

An artistic anatomical illustration of a human face, rendered in shades of green and teal. The face is shown with detailed musculature and a network of red and blue lines representing blood vessels. The eyes are closed. Overlaid on the face and the background are several faint, semi-transparent diagrams of anatomical structures, possibly the brain or internal organs, with various parts labeled with numbers such as 19, 18, 29, 2, 24, 8, 7, 9, 20, and 30. The overall style is that of a scientific or medical illustration, possibly from a vintage textbook or medical journal. The background is a mix of purple and green tones, with some white, fibrous-like textures at the top and bottom edges.

# FRESH BLOOD

SYNDROME

**Pilot: The Symptoms**

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(NOTE: Most scenes in which Mexicans speak between themselves will be in Spanish with English subtitles. Main character Helen Hartwell, an American expat, is proficient but not 'fluent' in Spanish. Scenes with Helen in which she speaks Spanish will be noted. English is the universal language of science, and this is reflected in the script.)

TEASER

EXT. STREET, MEXICO CITY - DAY

Narrow, busy, lined with shops and restaurants.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Upbeat noise from a large table of six or eight scientists, researchers, post-grads, winding down a lunch hour. One sports a lab coat. Others have ID badges around their necks.

There's plenty of science-speak in English and Spanish and we don't hear the multiple conversations clearly.

Included at the table is HELEN HARTWELL (30ish, American expat, post-doc researcher, her field, Neuroscience.) She's in jeans, T shirt, with an ID badge.

Helen is pulling out her wallet and getting on her feet.

HELEN

I gotta go. But ...

She lays down some cash.

HELEN (CONT'D)

... we're looking for guinea pigs.  
Come try floating in the isolation  
tank we've rigged up. I'm heading  
there, now.

A colleague, ROBERTO (similar age) from across the table clutches at his gut.

ROBERTO

I'd go, but I'm so full I'd sink  
...

HELEN

That's one thing that can't happen.  
We're working with a relative  
saline density of 1.3.

ROBERTO

But why sensory deprivation? That's  
not your field.

HELEN

I have a patient with severe  
hearing loss and his isolation from  
sound induces musical  
hallucinations that drive him  
crazy. So we dusted off an old tank  
the department's had for decades,  
and we're experimenting.

The people around the table, to varying degrees, are  
intrigued. But nobody is getting to their feet and joining  
Helen.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You're all missing out.

EXT. MEXICO CITY, UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE MEXICO  
(UNAM)

A vast University campus of 300,000 + students. The  
intellectual heartbeat of Latin America. A UNESCO World  
Heritage Site.

We get a sense of scale and character on our way to the steps  
of a medical science building.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR (MEDICAL SCIENCE BUILDING) - DAY

What a contrast to the exterior!

A long, institutional corridor lined with utility rooms and  
low level maintenance offices.

Helen strides toward the -

INT. MONITOR ROOM - DAY

A claustrophobic space with a desk, a couple of chairs, and  
two souped up laptops - a stimulus control computer (left),  
and a spectrometer control computer (right).

A LARGE GLASS MONITOR WINDOW separates this room from the  
adjacent space.

Pressed against the glass window, and looking through it,  
Helen sees something that causes her GREAT EMOTIONAL SHOCK.

INT. TANKROOM - DAY

The room is antiseptic, with non-slip flooring. In the middle sits the ISOLATION TANK. It's an enamel relic of mid 20th century science about 8 by 10 feet in area, with a space hatch for getting in and out.

Most notably, this tank is filled with a salt water solution in which A BODY OF A FULLY CLOTHED DEAD MAN FLOATS.

It is this that Helen stares at from behind the glass window, in abject, paralysing HORROR.

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S), POLICE HQ - DAY

The desk is covered with police files and a computer. One file sits open and includes photos of bloody, tortured corpses.

There's a rickety mini fridge and a microwave oven in a corner. The oven beeps.

POLICE DETECTIVE RAMOS, mid-aged, shop-worn, removes a bowl of soup and sips.

He wanders over to his desk, shuts the police file, finishes his soup, then picks up his office phone.

RAMOS  
(into phone)  
I'm heading out for lunch.

VOICE O.S.  
Yes, Detective Ramos.

Ramos leaves his office and heads for the

HALLWAY

Passes desks, work areas, reception. A couple of OFFICERS share a glance as Ramos exits without making eye contact.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ramos walks with his back to us.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ramos approaches a side altar.

At the altar railing he genuflects, blesses himself, looks up with poignant longing at the statue of The Blessed Virgin, then kneels in prayer.

RAMOS (V.O.)  
Ah, God. Today I want to sleep the  
sleep of peace.

A beat.

RAMOS (V.O.)  
I have nothing to live for.  
(hesitates)  
Except my faith in your church.  
Amen.

Ramos sits back onto the bench. His eyes are fixed in a haunted stare.

His cell phone rings. He fumbles for it, answers in a low voice while getting to his feet and heading for the exit.

RAMOS  
(into phone)  
Ramos, here.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
There's been a possible suicide on  
campus. He's a well known TV  
producer... Hit show. We're  
expecting pressure for a public  
statement.

RAMOS  
(into phone)  
I'm on my way.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR (MEDICAL SCIENCE BUILDING) - DAY

Ramos is heading along the corridor towards signs of police activity.

INT. TANKROOM - DAY

Ramos approaches the doorway. He has seen his share of the bizarre and, even so, this scene before him is unusual.

Two OFFICERS IN PROTECTIVE SUITS are preparing to pull the body of the dead man out through the space hatch.

Ramos watches the body of ERNESTO DUQUE emerge. Ernesto is mid thirties, fully clothed in jeans, shirt, jacket, shoes. Drenched.

RAMOS

No indications of resistance?  
Initial signs of trauma?

OFFICER 1

No. And no note found.

RAMOS

Any defecation at the point of death?

OFFICER 1

No indications.

Ramos hears a THUMP. He turns, sees Helen in anguish on the other side of the glass.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

That's the girlfriend.

INT. MONITOR ROOM - DAY

Helen, watching Ernesto's body being bagged. She slumps in a chair.

Ramos approaches her with studied dispassion.

He tracks Helen's tear-ridden face, the ID card hanging around her neck.

Ramos pushes a free chair close to Helen and sits. Helen turns and Ramos is now confronted with her unfiltered misery.

He reads from the I.D. hanging around her neck.

RAMOS

Dr. Helen Hartwell, Departamento de Neurociencia ...

He begins speaking in Spanish.

RAMOS (CONT'D)

American, yes?

Ramos anticipates a response but Helen is too distraught to speak.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
I am Detective Ramos. It was you  
who called the police, yes? You  
found Ernesto.

Helen struggles, then issues a few choked words ... in  
English.

HELEN  
Ah Jesus...Oh my God...

On this cue, Ramos switches from speaking Spanish to English.

RAMOS  
You said he committed suicide.

Helen bolts to her feet, sits down, then up again.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
So you know more than me.

Ramos gestures for Helen to sit back down.

She sinks into her chair, and leans up against the monitor  
window.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
You knew him well.

The BODY BAG is being wheeled from the tank room.

Helen reacts.

Ramos gestures to the Officers.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
Go go go!

He pulls out his pocket-sized flask. Nudges Helen with it.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
Embrace our local customs.  
You're not in Kansas anymore.

Helen grasps the flask, brings it to her lips with shaking  
hands, and swigs.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
So, your relationship to Ernesto  
Duque was ...

Helen levels her swollen eyes at Ramos. She's feeling the  
first hit of the alcohol. It helps.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
Intimate? Girlfriend?

HELEN  
Yes.

RAMOS  
Was Ernesto suffering ...  
(searches for English  
words)  
... Depression or a medical  
problem?

Helen leans over, presses her forehead against the desk.

Ramos looks down at the back of her head. He is sympathetic,  
but has a job to do.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
Did Ernesto drink? Did he do drugs?

HELEN  
(muffled words)  
That's what's crazy.

RAMOS  
What is crazy?

HELEN  
I didn't see it coming.

RAMOS  
And you should have?

Helen shoots up.

HELEN  
But HOW!? Ernesto was just Ernesto -  
- A FUCKING LUNATIC -- as usual.

Ramos's eyes widen at the incongruity between this woman's  
face - which he finds himself wanting to look at - and her  
sharp curse.

Helen is shaking her head.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I can't ... I can't ...

She's close to hyperventilating.

She takes another swig.

RAMOS  
(pointing)  
Tell me what you can about that.

Helen turns and she and Ramos look to what he's pointing at,  
the ISOLATION TANK.

END TEASER

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S) - DAY

Street noise pours in through an open window.

Ramos is seated at his desk typing notes at his computer.

RAMOS (V.O.)

Hartwell is a neuroscientist on a two year research grant at the UNAM. She and other researchers at the University have been making recreational use of an isolation tank. The body of Ernesto Duque, well known TV writer and producer, was found floating in it.

Ramos stops typing and looks up at the 'paused' frame on a TV monitor. He picks up the remote and presses play.

He sees OPENING CREDITS and hears the theme music of TU Y YO.

Ernesto's show is a generic expose on drug trafficking, violence, money, but with a twist - a sexy young woman, Sofia, and handsome Manolo, are a rebellious duo trying to opt out of a criminal life by any means necessary.

Ramos mutes the volume in disinterest, and returns to his typing.

Between key strokes Ramos pulls out his flask from a pocket, brings it to his lips. It's empty. He is surprised, then appears to remember something -- Helen drinking from it.

Ramos brings the flask back to his lips as if to savor a memory. An officer knocks, enters. Ramos pockets his empty flask.

OFFICER PEREZ (a cocky young cub) passes by a pile of police photos. One in particular catches his eye, of Helen and the monitor room.

PEREZ

She is criminally HOT.

Ramos is irritated at Perez, but resigned.

Perez goes to the window and looks out.

VIEW:

News crews are set up.

PEREZ (CONT'D)

The press is all over this. You know, my wife loves his TV show.

(turns to Ramos)

I love it. What's not to love.

Perez moves from the window to Ramos's desk and sits.

PEREZ (CONT'D)

Do you swim naked in this tank or wear something? And what do you do in it? ... Play with yourself?

Ramos switches on a function of his iphone and a recorded interview begins to play.

HELEN (V.O. RECORDED)

(her words are slightly fogged by alcohol)

The object is to self-induce hallucinations through sensory deprivation, and map the data on the temporal and frontal lobes, bas ganglia, and cerebellum.

RAMOS (V.O. RECORDED)

Go on.

HELEN (V.O. RECORDED)

(muffled)

I'm cold.

Movement is heard.

RAMOS (V.O. RECORDED)

Here...put this on.

HELEN (V.O. RECORDED)

(almost a sob)

I wanna go home.

INT. MONITOR ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Ramos putting a jacket around Helen's hunched shoulders.

HELEN

Can I go, now?

RAMOS

I'll take you home.

EXT. CAMPUS STREET - DAY

Reporters and photographers swarm around Ernesto's bagged body as it is loaded into an ambulance.

Ramos steers Helen clear of the ambulance, towards an unmarked police car.

EXT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - DAY

Ramos starts the car.

Helen in the back seat, watches from the rear window as the ambulance takes Ernesto away. She is in tears.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - DAY

Ramos straps on his seat belt.

He can sense Helen in the rear seat. He hears her take another swig from the flask.

She looms forward.

HELEN

Jesus.

She touches a medallion hanging from the rear view mirror with the tip of a finger. At the end of the chain is a small SILVER CROWN OF THORNS.

Ramos remains focussed on the job.

RAMOS

How did you meet Ernesto?

**LABORING TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, HELEN FLASHES BACK TO:**

INT. CAFE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Helen enters, upset, mascara mussed from tears.

She orders a coffee at the counter, pays, and takes it to a table at which she sits.

She digs into her handbag and pulls out some PILLS.

Swallows one with the help of the coffee.

The TU Y YO theme song starts up. It's someone's ring tone.

Helen catches one lone customer at the back, watching her over his laptop. This is Ernesto.

He answers his phone. Speaks a few words that Helen can't make out, and ends the call.

It's his turn to feel Helen's interest in him.

ERNESTO

You looked upset when you came in.

HELEN

It's nothing.

ERNESTO

Good.

He returns to reading on his laptop. Or at least pretends to.

HELEN

(across the room)

It's a broken heart. Bruised pride.

ERNESTO

(recognizing her accent)

You're American.

HELEN

Yep.

He switches to English.

ERNESTO

I'm sorry for the ...

Ernesto puts his hand over his heart. Then points to her chest.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

What's that?

She looks down. Sees her ID hanging there.

Helen takes in Ernesto's handsome enough face, bloodshot eyes, the pallor. It's interesting.

HELEN

Come and see.

Ernesto picks up his coffee cup and joins Helen at her table.

ERNESTO

(reading her ID)

Doctor.

Ernesto eyes the container of pills peeking out from Helen's handbag.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
What do those do, Doctor?

HELEN  
You want to stay up all night? You want something non-addictive? To maximize visual episodic memory?

He puts out a hand. *Yes, please.* Helen ignores the gesture. Zips up her handbag.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I have an excuse. I was put on Ritalin when I was ten so why are people surprised, right?

ERNESTO  
I was raised by my Uncle and I ate his pills as a kid.

Helen reacts.

HELEN  
What was his condition?

Ernesto shrugs.

Helen takes a close look at Ernesto's unhealthy pallor, his stubble. She leans in and pulls at the under area of his eyes.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Ever float in an isolation tank?

ERNESTO  
Isolation is my biggest fear.

HELEN  
It can have a real impact. Like a pill.

ERNESTO  
I hate being alone.

HELEN  
Yeah. Me, too.

INT. LIVING ROOM (ERNESTO'S) - A BIT LATER

The room is spacious. The walls are covered in framed posters and Helen is walking slowly from one to the other. Her attention lands on the largest of them, for TU Y YO.

The Spanish words for BIG and HIT are splashed across the chests of two sexy young stars (we'll put the names Sofia and Manolo to these faces soon enough).

HELEN

They're gorgeous.

She's referring to Manolo and Sofia.

ERNESTO

Come to the set. Meet them.

HELEN

Oh yeah?

(a beat)

What do actors do when they're acting?

Helen gestures at her forehead to indicate the internal workings of her mind.

HELEN (CONT'D)

They're not lying or pretending ...

ERNESTO

Everybody acts, all day long.

HELEN

Maybe.

Helen doesn't buy it, but she's intrigued.

She points to Ernesto's credit as 'Creator'.

HELEN (CONT'D)

That's you.

ERNESTO

(bragging)

So is this. And this.

He points to his 'Produced By' credit, his 'Written By' credit.

HELEN

I never watch TV. Never get around to it.

Helen moves close to Ernesto. He is inches from that smudge of mascara. Under those eyes.

Helen and Ernesto kiss.

Helen unzips Ernesto's jeans. Ernesto unzips hers. She pulls his down. He pulls hers down as we

**END FLASHBACK.**

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Traffic is stalled. Ramos sits stoically behind the wheel.

RAMOS  
So, love at first sight.

HELEN  
For Ernesto ... Yeah.

RAMOS  
But not you?

Helen's eyes seek Ramos in the rear view mirror.

HELEN  
Ever fall in love at first sight?

Ramos is mute.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
It's all just hormones in here (she taps her head) giving us marching orders.  
(pause)  
And hearts get broken. Collateral damage.

A cacophony of honking brings Ramos's attention from Helen back to earth. Traffic has begun to move. He accelerates to catch up with the flow.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Are you married?

RAMOS  
To my job.

HELEN  
They say being a cop in Mexico is the most dangerous job on the planet, after being a journalist in Mexico.

Ramos shrugs.

Helen plucks the flask off the seat. Readies it for another swig.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Your English is so good.

Ramos shrugs again.

RAMOS  
My father was American.

HELEN  
(surprised)  
You grew up there?

RAMOS  
(shaking his head)  
He taught here, at the University.

HELEN  
Really! Taught what?

RAMOS  
English.

HELEN  
What about your mother?

RAMOS  
My mother worked with the cleaning staff.

HELEN  
Does your father still teach there?

Ramos hesitates.

RAMOS  
He left. Long ago.

HELEN  
You watch Ernesto's show?

ERNESTO  
No.

HELEN  
(musing sadly)  
We are the only two people who don't.

Fresh tears flood Helen's eyes. She wipes them away.

ERNESTO

Tell me about this tank of yours.  
When you're in the tank, what's the  
water temperature?

HELEN

Huh?

RAMOS

It must be warm. No? To be  
comfortable?

Helen, trying to shift emotional gears, to the mundane.

HELEN

You want the air and water to be  
the same temperature as skin. It  
makes the feeling of your body's  
boundary disappear.

RAMOS

Is the tank safe? You compare it to  
a pill.

HELEN

Oh God. **IF ONLY THE TANK WAS THE  
PROBLEM.**

RAMOS

Did Ernesto embrace it? Learn to  
... to ...  
(searching for the English  
word)  
... love it like you?

Helen is slow to respond and when she does, it's to a  
different question.

HELEN

(words slightly slurred)  
To love... Well, here's all I know.  
I fell in love like THAT ...  
(snaps her fingers)  
... with Victor.

RAMOS

(confused)  
Victor...?

HELEN

And I fucked Ernesto that first  
time to get over Victor.

Ramos is trying to keep up with Helen's revelations.

RAMOS  
Ernesto was a 'rebound.'

Helen nods.

HELEN  
Victor broke my heart. He was  
married.

RAMOS  
Victor who?

Helen cradles her head in her hands.

HELEN  
(plaintively)  
Oh, *Ernesto!* Why? ...

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S) - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The sound of fingers typing on a keyboard. Letters appear on a computer screen - V-i-c-t-o-r D-u-n-k-i-r-k. Ramos hits 'enter'. Selects an option from the display.

Perez leans forward and joins Ramos in watching streaming footage of VICTOR DUNKIRK lecturing (a mature, self-possessed Neuroscientist.)

Victor stands at a podium, and behind him is an overhead projection of the human brain.

VICTOR  
(in English)  
Alzheimer's, dementia, the loss of  
language, loss of personal  
biography, memories of events, they  
can't be accessed directly, but  
they respond to music, to music  
therapy, because of the way  
personal memory is uniquely  
imbedded with music, and people can  
regain some lucidity through  
hearing music.

PEREZ  
Did she fuck him?

Ramos refrains from reacting.

PEREZ (CONT'D)  
I'm thinking a love triangle.

VICTOR

The therapeutic potential of this  
is something we are exploring.

An OFFICER sticks her head around the door and speaks in a  
hushed tone to Ramos.

OFFICER

The Commissioner is coming,  
Detective.

Ramos sighs.

INT. CORRIDOR, POLICE HQ - DAY

The COMMISSIONER OF POLICE is stiff with formality. She  
speaks to Ramos as they walk the corridor.

COMMISSIONER

I thought I'd drop in, Detective.

RAMOS

Yes. Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER

Not much of a case.

RAMOS

Yes, Ma'am.

This is an order all dressed up as a fact.

COMMISSIONER

He died at the scene.

RAMOS

It appears so. The Autopsy report  
should confirm.

COMMISSIONER

Fully clothed. No struggle. That  
suggests intention. Suicide.

The Commissioner stops and turn to Ramos.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

With drugs or without. Drowned,  
most likely.

RAMOS

Perhaps, Ma'am.

## COMMISSIONER

The sooner we can make a definitive public statement on this case the better. Coordinate with my office, would you. As soon as the Medical Examiner issues the Autopsy Report we'll schedule the press conference.

The Commissioner pats Ramos on the shoulder before walking off, leaving Ramos brooding at all that was said and all that was implied.

Ramos turns back to his

## OFFICE

Deflated. Takes a moment to THINK. Feels Perez waiting for him to say something.

Ramos makes a DECISION.

He pulls on his jacket, takes his briefcase, and heads for the door. On his way out he instructs Perez.

## RAMOS

Schedule a meeting with Victor Dunkirk.

## INT. LIVING ROOM (HELEN'S) - DAY

Helen lies on her side on a couch, staring at her TV. TU Y YO is streaming.

There is a bottle of pills and wine in reach, and Helen's numbed stupor indicates that she has ingested her share.

Helen's smart phone rings. She looks down at it, sees the callers name pop up on her screen. VICTOR.

**LOOKING AT VICTOR'S NAME ON HER PHONE SCREEN, HELEN FLASHES BACK TO:**

## INT. CORRIDOR (MEDICAL CENTER) - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Helen striding confidently through a set of glass doors, and proceeding down a corridor with a file in her hand.

There's a disturbance some distance behind her. The sound of glass shattering. Voices rising in concern.

It makes Helen look back.

She blinks. Can't bring herself to belief what she's seeing.

Ernesto standing BLOODIED WITH CUTS, surrounded by shattered glass from the door he's just walked through.

Helen takes in this spectacle in utter disbelief. Her eyes meet Ernesto's.

He spreads his hands, inviting Helen to sympathize or judge.

INT. MONITOR ROOM - DAY

A stern looking Victor sitting in the chair, legs crossed, opposite Helen and her colleague, BENJIE ((late 20s - early 30s, British post-doc researcher. Sports cropped hair and a white lab coat.))

There's no man-woman vibe here between Victor and Helen; it's scientists going mano a mano.

VICTOR

Let's skip the diplomatic overtures. Someone walked from that tank ... (points), into a glass door.

Victor pauses for effect.

HELEN

(incredulous)  
You think Ernesto walked into a glass door because he floated in the tank?

VICTOR

(ignoring Helen's question)  
You know who stopped me in the corridor, very upset, by the way? None other than the Chair of the department.

Victor looks again directly at Helen.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing with that god damn relic?  
(gesturing towards the tank room)  
Is it dangerous?

BENJIE

It's not dangerous.

HELEN  
Of course not.

VICTOR  
Which is what I said to the Chair.

Victor uncrosses his legs, stands up.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
Look, I have never met your friend,  
Ernesto. There may or may not be a  
link between him and that pathetic  
carcass.

(pointing to the tank)  
But why don't you two just shut  
that damn thing down. How the hell  
do you keep it sterilized and free  
of microbes?

HELEN  
It's got a circulating surface  
skimmer, Victor. Take a look.

Victor ignores the invitation, shakes his head like he can't  
make head nor tail of either Helen or Benjie, and heads for  
the door.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I think we're doing something  
interesting here.

Victor at the door stops and turns for a parting shot.

VICTOR  
Well I know you know the phrase,  
'first do no harm.'

Helen blinks. She watches Victor disappear from the doorway.

**END FLASHBACK:**

INT. LIVING ROOM (HELEN'S) - CONTINUOUS

Helen uses the tip of her finger on her smart phone to reject  
Victor's incoming call.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY (ERNESTO'S) - DAY

An elevator opens and Ramos emerges. He bypasses police tape cordoning off the approach to Ernesto's door, unlocks it with a set of keys, and enters.

INT. LIVING ROOM (ERNESTO'S) - DAY

The curtains are closed. Ramos opens them, lets the sun in, walks around the room, peers at the title of some books on a shelf. Mulls over a poster of Tu Y Yo, the same one that Helen stood in front of.

INT. BATHROOM (ERNESTO'S) - DAY

Ramos pulls out a pair of rubber gloves from a pocket and slips them on. He opens the medicine cabinet. Sees the usual paraphernalia.

Opens a drawer. Sees a box of condoms. Opens the box. Peers in for a beat, before returning the box to the drawer.

Walks into the

BEDROOM.

Spare, elegant.

Ramos stares at the bed. Silk sheets. Unmade.

He considers the large poster for TU Y YO hanging above the bed. Of Sofia and Manolo, two lovers.

He wanders back into the -

LIVING ROOM

Pauses by a fine grand piano. Slips onto the bench and his rubber gloved hands strike the keyboard. Plays the chords of something infinitely sad.

EXT. FILM STUDIO LOT - NIGHT

Soundstages, trucks, lights, typical production paraphernalia. Further afield, there are trailers towards which a PRODUCTION ASSISTANT heads.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

In it sits YOLANDA, the actress who plays Sofia. Yolanda is in full make up and hair, and next to her is Helen. They are hunched over Yolanda's phone, looking at photos.

(All the following dialogue is in Spanish.)

YOLANDA

That's Ernesto at the soundstage...  
... That's all of us on the red  
carpet ... This is before he met  
you...

Yolanda looks at Helen.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

I know he loved you. I knew him  
before he met you, and after he met  
you. So I know.

Helen is brought to the brink of tears. Yolanda hands Helen a Kleenex. Helen takes it, wipes her eyes.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

Everyone is saying it was suicide.

HELEN

Yeah.

YOLANDA

But he was so ... ALIVE.

HELEN

Yeah.

YOLANDA

He CREATED me. Out of his head. I  
was NOTHING before Sofia.

They sit in silence for a beat, isolated by private thoughts.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

(breaking the silence)

They're going to bring on a  
producer and some others to replace  
Ernesto. Keep the series going.

The squawk of a walkie-talkie is heard. It's followed by a knock at the trailer door.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT O.S

Five minutes, Yolanda.

The two women get up to leave the trailer.

Helen hangs back. She hesitates, then gets something off her chest.

HELEN

The tank didn't cause him to ...

Helen doesn't need to finish the sentence. Yolanda gets it.

YOLANDA

Okay. I mean, I wondered.

HELEN

I want you to know that.

YOLANDA

Ok.

HELEN

I should go.

YOLANDA

Hang out on the set with me. Come any time.

HELEN

(full of regret)

I never bothered to watch the show.  
And he begged me to.

Just as Yolanda is about to open the trailer door she pauses.

YOLANDA

(whispering  
conspiratorially)

Someone from the police department  
is coming to the set tomorrow to  
ask us questions.

Helen takes in this information.

HELEN

Good.

YOLANDA

Cops love the show.

Yolanda opens the trailer door, steps out, and the two women exchange a look of helpless pain as they hug goodbye.

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S) - DAY

Victor is sitting in a chair in front of Ramos's desk. Ramos is across from him.

RAMOS  
What is your opinion of the  
isolation tank?

Victor snorts.

VICTOR  
That relic? Oh for god's sake!

Ramos doesn't react.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
All right, wait a minute.  
(sighs)  
I don't know why Helen wastes her  
time on a tub of water. You run  
water. You get in, you relax.

RAMOS  
You see no value in the floating  
state? In the release of  
endorphins? Like a pill?

Victor STARES at Ramos.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
Have you personally tried the tank,  
Doctor?

VICTOR  
No.

RAMOS  
No? Why no?

VICTOR  
Look, Helen's research into brain  
deprivation is, I believe,  
important. But this recreational  
use of an old tank ... With all due  
respect!

RAMOS  
You had worries about the tank?  
What were they?

VICTOR  
For sure. Water on the floor,  
someone could slip.  
(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Keeping the water clean. A leak. I know users signed releases, but still ... And I turned out to be right.

RAMOS

Did you ever meet Ernesto Duque?

VICTOR

Not really.

RAMOS

Not really?

**REMEMBERING, VICTOR FLASHES BACK:**

EXT. STREET - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

A taxi pulls up in front of an expensive restaurant. Victor gets out, followed by his WIFE (a well-dressed woman similar in age to Victor).

Victor pays the driver. He spots a double parked car nearby and Helen in a bright red dress, crossing from a flower shop to the car, clutching a bouquet.

Victor watches Helen get into the car. Ernesto is at the wheel.

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S / VICTOR'S INTERROGATION) - (CONTINUOUS)

Ramos seated across from Victor, observing Victor's discomfort.

Ramos gets to his feet.

RAMOS

Sugar? Cream?

Ramos grabs a pot of coffee he's got brewing, and a couple of mugs.

Victor shakes his head.

RAMOS (CONT'D)

What was the date of this encounter between Helen and Ernesto?

VICTOR

It was the 5th. My wife's birthday. I was taking her to dinner.

Ramos nods approvingly as he pours coffee for Victor.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
 Good God I hope Helen hasn't done  
 anything stupid, has she?

RAMOS  
 What comes to mind?

VICTOR  
 Getting a prescription to this poor  
 dead fellow or...

Victor stops short of saying what's on his mind.

RAMOS  
 You think Helen administered  
 illicit drugs? Committed  
 manslaughter?

Victor is frightened by the madness he is hearing. He shakes his head.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
 Perhaps Helen was giving Ernesto a  
 little of this, a little of that?

Ramos pulls out his flask from a pocket, offers to pour some into Victor's cup. Victor nods, watches the pour and mulls over the unthinkable.

VICTOR  
 I don't know. How would I know? Did  
 you find pills in his medicine  
 cabinet? I assume you police do a  
 forensic autopsy in a situation  
 like this. The man was well known,  
 wealthy ... Should she lawyer up?  
 My God! Someone should warn her.

RAMOS  
 Go on.

Ramos sitting back in his chair, watching Victor gulp at his spiked coffee.

VICTOR  
 Why do you want my opinion? Why  
 would you invite speculation?

RAMOS  
 I learn a lot about Ernesto by  
 getting to know his friends, and  
 the friends of his friends ...  
 (MORE)

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
 (the next words he drops casually)  
 ... the lovers of his lover.

Victor shifts uneasily.

VICTOR  
 So Helen told you about us. Well...  
 That upsets me! Look, Helen and I  
 ... We had a VERY brief affair but  
 I'm married so please ... No  
 trouble.

RAMOS  
 You know what would help me?

VICTOR  
 (letting lose)  
 My God, if my wife found out!  
 (confessing)  
 I was flattered ... I was so AWARE  
 of Helen ...

Ramos avoids Victor's torrent of emotions, looks over to the time-line on his bulletin board.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
 I never felt that way before ...

RAMOS  
 It would help if we knew where  
 Helen and Ernesto were going that  
 evening you were with your wife.

VICTOR  
 I've no idea. How could I know?

Victor gulps the last of his coffee.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
 (suddenly remembering)  
 She was wearing something red that  
 evening.

Victor moves around in his seat distractedly. Not knowing how to articulate his feelings for Helen.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
 I don't know why I just said that.  
 It's immaterial.

Ramos leans forward with his flask and pours another shot into Victor's cup.

RAMOS  
 Everything is material.  
 (gently, probing)  
 Tell me how you met Helen.

**REMEMBERING, VICTOR FLASHES BACK TO:**

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We recognize this lecture from an earlier scene by the overhead projection of the human brain, and Victor standing at the podium, but now WE ARE LIVE.

VICTOR  
 So there you have it, the potential  
 therapeutic possibilities from the  
 proximity of parts of the brain  
 that respond to music with those  
 closely located that deal with  
 memory.

Helen is in one of the seats, listening. There is general applause as Victor steps away from the podium.

Helen picks up her phone and texts. *What are you doing tomorrow at 1 pm? I have a functionally deaf patient whose spontaneous musical hallucinations you'd find incredible.*

We can see Victor looking down at his phone, then towards Helen, intrigued.

INT. FMRI ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

An fMRI machine dominates the space.

SR. MENDOZA, (a fragile, elderly patient) is laying on the table. The dome of the fMRI looms above his head.

Helen watches as a NURSE AID restrains Mendoza with soft pads to prevent large movements.

NURSE AID  
 (in Spanish)  
 All right, keep still, now, Sr.  
 Mendoza.

Mendoza's nervous hand goes to his head. A PHRASE OF MUSIC repeats to the point of annoyance.

This music is INSIDE Mendoza's head.

The nurse brings Mendoza's hand back down to his side.

MENDOZA  
(in Spanish)  
It drives me crazy.

HELEN  
(in Spanish)  
I understand.

The nurse gestures for Helen to back away and the table slides Mendoza into the Magnet.

INT. MONITOR ROOM (FMRI) - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Helen and Victor huddle in front of a monitor that is configuring Mendoza's brain.

HELEN  
He's gotten consistent at pressing  
the response box each time the  
music in his head starts up.

Helen watches Victor in profile lean forward towards the monitor.

Helen brings a chair over, sits at the monitor table. She COURTS Victor's attention by shifting her legs. Feels his eyes dart there.

VICTOR  
You say it's an old childhood song  
that Mendoza hears?

HELEN  
Yeah. He'll sing it for you.

INT. FMRI DOME - (CONTINUOUS)

Mendoza is inside the claustrophobic enclosure.

The phrase of musical notes start up again in his head.

Mendoza presses the button on the response box.

INT. MONITOR ROOM (FMRI) - CONTINUOUS

Helen and Victor watching the lateral view of Mendoza's brain reacting in real time, on the monitor.

VICTOR

It could be that the activation of  
the music in the cortex is the  
consequence of a stroke.

Helen nods.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

The scan shows both anatomical and  
electrical abnormalities.

Helen turns her gaze up at Victor and he feels it.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Of course my wife would be  
interested in this case from a  
psychiatric perspective.

Helen swivels in the chair.

HELEN

You know, I've admired you since I  
was an undergraduate at Stanford. I  
heard you lecture for the first  
time, there.

VICTOR

(remembering)

I did give a talk there once ...  
The impact of music training on  
cognition.

HELEN

That's the one. And I was there. I  
had a school girl crush on you.

Victor is flattered.

Helen stands. She looks right at Victor and there's something  
startling about the directness of her gaze.

Victor is completely alive to the opportunity suddenly before  
him.

As if on cue, Mendoza starts singing his song. It can be  
heard between the monitor room and the fMRI room.

An amazing symphony of brain activity on the monitor occurs  
as Mendoza sings.

Helen and Victor are eye to eye.

Helen reaches for Victor.

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S / VICTOR'S INTERROGATION) - DAY  
(CONTINUOUS)

Victor is still seated across from Ramos.

He loosens his shirt collar.

VICTOR  
(desperate to be helpful)  
What else can I tell you?

RAMOS  
Who else besides Helen is involved  
with the tank room.

VICTOR  
Benjie Baum. Definitely. You've got  
to talk to Benjie.

Victor looks down at his hands, shakes his head in disbelief  
at the circumstances.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
Good God, Helen!

INT. MOTEL ROOM (SCENE FROM TU Y YO)

The room is trashed with half unpacked backpacks, take out  
food, beer bottles, and Sofia and Manolo are on the bed,  
surrounded by a couple of guns and bundles of cash.

MANOLO  
We gotta bury this money.

Sofia has other, alcohol fueled ideas.

SOFIA  
We could spend it.

MANOLO  
No. We gotta bury it.

SOFIA  
Manolo, try this.

Sofia is holding a shock buzzer hand device and playfully  
attacks various parts of Manolo's anatomy with it.

MANOLO  
I'm serious, Sofia.

SOFIA  
I know, but I've had a hard day.  
I've gotta release.

MANOLO  
Aaahh ... We can hide it at my  
ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

SOFIA  
High voltage fun.

MANOLO  
Aaahhh...

SOFIA  
I'm the torturer.

MANOLO  
Aaahhh...

Manolo struggles to get the upper hand.

Just as he's about to do so Sofia tosses the device onto the sheets and THROWS herself at Manolo.

SOFIA  
I love you.

We pull back to reveal we are in

HELEN'S LIVING ROOM,

and Helen is sitting up, at full attention on the couch, watching this scene of TU Y YO with almost scientific curiosity.

Helen rewinds, starts watching Sofia zap Manolo all over again.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
High voltage fun.

MANOLO  
Aaahhh...

SOFIA  
I'm the torturer.

MANOLO  
Aaahhh...

This scene is triggering Helen's memory.

**REMEMBERING, HELEN FLASHES BACK TO:**

INT. PARTY SCENE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A small living room, sparsely furnished, jam packed with graduate and post-doctoral students, profs, drink, food.

We move through the crowd to the kitchen doorway. Sitting at the counter with a CRANIAL STIMULATOR type gadget is Helen and a colleague, NYASHA OSAKWE (Ph.D Candidate similar in age to Helen).

The Stimulator has a head shaped like the number 8, about 7 inches by 10, and a thick cable that looks like a tail.

Nyasha checks the Stimulator signal on a laptop. Fishes around in her pocket for a coin.

She places the coin on the Stimulator, presses a release, and the coin flips into the air by the force of current.

NYASHA

Voltage is looking good.

HELEN

Go on.

Nyasha places a conducting band around Helen's head. She checks the graph configuration on the monitor of her laptop.

NYASHA

(pointing at a particular  
area of Helen's head)

You'll definitely feel strange when  
the pulse hits your neurons.

HELEN

Give it to me.

Nyasha readies the Stimulator at Helen's head.

ERNESTO

NO, WAIT!

Ernesto looms at the kitchen door.

He lumbers towards Helen, holding a shot in each hand.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

Push over. Let me.

Ernesto nudges Helen off her chair.

Helen and Nyasha exchange bemused shrugs.

NYASHA  
 (warning Ernesto)  
 It's the strangest thing I've ever  
 done.

ERNESTO  
 (not impressed)  
 Try me.

He plunks himself in the chair vacated by Helen and stares up at her while she fits the conducting band on him.

Nyasha takes the shot glasses from Ernesto. Ernesto insists on tossing back one of them.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
 (swallowing)  
 Zap away.

NYASHA  
 All right, start talking and keep  
 talking.

ERNESTO  
 I'm ready for the strangest thing  
 EVER to happen Aaaghh! Gggghhhh!!  
 Maaaaaaaghhhh!

Ernesto's speech becomes a garble. Sounds gush from his throat.

Nyasha stops pressing the release on the Stimulator.

Nyasha and Helen look at Ernesto expectantly.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
 (very loud)  
 BORING, Helen! *Boring, boring,  
 boring!*

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. HELEN'S LIVING ROOM - (CONTINUOUS)

Helen starts PACING. Trying to THINK.

She slumps back on to her couch in defeat, eyes empty of everything. She reaches for some pills as her cell phone rings.

She raises the phone to her ear with a shaking hand.

HELEN  
 (into phone)  
 Yes.

RAMOS O.S.  
 Detective Ramos, here.

HELEN  
 Yes.

RAMOS O.S.  
 Hello Helen. How are you doing?

HELEN  
 Oh, you know...

Pause.

RAMOS O.S.  
 Would you be able to meet with me  
 tomorrow at 4 o'clock?

HELEN  
 (faintly)  
 Yes.

RAMOS O.S.  
 I will be on the campus.

HELEN  
 (struggling to keep calm)  
 I have a lab session before that.  
 We can meet there?

RAMOS O.S.  
 Very good.

HELEN  
 I'll text you the building and room  
 number.

RAMOS O.S.  
 Thank you for your cooperation,  
 Helen.

HELEN  
 Detective? The autopsy report. Any  
 news?

INT. FILM SET, KITCHEN - DAY

We are on the TU Y YO soundstage, between takes.

The set is one of carnage, with blood, guts, a dead body (not that of Sofia or Manolo), shattered glass, kitchen appliances everywhere, holes in the walls.

Ramos is on the phone, in the background, away from the buzz of the set.

RAMOS  
 (into the phone)  
 Not yet. So we are gathering  
 information, talking to people.  
 Working out a time line. Just  
 typical police work while we wait.

Ramos is watching Officer Perez and a handful of actors wearing police uniforms ribbing each other. Taking faux shots with their pistols, like cowboys.

Ramos sighs deeply, realizes that Helen has ended the call, and slips his phone into a pocket.

INT. LIVING ROOM (HELEN'S) - CONTINUOUS

Helen tosses back a pill with the aid of some wine as the musical intro for yet another episode of TU Y YO starts.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - NEXT DAY

Following Benjie across a campus park. Walking with her is Helen, hiding behind sunglasses.

There is tension between them. An awkward silence.

Benjie tries to 'read' Helen's mood, but can't.

Helen stops in front of a large sculpture, one of many works of art that dot the campus, and tracks something in the distance.

HELEN  
 That's him, Benjie.

VIEW:

Ramos ambling up to a park bench and sitting.

Helen watches him from behind the bulk of the sculpture. Ramos looks solemn.

BENJIE  
 I'll keep my answers short.

A beat.

BENJIE (CONT'D)  
I've got nothing to hide.

A beat.

BENJIE (CONT'D)  
But short is better.

Helen turns to Benjie.

HELEN  
You're all set.

BENJIE  
What time's yours?

HELEN  
4 o'clock.

Benjie has something she wants to get off her chest.

BENJIE  
Helen, I...

Benjie flails.

HELEN  
Look, good luck.

Helen is about to leave.

BENJIE  
Wait. I just want to say, I've  
reached the phone to call you  
dozens of times.

HELEN  
Yeah, well ...

BENJIE  
I can't imagine what you've been  
going through since ...

Benjie let's her sentence trail off.

Helen takes a choppy breath, like someone trying to mask a cry.

Benjie touches Helen's arm. Squeezes it.

HELEN

Yeah ... Anyway, I should've seen it coming.

BENJIE

But HOW?

HELEN

I don't know. Anyway, you should go.

Benjie impetuously kisses the tip of Helen's nose, then walks around the sculpture towards Ramos on the park bench.

Ramos has a jacket casually draped over an arm, but we see that his eyes are sharp and he is tracking his surroundings.

Benjie waves at him. Approaches. Yanks nervously at the ID hanging around her neck.

Ramos acknowledges the ID.

RAMOS

Thank you, Benjie, for meeting with me.

BENJIE

Absolutely. Of course. I didn't even hesitate.

Ramos reveals something of his own for her to see. His phone.

RAMOS

I record the conversation. You don't mind?

BENJIE

(too eager to please)  
Oh God, no. Please. Record.

RAMOS

Good.

BENJIE

His death was such a shock.

RAMOS

Ah.

BENJIE

It's just so ... shocking.

RAMOS

Yes. Shall we walk?

BENJIE

Sure.

RAMOS

Did you know Ernesto well?

BENJIE

No.

RAMOS

How did you meet him?

BENJIE

(relieved)

That's easy to answer.

**REMEMBERING, BENJIE FLASHES BACK TO:**

INT. MONITOR ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Benjie is alone in the Monitor Room watching data sets form on the monitor. She senses something behind her.

Ernesto has suddenly appeared, and is standing in the doorway pulling off his shirt.

Benjie reacts.

BENJIE

Who are you? Can I help you?

ERNESTO

(pointing at the brain on  
the screen)

That's Helen, right?

Benjie nods.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

What a beauty, huh?

BENJIE

And I'm Benjie. What can we do for  
you?

Ernesto undoes his belt.

ERNESTO

I'm taking the plunge.

Benjie's eyes widen.

Ernesto peeling off the rest of his clothes, dumping them on a chair.

BENJIE

Is she expecting you?!

Ernesto's reply is to strut to the door of the tank room, and shut it firmly behind him.

INT. TANK ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Helen in the tank, eyes closed, hooked up to scalp electrodes.

Her eyes open in surprise as Ernesto peers in through the tank's space hatch.

HELEN

Ernesto!

ERNESTO

Move over.

HELEN

What are you doing here?!

ERNESTO

I'm coming in.

PLOP.

INT. TANK

Waves of salt solution splash against the sides of the tank.

HELEN

You don't just show up!

Ernesto HOOTS as he floats like a cork.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You've gotta schedule this.  
Wait...No...Don't...

Helen getting rocked, knocking against the side of the tank.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I'm serious.

ERNESTO

Let's do it together.

HELEN

Watch out!

Ernesto's limbs tangling with Helen's.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You'll bump my head!

Ernesto leans in and kisses Helen.

Their bodies sway back and forth like in a hammock.

ERNESTO

(whispering close to  
Helen's ear)

What's the first step?

Helen trying not to give in to the fun of the situation.

HELEN

You relax.

The two bodies come to rest. Ernesto shuts up for a second, but can't stop himself from breaking the silence.

ERNESTO

Okay, then what?

HELEN

You stay quiet. At some point your  
brain waves shift --

ERNESTO

(interrupting)

I'm in a hurry, Helen. A hospital  
where we shoot is up our ass,  
bitching about the fucking crew ...

Helen sighs, opens up the hatch door and climbs out.

ERNESTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Don't go.

WHOOSH. Ernesto sitting up in the water, pokes his head out of the hatch.

He sees Helen showering, drying off.

HELEN

I've got a patient waiting.

Helen is pulling on clothes.

ERNESTO

How many minutes am I looking at  
before theta period? Forty? Fifty?

HELEN

Yeah.

ERNESTO

Fuck!

(pause)

I really like you in that top,  
Helen.

Helen laughs, pulling on the last of her clothes. And a lab  
coat.

HELEN

Shut the door and turn off the  
lights when you finish.

INT. MONITOR ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Helen crosses by the console, pinning up her wet hair. Benjie  
looks up at Helen and gives a short irritable sigh.

BENJIE

He screwed up today's data, you  
realize. We can't use any of it.

Helen nods.

BENJIE (CONT'D)

Does he really produce TU Y YO?

HELEN

Yeah. Say, what's the relative  
density that we're working with?  
1.3?

BENJIE

We're 1.25.  
(gesturing to Ernesto in  
the tank room)  
Why, is he drowning?

Helen chuckles.

HELEN

Nose and mouth were out of water  
last time I looked.

**END FLASHBACK**

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Back with Benjie and Ramos, in the park.

Ramos rewards Benjie with an approving nod for her account of Ernesto.

RAMOS  
Very detailed.  
(pause)  
But tell me -

Ramos takes a moment to form his next question.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
You stayed on after Helen left  
Ernesto in the Tank Room? Why?

BENJIE  
My girlfriend's a fan. I hung  
around because I wanted to ask  
Ernesto about TU Y YO.

RAMOS  
Ah. But were you concerned that  
Ernesto might get hurt ... ?

Benjie's shoulders hunch defensively.

RAMOS (CONT'D)  
Was there any risk that Ernesto  
might drown?

BENJIE  
(Emphatic)  
No way.

RAMOS  
Or might need help, all alone in  
the tank?

BENJIE  
No way. Besides, he didn't stay. He  
grabbed his things and left right  
after Helen did.

RAMOS  
Ah.

BENJIE  
(nervous joke)  
We haven't killed anybody, yet.

RAMOS

Right.

BENJIE

Don't tell me the Pathologist got water out of his corpse! No way.

RAMOS

The autopsy report isn't in, yet.

Ramos calmly pulls a business card from his pocket and hands it to Benjie.

Benjie stares down at it.

BENJIE

So, that's it?

Ramos nods.

RAMOS

If you have something else to tell me, call me.

Benjie was expecting a bigger response.

BENJIE

So I can go.

RAMOS

Yes.

BENJIE

Okay. But we didn't kill anyone.

INT. DIGITAL FORENSICS LAB

A FORENSICS LAB TECHNICIAN is standing at a work bench over bagged evidence including used condoms, pills, Ernesto's laptop.

Perez is flipping through the pages of a report, listening to the technician summarize findings.

FORENSICS TECHNICIAN

You've got the list of his computer searches there. And emails. We've backed up the laptop data so it's now available to you.

PEREZ

Right.

Perez runs a hand down a list.

PEREZ (CONT'D)

Anything you want to bring to my attention.

FORENSICS TECHNICIAN

I've been liaising with the pathologist ... We're both big fans of the show. And ...

(lowers her voice)

Confidentially, one of the links stands out as an unusual coincidence.

GLOVED HANDS unwrap Ernesto's laptop from an evidence bag, and start up the computer.

FORENSICS TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

(making small talk while she works)

I wonder what's going to happen to the show. They can't just cancel it.

OFFICER PEREZ

(bragging)

I was just on the set.

FORENSICS TECHNICIAN

Really!

OFFICER PEREZ

The show will go on.

When she's ready, the Forensics Technician gestures for Perez to take a look. We see him peer at the computer and we hear the erratic thump of a heart.

PEREZ

(under his breath)

Creepy shit.

INT. LAB, CAMPUS - DAY

The lab includes cupboards, counter space, some medical supplies, and a hydraulic chair on which Helen sits.

She looks at the clock on the wall. 3:15 pm.

She is handed a Virtual Reality headset by DR. KIM AKIYAMA, a Department colleague.

KIM  
(worried)  
You look sick.

HELEN  
No. I'm good.

KIM  
No really, you look like shit.

HELEN  
That's why I'm here.

Helen, bone weary, puts on the VR headset. Lies back.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Let her rip.

**VR SEQUENCE:**

Beautiful Japanese forest landscape. Heaven on earth.

A sequence of shots between Kim, Helen, and the VR footage indicates a passage of time.

The video feed comes to an end.

Helen removes the VR headset.

Kim looks expectantly at Helen.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
That was a nice break.

Kim takes the set from Helen, brings a medical test tube up to her lips. Helen spits out a cotton cylinder from under her tongue.

Ramos, at the door, watches, baffled.

He knocks, so that he is noticed.

INT. CORRIDOR, CAMPUS - DAY

Helen and Ramos wander towards a staircase.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
How did it go with Benjie.

RAMOS  
Fine.

HELEN  
I knew you were meeting her.

Ramos nods.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Didn't want to pretend otherwise.

Ramos looks back over his shoulder at Dr. Kim Akiyama's lab.

RAMOS  
What did you spit back there?

HELEN  
A cotton cylinder. My cortisol level will get measured.

Ramos is uncomprehending.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Forest therapy.

Ramos still doesn't understand.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Japan has the third highest suicide rate after Hungary and South Korea. It has a rapidly aging and shrinking population. And 67 percent of their landmass is forest. Kim gets a lot of research money to play around with VR.

RAMOS  
(getting it, and impressed)  
Ah.

HELEN  
Forest therapy pays.

They walk towards a staircase in silence.

Ramos breaks it. Launches into business.

RAMOS  
Do you own a red dress, Helen?

HELEN  
Huh?  
(baffled)  
Yeah. Why?

RAMOS  
Victor Dunkirk saw you and Ernesto on the 5th of August, driving together.

HELEN  
(brittle)  
His wife's birthday.

RAMOS  
Where were you and Ernesto going  
that evening?

**MUSTERING A MEMORY, HELEN FLASHES BACK TO:**

INT. CAR (ERNESTO'S) - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

Helen in a red dress, getting into the car Victor described  
in a previous scene.

Helen hands the bouquet of flowers over to Ernesto, who is  
behind the wheel.

Ernesto tosses the flowers to the back seat while Helen  
buckles up.

HELEN  
Am I presentable?

Helen straightens her dress.

ERNESTO  
Yeah.

With the skill of a hairdresser Ernesto sweeps Helen's hair  
back, creating another look.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
But I feel like shit. Look at my  
tongue.

Ernesto sticks out his tongue for Helen to inspect.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
What does it mean?

Helen shrugging.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
Well you are about to meet the  
antique fucker to blame for it.

He puts the car into gear and heads into traffic.

EXT. COLONIAL HOME (JAVIER'S) - NIGHT

An old, colonial home. The hereditary badge of Ernesto's family.

Helen and Ernesto emerge from a bend in the path.

Ernesto pushes past a wrought iron gate. It squeaks with age.

The house comes into view.

HELEN  
(impressed)  
Wow!

ERNESTO  
(pointing into the  
darkness)  
The retaining wall over there needs  
to be reinforced ... A couple of  
windows need repair over there.

Ernesto flapping an arm in the direction of the building.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
Some day it'll be mine and I'll  
take care of it.

INT. DINING ROOM (JAVIER'S) - NIGHT

At the head of a table sits UNCLE JAVIER (old, declining, pious and proud.)

Ernesto and Helen flank him, one on each side.

A MAID hovers with a food platter. Javier peers at it, nods his approval. The Maid begins serving.

JAVIER  
You must tell me all the news,  
Ernesto. You are still working for  
television these days?

ERNESTO  
That's right.

Helen observes Javier uncap a bottle of pills with shaky hands, and spill two into his palm.

JAVIER  
(to Helen)  
Ernesto is a writer.

Helen looks surprised.

HELEN

Yes I know...

JAVIER

He is a writer despite what he does  
for a living.

HELEN

I get your point. You aren't fond  
of TV?

JAVIER

Am I fond of...purse snatching?

Helen smiles. She's liking Javier.

Javier chases down the pills with some water. He's noticing  
Helen's smile. Plays to it.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

I try to be an influence.

Gestures towards Ernesto.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

What a misused mind.

An awkward silence is filled by the clink of silverware and  
china.

Javier turns to Helen.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

You are a lovely young lady, my  
dear.

HELEN

Thank you.

Helen's eyes meet Ernesto's across the table.

JAVIER

Ernesto says you help people who  
hear music and telephones in their  
heads. That sounds like something  
he'd make up.

HELEN

It's sort of accurate.

JAVIER

Do many people have this problem?

HELEN

More than you'd think. Age and injury add up but people don't always ask for help. They fear being called crazy.

ERNESTO

How's your bad leg, Uncle? And your bad knee? You still see that doctor that's also a priest?

Ernesto blows up his cheeks and spreads his arms out to replicate the large girth of the man.

Javier pointedly ignores Ernesto's gesture.

JAVIER

Yes. He has taken great care of me for years.

ERNESTO

Did he take care of me, too, as a child?

Javier looks blankly at Ernesto.

JAVIER

I don't remember. But my memory is not so good these days, Ernesto.

ERNESTO

Maybe I should pay him a visit.

Javier shrugs, turns his attention back to Helen.

JAVIER

(unaware that he is repeating himself)

You are a lovely young woman, my dear. What do you do for a living?

Ernesto's fork hangs in mid-air.

HELEN

I work on helping people with brain disorders.

Javier leans towards Helen and tops up her wine glass, hands shaky.

He steals a quick silver glance at Helen's breasts.

JAVIER  
Ernesto lied. He said you do  
something with music.

EXT. COLONIAL HOME (JAVIER'S) - NIGHT

ERNESTO walks unsteadily to the car. HELEN watches his progress.

ERNESTO  
How fucking convenient! He can't  
fucking remember his fat traitor  
friend torturing me.

HELEN  
Give me the keys. You're drunk.

Helen fishes in Ernesto's pockets for the car keys. Ernesto is enjoying the body search.

ERNESTO  
Just a little lower...to the left.

Helen finds the keys, pushes Ernesto towards the car.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
(mimicking his Uncle)  
You are a very sweet object. A  
lovely thing.

Helen gives Ernesto another shove.

Helen opens the passenger side door for Ernesto.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
So what pills did he take at  
dinner?

HELEN  
I saw a cholinesterase inhibitor.  
It helps delay symptoms of memory  
loss.

Ernesto gets in the car and SLAMS the door shut.

INT. CAR (ERNESTO'S) - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Ernesto looks soddently at Helen as she slips into the driver's seat.

HELEN  
What?

Helen pulling on her seat belt.

Starting the engine.

ERNESTO

I bet you were raised by really lovely people. I bet I'd really love them.

HELEN

(softly)

I was raised by a grandmother.

ERNESTO

(insisting)

I love her.

He leans over and they kiss.

HELEN

(sadly)

She could have used some love. She was pretty lonely.

ERNESTO

This kiss, it's HERS.

They kiss again.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

I love you.

HELEN

I love you.

ERNESTO

Let's go roll around in the tank together.

Helen revs the motor.

INT. TANK ROOM - NIGHT

Lit only by the fluorescent light of the monitor room.

Two bodies floating as one in the tank.

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. CORRIDOR, CAMPUS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Back with Helen and Ramos, and they are walking aimlessly past classrooms, now.

RAMOS  
Javier is an interesting character,  
no?

Helen hesitates slightly.

HELEN  
Yeah.

RAMOS  
Do you believe that Ernesto took  
his Uncle's medications when he was  
a child?

HELEN  
(again, hesitating)  
Yeah. Why not?

RAMOS  
How did he describe it to you.

HELEN  
You have to consider that Ernesto  
had an overactive imagination.

RAMOS  
Okay.

**THINKING FOR A MOMENT, HELEN FLASHES BACK:**

INT. ERNESTO'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM

Curtains are drawn.

We hear the voice of a child saying a prayer.

YOUNG ERNESTO  
Dear God, please forgive me for my  
sins.

A PRIEST (rotund 40s/50s), sits on the edge of a bed, and looks down at a feverish, sickly YOUNG ERNESTO (11 - 12 years old). Young Ernesto's brow is beaded with perspiration.

YOUNG ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
I pray that Uncle Javier forgives  
me, too.

YOUNGER JAVIER (50s), watches timidly at the doorway.

The Priest gives Ernesto an approving nod. Exchanges a reassuring glance with Javier.

The Priest is about to rise to his feet. Young Ernesto's hand shoots out and grips the Priest's arm, leans forward in a calculated move, and emits an electrifying shriek into the Priest's ear.

The Priest recoils from the blast.

Javier at the door FLINCHES, then begins to pray under his breath.

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. CORRIDOR, UNIVERSITY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Back with Helen and Ramos, and they are standing at the head of a grand staircase.

HELEN

You want another incident?

RAMOS

All right.

Helen continues her story.

**FLASHBACK**

INT. BEDROOM (YOUNG ERNESTO'S) - DAY

Young Ernesto slamming onto bedsprings repeatedly. His arms flail. He flings his body horizontally up off the bed. He does this over and over.

The Priest approaches the bed. He takes Young Ernesto's pulse.

Young Ernesto's eyes roll back into their sockets and he begins muttering garble. The Priest prepares an injection.

The Priest beckons Javier (Younger) who hovers at the doorway.

PRIEST

Javier, you'll have to hold him down.

Young Ernesto slamming up and down the bed again, then twisting again.

JAVIER

Dear God, do something!

The Priest nods. He's ready with the injection.

Young Ernesto's head twists around, swivelling freakishly. (Suddenly this scene is starting to play out like a scene from a horror flick.)

SILENCE prevails. The injection is complete. The medicine taking affect.

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. STAIRCASE, CAMPUS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Back with Ramos and Helen.

Helen sits down on the edge of one of the steps, sinks her head into her hands.

Ramos positions himself a couple of steps below her, and stays standing.

HELEN

You want another?

Helen looks up. Bone weary. Emotionally drained.

Ramos stares a beat too long on her face.

RAMOS

The way you described it, Ernesto's head swivelled all the way like ...

Ramos tries to twist his head but he can only go so far with it.

RAMOS (CONT'D)

It can't happen. It happens in horror movies.

HELEN

That's what I said. And Ernesto said, 'You're missing the point of the story, Helen.'

RAMOS

Interesting.

HELEN

Yeah.

Ramos, absorbing the information. Interrupted by the ring of his cell phone.

RAMOS

Ramos, here.

(a beat)

I'll be there in an hour.

He hangs up.

HELEN

(peering at Ramos)

Duty calls?

Ramos takes a few steps towards Helen and hands her his business card. She looks down at it.

RAMOS

The Autopsy Report is in.

INT. BATHROOM (POLICE HQ) - LATER

Perez in full uniform checks himself in the mirror.

Ramos rushes in, buttoning up his uniform jacket.

EXT. PRESS CONFERENCE - EVENING

The Police Commissioner is making a statement, flanked by other officials. In this group we spot Ramos. And Perez, further back.

COMMISSIONER

As this was an un-witnessed death the decision was made to process the scene, and to call the medical examiner's office. The body was transferred to the Medical Examiner's office for an autopsy and today the results have been issued. Ernesto Duque died of heart failure due to natural causes between the hours of ...

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S) - LATER

Ramos removes his jacket, and loosens his collar.

On his desk sits the AUTOPSY REPORT.

Perez is seated nearby, tracking Ramos's mood.

OFFICER PEREZ

Ticker stopped. End of story.

RAMOS

So why did he jump into the tank fully clothed? When a man is suicidal he is capable of erratic behavior. But now we don't have an explanation.

Perez shrugs.

OFFICER PEREZ

We finished processing. We turn over the tank room to campus reps tomorrow morning.

This stirs Ramos's interest. He ponders an idea. Gets to his feet.

RAMOS

That's that, then.

Picks up his briefcase.

RAMOS (CONT'D)

Case closed.

PEREZ

I'll wrap things up, then.

Ramos nods.

RAMOS

It's all yours.

Ramos leaves the office.

Perez, left alone, wanders over to Ramos's desk, peers at the Autopsy Report. He pulls out Ramos's chair, sits, puts his legs up on the table. Looks around the room. *This could be his one day.* He idly flips open the Report and starts reading.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Ramos walking with uncharacteristic briskness, and this street should be familiar to us. It's a route Ramos took the last time we saw him walk out of his office.

INT. MONITOR ROOM

Police tape at the doorway, and inside the room is dingy, and stripped of computers. But there's a light on in the tank room.

INT. TANK ROOM

Ramos is alone.

He shuts the door, locks it, walks around the tank with boyish eagerness. Opens the trap, peers in, then rips off his uniform and strips down.

A messy heap of clothes forms on the floor.

He props his cell phone up against a chair and begins to listen to what we recognize is more of the recording of Helen describing the tank to Ramos:

VOICE OVER (HELEN)

The temperature allows natural heat generation to escape without the need for muscle action to raise body temperature in homeostasis.

INT. TANK

Ramos is floating. We get a sense of Ramos experimenting with his body weight and the liberating possibilities of buoyant water.

VOICE OVER (HELEN)

The natural tendency of the body in the floating posture at the correct temperature is to dilate the blood vessels, reducing the blood pressure and maximizing blood flow.

Ramos releases a deep sigh. He closes his eyes. This is heaven. He moves his body within the softness of the water. It's like an embrace.

He rolls over like an eel.

INT. APARTMENT (HELEN'S) - NIGHT

Helen at her couch, riveted to the TV monitor.

TV MONITOR: A chyron fills the lower half of the video image over images of Ernesto: 'Informe de Autopsia', followed by 'Causas Naturales'.

The segment shows footage from the press conference.

Ramos is standing behind the Police Commissioner.

Across the room, on a table sits Helen's handbag. From there come the muffled sounds of texts and calls. She is ignoring them.

There's a knock at her door. This shakes her into action.

Helen hurries over, like she's expecting the caller, and opens the door.

There stands Roberto, who we recognize as one of the lunchtime colleagues from the opening scene.

INT. POLICE HQ - NIGHT

Dark, empty and silent hallway.

There's one single light at the end of the corridor. The door to Ramos's office stands ajar, and yellow light spills out.

INT. OFFICE (RAMOS'S) - NIGHT

Perez still at Ramos's desk, lit by the desk lamp.

He turns over the last page of the Autopsy Report.

Then reaches for his cell phone and calls.

INT. TANK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ramos in the tank, floating on his back. THIS IS BLISS.

VOICE OVER (HELEN)  
 Forty minute float sessions have  
 been compared well with long  
 vacations by Swedish researchers.

CLOSE ON Ramos's smart phone, where the recorded voice over we hear is preempted by an incoming call.

Ramos ignores the ring. He turns over, to the prone position with his chin supported on his elbow. THINKING.

The ringing eventually ends.

Helen's voice resumes.

VOICE OVER (HELEN) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
And a person can float immobile for  
hours, increasing the benefits.

INT. TANK ROOM - LATER

Ramos, wet, naked, relaxed, washing himself down with the  
hose.

INT. LIVING ROOM (HELEN'S) (CONTINUOUS)

Helen is on the couch with Roberto.

He is shirtless, and in the throws of removing Helen's top.

Helen is watching more coverage of the News Conference on TV.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ramos walks with a religious calm, runs a hand through his  
wet hair.

Trance-like, Ramos crosses a street. Approaches a food stand.  
Orders some tacos and a beer. Watches the world go by.  
Watches news on a TV Monitor a-fixed to the interior wall of  
the food stand.

The words *La Inseguridad*, and some bloody images of drug  
cartel related violence (similar to TU Y YO) flash across the  
screen. SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN talk excitedly into a NEWS  
REPORTER's microphone. They jostle for the microphone and  
camera.

Ramos staring at the TV screen.

1ST CHILD  
(proudly)  
I saw blood...

Something is happening to Ramos's face as he watches the  
children. He looks more and more like the shop-worn detective  
we first met.

2ND CHILD  
(words tumbling)  
And the people were killed and tied  
up.

The affect of the tank is all but gone. Ramos signals for another beer.

INT. LIVING ROOM (HELEN'S) (CONTINUOUS)

On the couch, both Roberto and Helen are naked, by now.

Helen is following extended coverage on the Police Commissioner's Press Conference with razor interest.

Roberto is totally focussed on Helen.

TV Monitor - "No drugs or alcohol were found in his system. It remains unknown why he did not disrobe before taking a dip in the isolation tank in which he died. Here on the set of TU Y YO there is an explanation. Ernesto Duque was unique, and did things his way."

Roberto comes between Helen and her view of the TV.

HELEN

Move.

INT. RAMOS'S OFFICE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Close on an erratically beating heart under attack by stress hormones.

Perez is peering at his laptop, watching the footage he viewed at the Forensic Lab.

He gets up, paces.

The erratic beat is unnerving.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ramos is crossing a street, and from his gait we determine that he is walking aimlessly, and perhaps a bit inebriated.

He walks by a church, locked up for the night.

His cell rings.

His shoulders sag.

Finally --

RAMOS

What is it, Perez?

PEREZ  
Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy.

Ramos doesn't react. The words aren't resonating.

PEREZ (CONT'D)  
Ernesto Duque died of Takotsubo  
Cariomyopathy.

END