



pilot script for
limited series
by
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BERKELEY

A Delightful Place to Avoid Death

Russ Woody

FADE IN:

EXT. PLANO, TEXAS - AFTERNOON

LONG SHOT of an upscale suburb outside of Dallas. As we get closer and move down Lone Star Drive, we see several posh restaurants, some high-end stores including a Restoration Hardware, where we're drawn to the store's rooftop.

EXT. ROOFTOP OF RESTORATION HARDWARE - SAME TIME

A battered ATTACHÉ CASE drops with a thud onto a the slats of roll-up wooden walkway. Hands unsnap the latches of the attaché case, opening it to reveal pieces of a SNIPER'S BOLT-ACTION RIFLE. The hands lift the stock and the receiver, shove them together: **CLICK!** The barrel slides into place: **CLICK!** The scope: **CLICK!**

EXT. LE ORANGE RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Across the street, a chic mid-town lunch spot. DR. ALAN WESTBROOK -- 35, good-looking, easy going, a nice guy -- makes his way through the crowded restaurant behind the MAITRE D to a table along the sidewalk. His friend, RUDY POELLINGER is already there -- mid-thirties -- is poking at a salad that's just been delivered. Alan pulls a chair out.

ALAN

(sitting)

Sorry, sorry, I know I'm late.

RUDY

(looking at salad)

If we were dating, I wouldn't be speaking to you.

Maitre d hands Alan a menu.

ALAN

Thanks.

(to Rudy)

Office is a mess. Some kids ransacked it over the weekend.

RUDY
Lookin' for drugs...

ALAN
(looks over menu)
Probably.
(nods at Rudy's salad)
I see you already ordered, thanks
for waiting.

RUDY
Attitude from the late guy.

EXT. ROOFTOP OF RESTORATION HARDWARE - SAME TIME

Gunman's POV - crosshairs of the rifle's scope scan the RESTAURANT PATRONS across the street until ALAN and RUDY come into view.

Now we see the GUNMAN -- 20s, scruffy-looking, tats -- lifts his head from the scope, cradles the rifle in the crook of his arm and reaches for a SINGLE CARTRIDGE resting on the wooden walkway, but knocks it into a gap between the slats, where it rolls away.

GUNMAN
Shit.

He sets the rifle down to retrieve the cartridge.

EXT. LE ORANGE RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

A WAITRESS approaches their table.

WAITRESS
You ready to order here?

ALAN
Yeah. I'll have an Arnold Palmer and
the Reuben sandwich.

WAITRESS
You want that on whole wheat, white,
rye, gluten-free oat or sour dough?

ALAN
Rye's fine.

RUDY
You know, that sounds good. I'll
have a Reuben too.

WAITRESS
On rye?

RUDY
Oh, I don't care.

WAITRESS
So... rye?

RUDY
Not rye.

WAITRESS
Gluten-free oat?

RUDY
You gotta be kidding.

WAITRESS
How 'bout white?

RUDY
(with disdain)
White?

WAITRESS
Fine. Whole wheat.

RUDY
Eh, rye's fine.

The waitress suppresses a comment, moves off.

ALAN
See, Rudy, this is why I end up
tipping 30 percent.

EXT. ROOFTOP OF RESTORATION HARDWARE - SAME TIME

The wooden grating has been rolled up. The GUNMAN (now on all fours) picks up the errant cartridge.

EXT. LE ORANGE RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Alan puts the napkin on his lap.

ALAN
You're in a mood.

RUDY
No, I'm not.

ALAN
Okay.

RUDY
I hate my fucking life, Al.

ALAN

There it is.

RUDY

I'm bored. I'm stifled.

ALAN

You and Stacy doin' okay?

RUDY

Fuck Stacy. Three years now and she's still too snobby for anal.

ALAN

Well, persevere.

RUDY

It's not Stacy. Something occurred to me the other day.

(looks at him)

I'm not a hip-hop star, Al.

ALAN

And this occurred to you... the other day?

RUDY

I was gonna be a hip-hop star. Or a rock star. It never happened.

ALAN

Right. Well, I wanted to be a poet.

RUDY

Jesus, a poet? How the hell you make a living?

ALAN

Love of art.

RUDY

I'm a fucking urologist, Al. How did that happen?

ALAN

Well, you probably should've had a clue in med school.

(then)

So what brought this on?

RUDY

This morning... I'm standing with my finger up some octogenarian's ass, who, by the way, had a persistent

(MORE)

RUDY (CONT'D)
cough, and it hits me: This is not
what I dreamed of.

EXT. ROOFTOP OF RESTORATION HARDWARE - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON the rifle as the GUNMAN slides the cartridge into
its chamber, slams the bolt shut and puts an eye to the scope.

RUDY (V.O.)
Life is flying by, Al. Like a bird
or something. Like something that
flies by. Well, I guess that's a
bird.

EXT. LE ORANGE RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

ALAN
I get it. Look, my life's no joyride
either.

RUDY
I'm a goddamn 36-year-old urologist
in Texas. What the fuck?

ALAN
I thought you were 37?

RUDY
Shit. You're right, I'm 37.

ALAN
You want the honest truth, Rudy?

RUDY
Not really, no.

ALAN
Urology's a romp in the park compared
to psychiatry.

RUDY
You're trying to make me feel better.

ALAN
I'd never do that. Try sitting across
from an endless string of overfed
golfers and coddled housewives.
Bitching about their plastic surgery
and their kitchen remodel. The
husbands are all fucking their
assistants. And why wouldn't they?

RUDY
God, I wish I could fuck my assistant.

ALAN

You don't want that.

RUDY

I used to have everything in front of me, Al. Undergrad at Berkeley. The whole world was exciting.

ALAN

Berkeley?

RUDY

Nobody had anything. Nothing. We didn't have "things" in Berkeley. Nobody had things. Or money. We had t-shirts. We were free. Free to be young, free sex, free hip-hop.

(then)

Completely different than this.

They hear a **CRACK!** from down the street. Alan turns to look. Nothing. He turns back and sees a RED SPOT in the middle of Rudy's forehead, then a streak of blood that runs down to his nose, as he falls face-first into his salad. The OTHER PATRONS quickly realize what's happened and, as pandemonium breaks out,

EXT. PLANO POLICE STATION - EARLY AFTERNOON

Establish. Nice, upscale police station.

ALAN (V.O.)

I'm sorry, but I don't know who'd do something like this...

INT. PLANO POLICE STATION - DETECTIVES' OFFICE - SAME TIME

ALAN -- still in shock -- sits at a table across from TWO DETECTIVES. One is Detective ART GILLESPIE.

ALAN

Sure, there were people who thought he was annoying. I did.

GILLESPIE

Did he owe anybody money? Anybody owe him money?

ALAN

I don't think so. His practice was doing well. He was bored. He wasn't crazy about his girlfriend. I don't think he really liked her.

DETECTIVE

You think this woman might've wanted to kill him?

ALAN

(shakes his head)

Nah. From what Rudy said, she doesn't sound ambitious enough.

GILLESPIE

(standing)

Okay, Dr. Westbrook, if you think of anything else, let us know.

Gillespie hands Alan his CARD.

DETECTIVE #2

(standing)

Oh, and... we'd appreciate if you didn't go anywhere without letting telling us, huh?

ALAN

Am I a suspect? 'Cause I was sitting right there.

DETECTIVE #2

(opens the door)

Just for further questions.

ALAN

Right.

He stuffs the card in his shirt and exits.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Establish high-tech, lotta glass.

INT. RECEPTION AREA TO ALAN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Sleek. A fish tank, leather chairs, a couch, a Receptionist Window. An ignored TV dribbles out a stock market report. One client, a small man -- GORDON MELMAN -- 25, sits alone at the end of a couch, practically blending into it. Alan ENTERS, still somewhat shell-shocked, crosses through without noticing Gordon. A voice calls out from the back office.

SHELLEY (O.S.)

Alan!

The door beside the Receptionist Window opens and Receptionist SHELLEY RODRIQUEZ, 40, bursts out and embraces him.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)

Oh my God, I heard. Are you all right?

ALAN

Yeah. A little... rattled, I guess.

SHELLEY

(still hugging him)

Poor Dr. Poellinger. Gunned down in broad daylight.

ALAN

Right.

He waits for her to release him. Then,

ALAN (CONT'D)

Okay...

She lets go and stands back.

SHELLEY

It's a travesty. Who would've ever thought someone could get shot in the head like that, right here in Dallas?

Alan thinks about that, decides to let it pass.

ALAN

You okay?

SHELLEY

I'm sorry. I'm just... well, after the break-in, and now this. I'm a mess.

(composes herself)

Anyway, I cleared your schedule. Canceled everything so that --

GORDON (O.C.)

Dr. Westbrook?

The little man on the couch is standing now.

SHELLEY

(to Alan)

Oh, that's right. Gordon showed up.

ALAN

(turns to him)

Gordon. Listen, today isn't good.

GORDON

Boy, no kidding. Today's the worst. Anxiety is about an eight or nine. Then somebody killed my urologist. Which doesn't even make sense. A urologist? I mean, a psychiatrist, I get. But a urol --

ALAN

Look, Gordon, you'll have to make an appointment for later in the week.

GORDON

Right, right... but I thought maybe fifteen minutes would be okay, 'cause the anxiety is very high and now I'm worried about you.

ALAN

Me?

SHELLEY (O.C.)

(gasps)

Oh my god...

Alan turns to see Shelley looking at the TV, her hands on her face. There's a STILL of AN ATTRACTIVE BLACK WOMAN as a news story plays out.

TV REPORTER'S VOICE

...outside the high rise where Vander had an apartment on the 20th floor. Her body was found early this morning in front of the building, and though Dallas police are not confirming at this hour that Vander took her own life...

Alan walks to the TV, where THE REPORTER addresses the camera.

TV REPORTER'S VOICE (CONT'D)

...a police spokesperson has acknowledged that a note by Vander was found in her apartment...

ALAN

Suicide? No, no, no...

Alan turns abruptly and crosses for the back. Gordon and Shelley follow.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He moves to his COMPUTER to pull up client files. But the screen remains blank. Shelley and Gordon appear at the door.

SHELLEY

They trashed the mainframe, those
kids, whoever broke in...

As she moves to the FILE DRAWERS behind his desk, pulls out
a lower drawer and starts to search the HARD-COPY FILES,

SHELLEY (CONT'D)

I've been trying all morning to get
the computers back up. It's just...

Alan moves to the drawer, quickly fingers through the files.

ALAN

(as he does)
...Stillwell, Teller, Thomas...
Weddington...
(he looks at her)
It's not here. The Vander file's gone.

Gordon gasps from the doorway. They see him, then turn back.

SHELLEY

Why would someone take it?

GORDON

Probably 'cause she didn't kill
herself. Probably 'cause somebody
killed her and they gotta cover their
tracks. I gotta feeling 'bout this.

ALAN

Okay, Gordon, your speculation isn't
helping. You have to go home.

GORDON

(crushed)
Oh. Well, all right.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Gordon trails Alan out of the building into the PARKING LOT.

GORDON

Boy, I knew something like this was
gonna happen 'cause a that dream I
had. 'Cept, in the dream, they shot
you and threw my proctologist outta
window.

ALAN

(stops)
Okay, Gordon, that doesn't mean...
anything.

(MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)

Your "premonitions" aren't really premonitions, remember? We talked about this. Now I want you to listen closely...

(firmly)

Go. Home.

A beat. Gordon looks at him.

GORDON

I pushed too hard. You hate me now.

ALAN

(a sigh)

No, Gordon, I don't hate you. I'm irritated, yes. But it doesn't mean I hate you. People can care about each other and still be irritated.

GORDON

Oh yeah. But you're okay, right?

ALAN

I'm fine.

SFX: LOUD BANG from down the street.

Alan drops to the ground. Gordon looks curiously at him, then down the street, then back to Alan.

GORDON

It was the back-lift on a truck. You seem a little jumpy.

Alan looks, and then gets to his feet.

ALAN

Go home, Gordon.

GORDON

Right.

Gordon nods and looks at him sadly before moving off. Alan opens the door to his BMW, gets in.

INT. ALAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He starts the car. His phone buzzes, as he buckles up, he pushes the Bluetooth to answer.

ALAN

(weary)

Hello, Beth...

BETH ON PHONE
It's the sixth of the month, Alan.

ALAN
Well, take a Midol and call me on
the tenth.

BETH ON PHONE
Alimony check's supposed to be here
by the third.

ALAN
Worst day of my life, nice of you to
ask.

He puts the car in reverse, about to back up, checks the
rearview and sees a FORD TAURUS STOPPED behind him.

BETH ON PHONE
So, is this your accountant fucking
with me again?

ALAN
Beth, trust me, Carl's more afraid
of you than I am.

BETH ON PHONE
I'm serious, Alan.

ALAN
(watches the rearview)
So am I. The mention of your name,
Carl turns white. And he's black.

BETH ON PHONE
I honestly don't miss your sense of
humor.

Alan sees a scruffy-looking MAN get out of the car.

ALAN
Look, it's probably just a post office
thing.

BETH ON PHONE
I need that check, Alan. You don't
know what my life is like. The
housekeeper is out sick, the wifi is
down, the Lexus is clicking again...

ALAN
My God, I had no idea things were
that bad.

BETH ON PHONE

Fuck you.

He checks his sideview and sees the man come around the front of the car... something METAL low at his side. A gun?

ALAN

Shit!

He drops the phone and punches the gas.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

His car BLASTS BACKWARD INTO THE TAURUS, as the man dives out of the way, FIRING A ROUND that SHATTERS ALAN'S DRIVER-SIDE WINDOW, narrowly missing Alan's head. The man starts to get up. Alan knows he's a sitting duck. He throws the car into DRIVE and punches the gas again. The man FIRES OFF A ROUND that SHATTERS THE BACK WINDOW, as the CAR PLOWS OVER THE HEDGE in front of the parking space, through a BUS BENCH on the sidewalk and FISHTAILS out onto a BUSY BOULEVARD, where it SWERVES to miss ONCOMING TRAFFIC and then flies wildly INTO A PARK across the street. PEOPLE SCATTER as the car flies through the park, finally emerging out the other side and slamming into a tree. A moment later, the car door pops open and Alan crawls out. He thinks to grab his phone before he gets up and runs. And runs and runs.

INT. PLANO POLICE STATION - A MOMENT LATER

A PHONE RINGS on a desk (A LAND LINE) in the busy squad room. DETECTIVE GILLESPIE picks up.

GILLESPIE

(to phone)

Gillespie here.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME TIME

ALAN is crouched behind a dumpster, still breathing hard from the vigorous run.

ALAN

(into phone)

It's Alan Westbrook. Someone just tried to kill me. Something's going on. They killed Rudy, but they... it was me. They were trying to kill me. Whoever it is... it has something to do with Leslie Vander!

INTERCUT WITH:

GILLESPIE

Where are you?

ALAN
Off Elm. An alley.

GILLESPIE
There's a Starbucks at Elm and
Terrace. Five minutes.

ALAN
Right, five minutes.

GILLESPIE
My cell's on the back of that card.

ALAN
(checks it)
Okay.

GILLESPIE
And listen... it'll be okay.

STAY WITH GILLESPIE:

He hangs up and grabs his coat, while ANOTHER COP at a desk nearby, gently, suspiciously, hangs up (UNSEEN by Gillespie). As Gillespie heads out, the other Cop takes out his cell.

COP
(quietly into cell)
Elm and Terrace. Starbucks. Now.

INT. STARBUCKS - A MOMENT LATER

ALAN slinks into the store. IT'S CROWDED, he moves toward a window seat and is about to sit, when he sees a BADLY DAMAGED FORD TAURUS pull up across the street. From Alan's POV, we see the scruffy-looking GUNMAN get out of the car. Shit. Alan crosses quickly to the side of the counter where he's met by a TALL BARRISTA who steps in front of him.

BARRISTA
Can I help you, sir?

ALAN
I need to use the back door.

BARRISTA
Right, right. But it's for employees
only.

Alan glances out the window and sees the Gunman crossing the street for the Starbucks. He turns to the Barrista.

ALAN
Look, I gotta use that back door.

BARRISTA

I hear ya, bro. But I'll catch shit
from the Jam.

ALAN

The Jam?

BARRISTA

Manager. Gave himself the name. He's
like sixteen.

Alan glances again at the window, sees the Gunman step onto the sidewalk and reach for the front door. Alan turns back to the Barrista.

ALAN

Really sorry about this.

BARRISTA

'Bout what?

Alan slams his foot into the Barrista's groin.

BARRISTA (CONT'D)

Ooooofffff...

As the Barrista doubles over, Alan moves quickly around him.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Beside the closed back door of Starbucks, a homeless man notices a full cup of coffee on the ground. He picks it up, examines it. Tastes it. This is a good day. He starts to drink, just as the back door blows open and slams into the coffee cup and his face. Alan bolts out and sprints down the alley. Slowly the door swings back, revealing the bum holding a smashed coffee cup to his face, coffee having exploded all over. He lets the cup drop.

BUM

(not surprised)

Okay.

INT. STARBUCKS - SAME TIME

The Gunman enters as the Barrista, trying to catch his breath, is attended to by ANOTHER EMPLOYEE. The Gunman looks curiously at the man in pain.

GUNMAN

Nutsack?

BARRISTA

Yeah boy...

EXT. ANOTHER SIDEWALK - SAME TIME

ALAN, still sprinting, passes another alley, turns and sprints to an ABANDONED PICKUP, tilted from a missing wheel. He slumps behind the truck. Breathing hard, he pulls out his phone and hits redial.

COP (ON PHONE)
Fifty-second, Grady here.

ALAN
You sonofabitch! You...
(then)
Wait. Who is this?

COP (ON PHONE)
Uh... Sgt. Grady. Who's this?

ALAN
Wrong number.

He hangs up, pulls out Gillespie's card. Checks the back for the cell number, punches it in, waits, then:

ALAN (CONT'D)
You fucking set me up!

INTERCUT with Gillespie in his car:

GILLESPIE
Alan? What're you talking about?

ALAN
Fuck you! Your guy showed up at Starbucks! You're a fucking part of this.

GILLESPIE
I'm not. Look, I don't know where this is coming from. There's somebody on the inside. You're scared, but listen to me -- you gotta disappear. You don't have to tell me where, just disappear. I'll work on it.

ALAN
Disappear?

GILLESPIE
Don't go home. Don't use anything, nothing electronic. Get rid of your phone, your credit cards. Get out of Plano... out of Dallas. And, whatever you do, stay out of public venues!

EXT. DALLAS/FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - LATER

Very public. A CAB stops at the busy curb of a loading zone. ALAN gets out, moves into the terminal.

INT. TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

He finds an open ATM and slides his card. A banner over the machine says "AmeriTex Bank." As he punches his PIN, the screen shows VIP STATUS. A moment later he takes a thick stack of bills from the machine, shoves them in his pocket.

EXT. CARL'S JR. PARKING LOT - LATER

The GUNMAN'S DENTED CAR is parked.

INT. CAR - CARL'S JR. PARKING LOT - DALLAS

Would-be assassin -- WAYNE DeANGELO -- doesn't look happy as he spoons ice cream out of a cup. Comfort food. His PHONE RINGS, he looks at it with dread, puts the ice cream cup on the passenger seat and picks up.

WAYNE
(nervous into phone)
Wayne here.

VOICE (ON PHONE)
Listen to me, fuckwit. He's at the airport. Right now.

WAYNE
The airport? DFW?

VOICE (ON PHONE)
No, dipshit, Heathrow! Get over there. Terminal Three. And make sure this happens!

WAYNE
Right. Terminal Three.

Wayne hangs up, tosses the phone aside, throws the car in reverse, jolting the ice cream off the seat onto the floorboard. He slams on the brakes, and looks.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Caramel fucking pecan...

EXT. DALLAS/FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Alan emerges from the terminal and sees a MAN SLEEPING near a luggage rack. He takes out his CELLPHONE and slips it into the Sleeping Man's coat.

As he heads to his waiting the cab, he extracts CASH from his wallet and shoves it in his pocket with the rest of the cash, then stops at a small group of GREASY TEENS.

ALAN

Hey, guys.

TEEN

The fuck you want?

ALAN

Well, see, I found this wallet with a bunch of credit cards. But I'm in a hurry, so I thought you might take it to lost and found for me?

He hands his wallet to one of them.

TEEN

Yeah, man. Lost and found.

Alan moves off to his waiting cab and climbs in. As expected, the teens bolt for a spending spree of unrivaled proportions.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Alan watches them go, then turns back. Now with money in his pocket, his electronics/credit cards gone, the shooter (hopefully) deceived and headed for the airport, he turns to the cab driver.

ALAN

Roanoke... the bus terminal.

INT. BUS - LATER

ALAN shoves a GROCERY BAG of belongings against the window, leans his head against it.

EXT. INTERSTATE 114 - MOMENTS LATER

From a distance, we see the bus headed west out of Roanoke, Texas, headed our way. As it blasts past us, it sounds a little like a GUN SHOT.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE PARKING LOT - ALAN'S DREAM

FLASHBACK to the window of Alan's BMW shattering.

INT. BUS - CURRENT

Alan jolts awake in his bus seat, shakes it off. A CORPULENT MAN next to him is reading the paper.

Alan turns to the window, watches the Texas landscape stream by when he notices on the metal rim of the window a metal plaque that says, "Coach Assembled by Janssen & Company."

MAN (O.C.)
You want sports?

Alan snaps out of it, turns to the guy with the paper.

ALAN
Sports?

MAN
The sports section. I'm done.

ALAN
No. Thanks.

MAN
Carl Garrett. Who do I have the pleasure...

He reaches over, offers Alan his hand.

ALAN
Oh. Uh...
(shaking his hand)
Alan... Janssen.

MAN
So where ya headed, Alan Janssen?

ALAN
No place really.

MAN
No place? Then you shoulda just stayed where you were.

He laughs.

ALAN
No, just... going to California. A little vacation. Never been.

MAN
California. Not that great. Lotta flakes out there... all upset about summer being hot.

ALAN
Right.

The man reopens the paper.

MAN

(looking at story)
 Shame 'bout this weather girl, huh.
 In Dallas. Vander. I don't understand
 why these people, this woman, a looker
 like that... she jumps off a balcony.
 Why inna hell does somebody do that?
 Got her whole life...

Alan nods and turns back to the window, remembering.

INT. ALAN'S PLANO OFFICE - FLASHBACK

LESLIE VANDER, the beautiful black woman, alive, sitting
 across from Alan. She's been crying.

LESLIE

...in my mind somewhere, I know it's
 not as bad as all that. Just...
 sometimes it seems pointless. I don't
 know where I'm at... a treadmill.
 Like I'm on a treadmill...

ALAN

And you haven't thought about hurting
 yourself?

LESLIE

Hurting myself? You mean suicide?
 (shakes her head)
 No. Not something I could do. Too
 big a step. I'm too narcissistic.
 Howard Beale, right: "I'm on TV,
 dummy."

ALAN

(smiles)
 And you're consistent with the
 Effexor?

LESLIE

(nods)
 Mornings aren't so bad anymore. I'm
 feeling better. Honestly.

EXT. BERKELEY BUS DEPOT - DAY

Seedy. ONE BUS pulls out, ANOTHER BUS pulls in, as ALAN
 EMERGES, his grocery bag under his arm.

MAIN TITLES

MUSIC COMES UP AND OVER:

COLLEGE KIDS OF EVERY MAKE/COLOR pass with backpacks. Verdant trees nestle Victorian homes and uproot aging sidewalks. HOMELESS PEOPLE and ADDICTS lounge in People's Park. Downtown is rich with aging health food stores, book shops, head shops, bike shops, coffee shops fronted with tables and ACADEMIC TYPES among many, reading or talking politics, philosophy, poetry. THE UNIVERSITY itself is cradled by the city. Brick buildings among towering eucalyptus, birch and oak trees. This is the incubator of free thought, the seed of dissent, catalyst to the unrest of the '60s. The opposite of Plano.

EXT. SIDEWALK COFFEE SHOP - DAY

ALAN sits at a sidewalk cafe, looking slightly more relaxed. He's perusing the CLASSIFIEDS. Around him are STUDENTS on cellphones, AN ELDERLY HIPPIE, A COUPLE OF BIKERS, a sleeping bandana-ed DOG. Alan circles something in the paper and then starts to unfold a MAP of Berkeley.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX- DAY

He stops on the sidewalk in front of a shabby Apartment Complex, probably built in the '50s. Doesn't look like it's been kept up, a "FOR RENT" sign in front.

MUSIC FADES UNDER

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A Studio Apartment any undergrad would be proud to call home. ALAN ENTERS, followed by an elderly man, STANLEY TROTTMAN. Alan looks around.

ALAN

Pretty small.

STANLEY

Last available unit.

ALAN

Isn't this how they raise veal?

Suddenly an attractive woman, about 30, appears at the open door. KATE HALEY.

KATE

Stanley, the step on the stairway is still loose. This is the third time I've asked you to fix it.

(notices Alan)

Sorry to interrupt.

ALAN

It's okay.

STANLEY
Lemme get my toolbox.

Stanley EXITS, mumbling something about his busted balls.
Kate turns to Alan.

KATE
So, you're thinking of moving into
Shangri-La, huh?

ALAN
Yeah. Always been a dream of mine.

KATE
So, what's your story?

ALAN
My story?

KATE
Well, you don't look like a student.
You're wearing an expensive suit
that seriously needs dry cleaning.
You're past due for a shave and you're
carrying a worn-out grocery bag like
it's full of drugs.

ALAN
Drugs? Sort of a leap, don't ya think?

KATE
So, what is it? What's going on?

ALAN
Nothing. Just hit a little rough
patch is all. Need to figure out
things. In my life.

KATE
Rough patch, huh? Boy, that sure
doesn't sound suspicious.

ALAN
You always this... inquisitive?

KATE
You mean noseey?

ALAN
That's a better word.

KATE
Yeah, I am. I wanna know who's living
across from me.

ALAN

And you think maybe I'm, what, a murderer, a sexual predator, what?

KATE

Haven't made up my mind. But it is the #MeToo era, in case you just crawled out from under a rock.

ALAN

"Me Too"? That's where you include other people in things, right?

KATE

No, it's...
 (stops)
 Ah, a joke.
 (smiles)
 I'm Kate. Kate Haley.

She extends her hand. He takes it.

ALAN

Alan West -- Janssen.

KATE

West-Janssen?

ALAN

(shit, shit)
 No. No. Just Janssen. West is my middle name.

KATE

Uh-huh...
 (squints at him)
 So, what is it you do for a living?

ALAN

(guarded)
 Nothing really. Just, you know, between jobs.

KATE

Wow. It just gets better and better with you.

ALAN

Hey, the bottom fell out of the drug trade.

KATE

(laughs)
 I'll give you one thing: You got a way of stirring up my curiosity.

ALAN

Boy, welcome news. So what is it you do?

KATE

Working on an undergrad degree.
Liberal Arts.

ALAN

Undergrad? You seem a little...

She narrows her gaze -- is he really going to bring up age?

ALAN (CONT'D)

...like someone who should sail right through.

KATE

(smiles)
Nice save.

EXT. UC BERKELEY LIBRARY BUILDING - DAY

Establish.

INT. UC BERKELEY LIBRARY - DAY

ALAN finishes trimming a BOOTH-STYLE PHOTO of himself. He opens a scanner and puts the photo in it. He turns to a COMPUTER, where the screen shows a large California driver's license beside the scanned image of Alan. He drags the image over to the license.

INT. CAR - CARL'S JR. PARKING LOT - DALLAS - DAY

CLAUDIA VARGAS, 20s, waits in the car, as WAYNE opens the squeaky banged-up door of his Ford Taurus and gets in with a CARL'S JR. BAG. She is not impressed.

CLAUDIA

So, this your idea of taking me "out to dinner"?

WAYNE

I told you, things are a little tight.
But pretty soon, baby, I'm gonna be flush.

CLAUDIA

(taking bag)
Your phone was ringing.

He grabs his PHONE off the console, reads the name. Crap. He gets out of the car.

EXT. CARL'S JR. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Wayne steps away from the car, punches phone.

WAYNE

(into phone)

Mr. Scully, hi. Listen, I just wanna 'splain how there was some existential circumstances goin' on the other day --

SCULLY (ON PHONE)

No, I'm gonna "'splain" how you're a fuck up. My client is very unhappy.

EXT. QUINN'S RESTAURANT, DALLAS - DAY

MIKE SCULLY, 40s, nice suit, steps out of a posh downtown restaurant to finish the call.

SCULLY

(into phone)

And by unhappy, I mean he's gotta sore throat from screamin', "That stupid motherfucker!"

WAYNE (ON PHONE)

(winces)

Kinda harsh.

SCULLY

Look, we commissioned you to deliver a painting. A professional painting. What we got was fucking finger art.

WAYNE

Finger art? I don't know what that is.

SCULLY

Huh? It's a thing, those stupid things that little kids do! They make turkeys.

WAYNE (ON PHONE)

Oh, right. Wull, okay, but here's the thing: that photo, the one I was workin' from, it was kinda outta focus so --

SCULLY

Shut the fuck up! I'm hiring somebody else. Somebody who knows how to actually finish a painting!

WAYNE (ON PHONE)

No, wait, wait, you can't! I need this! My life is shit. I don't got money for rent. My car's all busted up. My mother changed her phone number, my cat's got cancer an' I'm pretty sure my girlfriend's fucking some guy in AA.

SCULLY

Not really my problem, is it?
(then)
What type cancer?

WAYNE (ON PHONE)

Huh?

SCULLY

The cat.

WAYNE (ON PHONE)

I don't know, it's like ass cancer or somethin'. They wanna do surgery an' then she's gonna be paralyzed, so I gotta get her one a those strap-on hip things with the little wheels... so she's gonna have to roll everywhere. She's like six, man.

A long beat.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THEM:

SCULLY

Okay look, here's what I'll do. I'm keeping the other deal in place, the one with the painter who's NOT a fuck up. But -- big but -- if you're the one who actually finishes the job... you get half what I offered.

WAYNE

Half?

SCULLY

You don't like that?

Stay with Wayne.

WAYNE

(emphatically)

No, no! I was just gonna say how grateful I am for the chance to --

Wayne looks at his phone, Scully's gone. He glances forlornly at his girlfriend sitting in the car, as she digs into her cheeseburger. He shoves the phone into his pocket and opens the car door.

CLAUDIA

There's no goddamn mustard!

As Wayne takes that in (and the rest of his miserable life),

EXT. HOFFA MARRIAGE/FAMILY COUNSELING CENTER - DAY

The counseling center is a converted Victorian, run down, sliced by the slope of a Berkeley hillside. A far cry from Alan's high tech Plano office. Alan double checks the address and climbs the wooden stairs. He's dressed in new clothes, with a little more of a beard now.

INT. COUNSELING CENTER LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Not much better inside. There's a large second-hand couch and a few raggedy chairs. A smorgasbord of clients are waiting: TWO HUSKY MEN holding hands, a STONER who may or may not know he's actually there, a CROSS-DRESSER, a YOUNG WOMAN with bright green hair. It's Berkeley. At the reception desk, TRACY SOWER, 20, has a bare foot up on the desk, painting a toenail. Alan enters, approaches.

ALAN

Hi. I'm here to see Roselyn Carlyle about a job opening.

TRACY

(looks up)
A job opening?

ALAN

Yeah. Alan Janssen.

TRACY

(sits up)
Are you shitting me? Why? 'Cause I was late again? Is that it? I told her, I told her my boyfriend had to get his stomach pumped! I told her that!

ALAN

Right. But, see, I'm here for a counseling position.

TRACY

(breathes)
Oh. Right. I forgot about that. You're like the only one that's show'd up.

She punches the intercom button when the door to Roselyn's office opens and A LARGE GRUFF-LOOKING TATTED MAN emerges -- looks like he's spent time in prison. ROSELYN CARLYLE (early 40s, attractive, confident, professional) follows him out.

ROSELYN

Mr. Yoffee, the county requires my signature on that paperwork. If you don't bring it in, I can't sign it.

TATTED MAN

(a grunt)
Yeah, yeah.

He EXITS. Roselyn turns to Tracy, who points to Alan.

TRACY

This guy's here about a counselor thing.

(nods at green hair girl)

An' Salad Head's in for her two o'clock.

Roselyn shoots Tracy an admonishing look for the "Salad Head" reference, then turns to Alan.

ROSELYN

Roselyn Carlyle. Pleasure.

ALAN

Alan Janssen.

They shake hands.

INT. ROSELYN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Alan sits as Roselyn finds his (fake) resume and sits.

ROSELYN

(looking it over)
Now then, I see you did your undergrad work in Denver, then Idaho for your MFCC. You worked out of Mercy General in Boise... crisis and social service center?

ALAN

(nods)
Cohabitational problem-solving.

ROSELYN

My husband's from Boise.

ALAN

Oh...
 (shit)
 That's great.

Her CELLPHONE RINGS. She looks at it, pushes it aside.

ROSELYN

Speak of the devil.

The cellphone continues to ring, Roselyn ignores it.

ROSELYN (CONT'D)

Go ahead, Mr. Janssen.

ALAN

Uh... I also dealt with cases of
 unipolar and bipolar depression...

Her PHONE KEEPS RINGING, Alan continues tentatively.

ALAN (CONT'D)

...and, uh, addiction, substance
 abuse, PTSD, a few cases of --

She suddenly grabs the phone and answers.

ROSELYN

What!?
 (turns to face away)
 No, I'm at work. I'm at work, Roger!
 (then)
 My car's not out front because it's
 in the shop, remember? I Ubered here!
 Call the land line if you don't
 fucking believe me!

She looks apologetically to Alan. He half-stands, indicates
 he'll wait outside. She waves him off. He sits back down.

ROSELYN (CONT'D)

(into phone)
 Because I'm in the middle of an
 interview.
 (then)
 An interview!
 (then)
 It's none of your goddamn business
 who I'm interviewing! Yes, he's
 attractive, so what? Jesus, Roger,
 don't start this shit again!

She hangs up, drops the phone in a desk drawer, slams it shut,
 while Alan waits. She tries to compose herself. Then,

ROSELYN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Mr. Janssen. You were saying...

ALAN

Uh, well... I also have some experience dealing with eating disorders...

Roselyn suddenly bursts into tears. Alan sits for a moment, waits awkwardly, then sees a TISSUE BOX on the coffee table. He gets up, grabs it and puts it on Roselyn's desk.

ROSELYN

Thank you.

She takes one and blows her nose. Alan sits again.

ROSELYN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry...

ALAN

If you want me to give you a moment...

ROSELYN

(wiping her nose)

No, no. I'm fine... I seem to know how to fix everyone else's life but...

She dabs the tears and then looks at him.

ROSELYN (CONT'D)

I'll tell you something, Mr. Janssen. You have kind eyes, honest eyes. Believe it or not, that's hard to find in this business. I have a feeling you'll work out fine.

(stands)

You start Monday.

Alan, surprised, stands. She extends her hand, they shake.

ALAN

Thank you.

ROSELYN

Don't thank me yet.

(off his look)

We have a new contract with the county. A windfall for the center here. But it means we'll be taking on a number of clients from Alameda Correctional. Mostly parolees with mandates for counseling.

ALAN

Cons?

ROSELYN

For want of a better word, sure. Car thieves, armed robbers, pickpockets, hackers, embezzlers. Bottom of the barrel -- even for Berkeley.

ALAN

And I'm guessing these barrel people will be mine?

ROSELYN

Good guess.

ALAN

Couldn't be happier.

ROSELYN

Excellent. Keep your sense of humor.

Alan smiles and starts for the door as Roselyn sits. Then Alan thinks of something, stops and turns back to her.

ALAN

Uh, I'll need to be paid in cash.

ROSELYN

Oh?

(suspicious)

And why is that?

ALAN

I'm just in the middle of a... a complicated situation is all.

ROSELYN

Well, I'm afraid that's quite impossible.

ALAN

Right.

He isn't sure if this a deal breaker ('cause this place looks as under-the-table as it gets). A gambit:

ALAN (CONT'D)

Well, I'll have to give it some thought...

Roselyn sees his wheels turning. Unfortunately for her, she hasn't been deluged with applicants.

ROSELYN
Fine. If that's what you want.

ALAN
(breathes)
Thank you.
(smiles)
See you Monday.

ROSELYN
Nine o'clock.

She watches him exit.

EXT. HOFFA COUNSELING CENTER - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

ALAN emerges, pleased with himself, as he descends the front steps and heads down the sidewalk. He's got a job and a place to live -- now he can start figuring things out. He smiles a little as he passes a HOMELESS GUY beside a SHOPPING CART.

HOMELESS GUY
Spare change?

ALAN
(stops)
Oh... yeah, sure.

Alan digs some change out of his pocket, hands it to him.

HOMELESS GUY
(examines it)
Seventy-five cents? Wow. Now I can buy half a McMuffin.

ALAN
You're welcome.

HOMELESS GUY
(studies Alan)
Hold on. You him!

The Homeless Guy takes out a crumpled FLIER with a PHOTO OF ALAN on it, looks at Alan, looks at it. Alan sees it.

ALAN
Where'd you get that?

HOMELESS GUY
Whooo-eh! 'At's you, awright!

The Homeless Guy pulls out his CELLPHONE.

HOMELESS GUY (CONT'D)

(to Alan)

Don't go nowhere! There's a guy gonna
gimme fifty bucks for findin' you!
Stay here, huh! Don't go nowhere!

The man punches numbers on his cell, as Alan mulls this over. It's not good. He's gotta get out of there, out of Berkeley. He starts to sprint down the sidewalk as the man looks up and sees him running away.

HOMELESS GUY (CONT'D)

Hey! What'd I JUST finish tellin'
you!?

EXT. DOWNTOWN BERKELEY - MOMENTS LATER

As Alan sprints down the sidewalk, headed for his apartment, he blasts past some shops and A SMALL MAN he doesn't notice. WE STAY WITH the Small Man, who hands a FLIER to an ELDERLY COUPLE.

GORDON

So, if you see this guy, lemme know.
'Kay?

And we,

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE ONE

072020

BERKELEY

What to Expect in a Limited Series

ALAN

Alan's life will be in constant danger as he continues to dig for answers—who wants him dead and why? In his time at the counseling center he will gain more and more “skills” from his criminal clients: computer hacking, car jacking, pick pocketing and an impressive knowledge of guns and other weapons. He'll even learn slight-of-hand.

KATE

Kate and he will have impetuous/desperate sex when Alan thinks he has to get out of town and *they* believe they will not see each other again. She is guilt-ridden about it, since she's engaged to a wonderful woman named Anne. The three of them will gradually become good friends.

ROSELYN

Roselyn's husband Roger shows up at Alan's place with a not-so-friendly warning to stay out of his wife's pants. Then he'll smile and show Alan the gun stuffed in his pants. After Roger trips and accidentally shoots off a testicle, his male insecurity will ratchet up considerably. Alan then finds himself in the middle of their dysfunctional tar pit when Roselyn confesses to him her doubts about making love to a man with a “silicone testicle.”

GORDON

Alan will discover it's Gordon who's looking for him in Berkeley (after another "premonition"). Alan pleads with Gordon to leave because he's putting both their lives in danger. Gordon, of course does nothing of the sort, insisting he's there to keep an eye on Alan, protect him from danger and to see him once or twice a week.

WAYNE

Wayne the "assassin" will continue to bumble his way to Alan in Berkeley, as will the (more) professional assassin that Scully has hired. All hell will break loose when they both arrive in Berkeley and realize they're both trying to kill the same man at the same time. Gordon will be there to protect Alan, but will pay a heavy price.

AMERITEX BANK

Alan finally figures out who is trying to kill him and why. It has to do with the CEO of AmeriTex Bank, an investment gone bad, a cover up and the suspicion that Leslie Vander had been talking to Alan about it. Alan will eventually make his way back to Dallas—using his newly learned "skills." There, the AmeriTex CEO will wake in the middle of the night to discover one of his wrists is hand-cuffed to the headboard and Alan at the end of the bed with a gun and a psychological game to play.

THE ENDING

After the CEO's confession, Alan will try to renew his former life in Plano, Texas. He soon finds himself bored by his clients and rethinking his decision to pick up where he left off. In the middle of a session, he gets a text from Kate's wife Annie, who let's him know that Kate is pregnant. She says they would both like him to be in Berkeley and available to babysit on short notice. Alan decides to step out of his session, take a flight to Berkeley and begin his life again. This time with a new practice catering to a wide array of alternative lifestyles and a baby girl who will grow to love Uncle Alan.