking up the system.

LOGAN

The system works.

He coughs.

COURTNEY

The system is happy.

INTERVIEWER

No. It isn't.

MAMA STORK

What?

The light blue field behind her hosts flying yellow frowny faces.

INT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

S.A.M. sits on the floor, slowly dying. She watches as Ted falls to the ground, dead. The monster that is clearly not the real Lexi discards him like a candy wrapper.

The creature looks at S.A.M. and walks over to her, kneeling down and looking into her face.

LEXI

You know, I've been watching you. You were off to a pretty good start. If you had been dealing with someone a little less... professional... than me, you might have won. But I don't make mistakes. When I pick a target, I choose wisely. And this one...
(gestures towards Ted)
...was tasty.

Lexi walks towards the front door.

LEXI (CONT'D)
I'm sure I'll see you again,
knowing how your bosses work. But
you? You won't see me.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - CONTINUOUS

INTERVIEWER
The S.A.M. unit was there to
protect the human, then?

LOGAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
So, it was a failure.

COURTNEY
This unit was, yes, but the units
don't come out perfect or the same
each time. When they are birthed,
they are somewhat unique. In ways
that we can't always predict.

MAMA STORK
(frowning)
Farewell, Little One. I had higher
expectations for you than this.

The frowny faces return.

LOGAN
That's why not just anybody can do
our job.

COURTNEY
We're still trying to figure all of
this out.

INTERVIEWER
That's my job as well.

LOGAN
What we do is an art, not a
science.

COURTNEY
We have one of the best success
rates in the business. But, Ted was
a tough case. He didn't believe in
his job. His brain was too easy to
manipulate. He was an easy mark.

LOGAN

But now we're starting to learn about these gangers. We can adjust for the future and share the intel with the rest of the team.

INTERVIEWER

The rest of the team?

COURTNEY

S.A.M.s have been adjusted enough that they no longer are good at attack or espionage. Now they're essentially completely harmless. So we share what we've learned with those teams and a lot of this happens less often. Maybe we save the next Ted.

INTERVIEWER

And the next S.A.M.?

COURTNEY

(with remorse)

Yeah, the next S.A.M.

MAMA STORK

My Little One is no more.

A computerized tear runs down Mama Stork's digital cheek. The screen behind her is green.

INT. S.A.M.'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

POV of S.A.M., a savior, as she goes offline. We see through her eyes as she blinks them closed for the last time.

FADE OUT.

CREDITS.

INT. ACME SAVIOR HEADQUARTERS, CONTROL ROOM 15 - DAY

SUPER: One Month Later

Logan is changing a bloody mask. He coughs while changing it, getting blood on the floor.

As he goes to wipe it up, Courtney opens a letter marked PRIORITY and TOP SECRET.

She reads it.

COURTNEY

Fuck.

Logan looks up.

LOGAN

What?

She holds up the letter.

COURTNEY

The Corporation bought us ought.
They're shutting down the savior
program.

LOGAN.

Fuck.

He coughs.

FADE OUT.