

EKKO 'FOLLOW THE STONES'

A Screenplay TV Pilot by

Johnny Walker

Based on the EKKO book trilogy
by Johnny Walker

Second Writer: Brooks Crudup

Johnny Walker
646.861.8283
Johnny@EkkoMysteries.com

1 INT. STADIUM HALLWAY - NIGHT - 2009

Audio: Muffled cheering sounds of a crowded stadium. A man hauls ass down a long hallway, white cinderblock walls.

This is CHAD JOHN SINGLETON, or CJ, (22) headset, the stadium A/V engineer, a sound guru who spends more time with frequencies than people.

Sweat on his face. Terror in his eyes. This is life or death.

2 INT. CJ'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

CJ (29) is in bed -- twitching. He rolls on his back and stares at the ceiling. His brown hair is long and messy, a scruffy beard grows up his cheeks. No life in his saggy eyes.

He rolls to the side, restless, buries his head under a pillow.

3 INT. STADIUM HALLWAY - NIGHT - 2009

Still hauling ass, CJ comes to a sharp turn. Can't make it -- slams into the wall and falls. He jumps back up and runs.

He puts a radio to his face.

CJ
Abort! Do not make the swap!

People who see him get out of his way, others get shoved aside.

A food cart rolls out of a dressing room. CJ SLAMS into it, rolls across the floor. Crap goes everywhere. He gets up, slips on lettuce and strawberries, struggles to stay on his feet.

4 INT. CJ'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

CJ flings the pillow down. Man, is he troubled. He tosses, punches the pillow. Forces his eyes shut.

5 INT. STAGE WING - NIGHT - 2009

CJ flies up a set of metal half-stairs, gets to a platform. To his right is the stage where the band is rockin'. A security guard stands watching, his back to CJ.

Just ten feet ahead a ROADIE squats in front of a breaker panel. He's about to flip a switch.

CJ
Stopp!!! Don't --!

The roadie flips it. ZZZZT! POW! A waterfall of sparks pour from the breakers, knock him on his ass. Overhead lights flicker.

CJ shields his eyes, then turns to the stage.

The LEAD SINGER has a tight grip on the mic stand. His body is gyrating, his eyes bulging. He's being electrocuted.

CJ runs onstage and yanks a carpet from under the drums. He DIVES for the lead singer, wraps him in carpet and breaks the connection. They tumble across the stage floor.

The lead singer isn't moving. Blood drips from his nose and ears.

Two security guards run onstage and crouch over the lead singer.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
 CJ, move! CJ! Let em work!

CJ spins around in disbelief. A stadium filled with people is dead quiet. Then... everyone turns and faces CJ.

AUDIO PRELAP: A fire alarm chimes.

6 INT. CJ'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

CROSSFADE AUDIO: CJ's alarm is chiming.

He rolls over in bed, eyes the alarm. He sits, turns off the alarm and rubs his face. A silver AMULET swings from his neck.

ROLL CREDITS

7 EXT. CJ'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Wearing jeans and a hoodie, CJ flings a leather bag over his shoulder and walks down the stoop, hails a cab.

8 INT. FRYING PAN ROCK CLUB - NEW YORK - NIGHT - LATER

A music club on the PIERS, wood cabin style, fifty BEER DRINKERS scatter the dance floor, vacant tables behind them. A FEMALE FAN (20) yells at the ROCK BAND on stage.

FEMALE FAN
 Take me home with you!

The CROWD behind her cheers, looking up at the band.

9 SOUND BOOTH

In the back, four feet above the floor is a wooden booth, the top half unobstructed. Inside is a YOUNG SOUNDMAN, wearing headphones.

10 BACK CORNER

CJ stands in a shadowed corner, barely seen under his dark hoodie. He studies the stage and sound booth from afar.

He pulls out a cell phone. There's something attached to the back, a clunky adapter, wrecks of a HOMEMADE DEVICE.

CJ POV: He swipes his phone and comes to an APP - also homemade, resembles the amulet he wears. He taps. Various stick men appear on the screen, one figure is bent over. He taps it.

The clunky adapter HUMS. He AIMS HIS PHONE at the soundman and thumbs it like a remote. Hazy ripples flow like waves, transmitting a low-frequency pulse.

11 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The Young Soundman has a sudden dizzy spell, shakes his head and grips the counter. Sweat covers his face. A barf rattles its way up and he clinches his stomach, drops to the floor.

12 BACK CORNER - CONTINUOUS

CJ aims his phone at the stage, taps the screen. The homemade adapter heats up, a puff of smoke rises.

The amplifiers onstage PING all at once, a squealing sound -- shrill and painful. People cover their ears as feedback escalates.

CJ swishes his hot phone. OUCH! He backs into the dark corner.

13 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The club MANAGER, hip guy, runs to the front of the booth. He looks inside, then spins in circles looking for the Young Soundman. No luck. He's pissed.

He climbs into the booth, TRIPS and falls out of view.

The Young Soundman rolls out of the booth and down a few stairs. He's puking. The Manager STANDS and eyes the sound board. He's clueless. Shit. He eyes the stage. Double shit!

14 STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The musicians have unplugged. One singer flips the bird at the sound booth as he walks off the stage.

15 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

CJ leaps into the booth and shoves the Manager aside. He fingers buttons on the gear FLIP FLIP FLIP -- lighting speed, redirects cables, ejects a computer card. The painful sound stops.

He brings the VOG, (voice of God microphone) to his face.

16 STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The drummer is tossing his sticks in a bag, when...

CJ
(over stage monitors)
Plug in guys. We're back on track.

The musicians go back to their instruments and plug in.

The crowd reappears on the dance floor as the band starts playing. The sound is superb. The night continues.

17 SOUND BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

The Manager stands behind CJ, his arms crossed, watching CJ swiftly master the controls on the sound board. Huh. He's impressed.

CJ
(over his shoulder)
You should get this looked at. Set up all wrong.

MANAGER
Something you can do?

CJ
(over his shoulder)
I was hoping not to work tonight.

CJ pulls out a RED FLIP PHONE, checks it. He pauses, then...

CJ (CONT'D)
What the hell. I could fix it by the time the band is done. But I'm sorry, man. I'd have to charge you.

18 BACK TABLE

SARA (26) INTERTWINE MUSIC office Manager, likes her wine, blonde hair, hard to tell if she's cunning or just drunk. She's in the club scouting bands.

She sits across from E, (49) NATHAN JUJU'S aging lead singer, pointed boots, dyed blond ponytail, egomaniacal ass.

E taps his shot glass on the table -- loud enough for others to hear. He's in sync with the music, but, damn it's annoying.

Sara peers over the crowd at the sound booth. She stands.

SARA
Holy shit. Is that--?
(tosses her bag at E)
Don't lose this.

19 SOUND BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Sara eyes CJ as she walks in front of the booth. She gets ten feet away, turns and walks by once more, again staring CJ down.

CJ's face is glued to the sound board.

Sara stands at the corner of the booth.

SARA
CJ!

It's too loud. Sara then hollers...

SARA (CONT'D)
CJ!

Sara ducks down when CJ looks up. CJ drops his brows. HUH? His eyes shift, then... he faces the board again. Back to work.

20 INT/EXT. FRYING PAN ROCK CLUB - NIGHT - LATER

CJ is just inside the club, facing the glass door exit. He stuffs some cash in his wallet and goes outside, walks away.

A gray apparition emerges inside the club, well-defined and visible through the glass door. This is NIBEL, (50s) an Imperial Messenger in d'artagan clothing. He's not too happy about being a servant.

He walks THROUGH the glass door and follows CJ.

21 INT. CJ'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - LATE NIGHT

In a brick loft, CJ sits at a U-Shaped workstation, stainless steel tables, electronics, monitors, equalizers. Wurlitzer organ.

One table holds shallow tins of water, wired to electronic gear and auditive devices.

A CHLADNI PLATE is mounted over a speaker. The tray shows lines of salt in a Mandelbrot design.

He's working on his clunky adapter -- tweaking knobs, taking notes, charting the VISUAL EFFECTS of sound.

He WHEELS to a Wurlitzer, hits a note, WHEELS to a tin of water. Ripples flow, but they're not centered. Somethings wrong.

He tweaks knobs, watches the ripples swell, but still not centered.

The tone suddenly DEEPENS ON ITS OWN. WTHell? He looks at the gear, then the tin of water. The ripples are symmetrical.

CJ eyes his notes, then, dials a LARGE KNOB back to his settings. The water ripples go off center. He sits back and eyes the gear.

Then, the large knob slowly... turns... on it's own.

HOLY SHIT! He wheels away. Looks around. Then, a big sigh.

CJ

Dammit, DeBussy. Knock it off!

CJ stands and looks for a hiding DEBUSSY, his longtime pal.

CJ (CONT'D)

(peeks under a table)

How'd you hook that up to wireless?

(a beat)

D?

He goes back to the worktable and sits, a little freaked.

BAM!! A musical growl BLASTS from his gear. It's deafening. Everything rattles. He jumps out of his chair.

A tiny blue reflection appears on the silver gear, catches his eye.

He starts looking, can't find the source until... he passes a black monitor that shows his reflection. The silver amulet around his neck is now blue, and it's glowing. He turns off the gear.

The growling tone stops. The blue amulet dims.

22 INT. BASEMENT - DAY - FLASHBACK 1990

POV: a four-year-old CJ is looking up at...

Fuzzy images of COPPER SINGLETON, his grandfather, sitting at a counter and adjusting radio knobs. A GLOWING BLUE AMULET hangs from his neck.

AUDIO: Echoed giggling of a little boy.

END FLASHBACK

23 INT. CJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

He wheels his chair to the CHLADNI PLATE, drops his AMULET in the center. FLIPS the gear back on, adjusts some knobs.

He eyes the amulet while playing random keys on the Wurlitzer, searching for the right tone. Nothing. Nothing. EUREKA! He found the tone and the amulet glows. EXCITING!

He inverts two knobs and everything on the table vibrates. He wheels to a monitor and types in some CODING, plugs in his phone. A DOWNLOAD BAR appears on the screen, then... DOWNLOAD COMPLETE.

CJ flips a switch. The vibrating stops.

He stands and CLICKS his clunky adapter to the phone, aims it across the room and taps the screen.

An ELECTRIC ARC shoots from his adapter and hits a monitor. ZZZT-POW! The monitor EXPLODES!

CJ swishes the smoke away and creeps up to the damage, shocked and thrilled. He looks at the gear, at his phone, at the amulet.

HELL YEAH! He sits down and goes into MAD SCIENTIST mode.

24 EXT. - CITY SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Sara strolls, dialing her phone.

SARA

(into phone)

I was in your club tonight, and I just realized someone got into my purse. You have security cameras?

She listens, waits, then... drops her shoulders.

SARA (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 I saw your soundman by my table, and
 now my cash is gone.

She listens.

SARA (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Brown hair, kinda scruffy. What's
 his name?
 (a beat)
Curt ... Johnson?

Sara pulls the phone away and smirks. Puts the phone back.

SARA (CONT'D)
 (irate, into phone)
 He's a thief! Fire him!

25 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - EARLY MORNING

CJ drives down a highway mouthing words to "DARKEST CHILD" by
 Sophie Hawkins. A passing road sign reads: BOSTON 27 MILES.

26 INT. HALLWAY - BOSTON - MORNING

CJ approaches an apartment door, slips a key in the lock.

27 INT. DEBUSSY'S APARTMENT - BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

CJ enters and shuts the door behind him, noses through the mail.
 Next to some keys are crumpled balls of cash. CJ pulls some cash
 from his pocket and crumples it up. He stares at a far door, opens
 a drawer, scatters the cash inside, quietly closes the drawer.

He sits on a couch, feet go on the table. Lights a cig.

A bedroom door opens and DEBUSSY (27) walks out. Cherokee Indian,
 rock t-shirt, bipolar -- a rebel in his own mind.

DEBUSSY
 Dude. How many times? No smoking.

CJ
 (blows a puff at him)
 God, you're a whiny bitch.

DEBUSSY
 (waves the smoke away)
 What are you doing here?

CJ
 Couple jobs. One you're gonna help
 me with.

DEBUSSY
 No more places to scam in New York?

CJ
 (snuffs his cig)
 Charming way to put it.

It's early, DeBussy has just woken. He sits in an armchair, rubs his eyes, grabs a pill bottle from the end table.

CJ (CONT'D)
 See... when you guys moved up here,
 you gave me more places to... *work*.

DEBUSSEY
 Shoulda moved farther away.

CJ leans over and snatches the bottle from DeBussy.

CJ
 These any good?

DEBUSSY
 If you like diarrhea.

CJ tosses the bottle back at DeBussy. PASS.

CJ
 I need your car. Back in an hour.

DEBUSSY
 No. Last time you were gone for
 days.

CJ
 Radine knows my truck.
 (lifts a set of keys)
 She'll see it. Use my wheels today.

DEBUSSY
 I've only worked with her for six
 years. She knows my car, too, dumb--
 (shakes his head)
 You need these pills worse than me.

CJ stands and pulls some cash from his pocket, flips through it. Flings a TEN at DeBussy and bolts for the door.

CJ
 Put some gas in it.

DeBussy leaps up as CJ exits and slams the front door shut.
DeBussy tugs on the door. It judders, but won't open.

DEBUSSY
(tugging the doorknob)
God dammit, CJ!

28 INT. BOGIES ROCK CLUB - BOSTON - DAY

CJ drags a ladder under a ceiling speaker, climbs up.

AUDIO: The MUSIC in the showroom fluctuates, like changing stations between ROCK music and a baroque-style CHANSON.

House lights FLICKER.

CJ
(To himself)
God bless shitty soundmen. Ya keep
me working.

He puts his ear to the speaker, whacks it and listens again.
Looks behind the speaker.

CJ (CONT'D)
No wonder it's picking up China.

He unplugs the speaker, unlatches the mount. The quiet speaker drops, he cradles it and descends the ladder.

The CHANSON suddenly plays through the disconnected speaker, then... a GHOSTLY WHISPER, Nibel, comes through the speaker.

NIBEL (V.O.)
(softly)
Follow the stones.

CJ pauses on one rung, stares at the speaker. He laughs -- kinda -- then climbs down the ladder. He sets the speaker on a table, backs away and looks around.

Nibel emerges onstage as a vague, gray figure. CJ stares.

NIBEL (CONT'D)
Heed my words, voyager.

Nibel TRANSFORMS into a physical being: SPEAKING OUT LOUD does that. He now has a dark beard, his deerskin vest is tan and faded.

CJ
(turns away)
NO, no no. You are... *not here!*

NIBEL
We must speak.

CJ
(head thrown back)
No, we must not. I'm not doing this
shit again... and you are *not here*.

NIBEL
(passionately)
Your parents seek you. Be swift, or
lose them forever.

That stung CJ. He breathes, wants to look -- just can't.

CJ
That was you last night, wasn't it?

A WHIRLING chair flies by CJ's head and slams into the stage wall.
The speakers squeal, then, the tables and chairs RISE and HOVER.

NIBEL
(forceful)
Hear me now!!

The squealing stops and the furniture drops. CJ dodges a chair
and spins around -- on guard.

NIBEL (CONT'D)
The stones will guide you. Make
haste!

29 INT. SARA'S LIVING ROOM - NEW YORK - DAY

Sara FLINGS crap out of her closet, finds a shoe box and carries
it to the kitchen. She hops her butt on the counter.

From the shoe box she pulls out notebooks, stacks of them.

SARA POV: Flipping through pages of notes and phone numbers.

She comes to one page and stops, runs her finger down the page.
Then... She rips the page out and hops down.

30 INT. DEBUSSY'S CAR - BOSTON - DAY

CJ pulls up to a rock club on the BOSTON PIERS. He parks, stares
across the street. His hands shake as he adjusts the radio.

A woman walks across the street. She owns the club. She is RADINE
(28) lustrous black skin, burgundy hair, a tender heart that
comes from tough love. She shoulders her bag and looks his way.

CJ DUCKS down... then, he creeps back up.

She unlocks the club door and goes inside.

CJ takes a swig from a bottle of booze, unfolds a newspaper: the classifieds. He circles a LIVE MUSIC add, starts the car.

31 INT. DEBUSSY'S CAR - DAY

CJ drives down a road, troubled. He looks in the rear view mirror. Nibel is in the backseat, staring him down.

NIBEL
I insist we speak.

CRAP! CJ freaks and sideswipes a parked car. He screeches to a halt.

CJ
What the fuck!

CJ gets out. He paces, shaking off the adrenaline, then turns to yell at Nibel, but, the backseat is empty. AARG!

32 INT. DEBUSSY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

CJ is crashed on the couch. His eyelids are fluttering.

33 INT. OFFICE - DAY - 2009 - FLASHBACK/DREAM

CJ sits at a desk opposite a HEAVY MAN wearing a Santa Clause tie. Two policemen lean against the wall behind him.

HEAVY MAN
No, there are no charges filed against you, but we have to let you go.

CJ
The crappy gear was your fault. You know that, right?
(points to a file)
Is that in your report?

HEAVY MAN
The family of the singer wants blood, CJ... and shit rolls downhill.

DeBussy enters the office and approaches the desk. He leans forward and MASHES a chocolate doughnut in CJ's face.

END DREAM/FLASHBACK

34 INT. DEBUSSY'S APARTMENT - EVENING - PRESENT DAY

CJ springs up. WTF? DeBussy is standing over him, a mangled chocolate doughnut in his hand. CJ scrapes icing from his cheek.

CJ
(eyes the icing)
Why... did you do that?

DEBUSSY
Pick a reason.

CJ goes into the bathroom.

CJ (O.S.)
I saw her today.

DEBUSSY
You gotta move on, CJ. She told me--

A toilet flushes. CJ rushes back in the room.

CJ
What did she say -- about me, I mean?

DEBUSSY
Was a few days ago. Something about
a tour. People looking for you.

CJ's shoulders drop. Meh. He plops down on the couch.

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)
Take the tour, CJ. You used to rock
those year round. You need it.

CJ
(scopes out the room)
And leave all this behind?

DEBUSSY
There's a lot of new faces in the
industry. No one will know you.

CJ toys with his phone.

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)
What happens when there's no more
clubs to hack?

CJ
The country is loaded with clubs,
and I'm loaded with ammo.
(shakes his phone)
Now... new and improved.

DEBUSSY

So that's it. You've officially
become a full blown scammer.

CJ grabs a remote from the end table, pries it open.

CJ

I could become a skyscraper techie.
Spend the rest of my days
broadcasting powerpoint charts between
Idaho and Singapore. So thrilling.

DeBussy snatches the remote from CJ.

DEBUSSY

Or... stop dissecting sound in your
forensic dungeon? Get back on the
horse? I don't know -- *man up?*

CJ

Says the man people don't avoid.

DEBUSSY

Then change your name, color your
hair, but get back out there, man.

CJ throws DeBussy a look.

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)

What?

CJ

Always wanted blue hair.

A ringtone chimes the song, BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN. CJ pats his
jacket, pulls out a red phone. He looks, doesn't answer.

DEBUSSY

(nods at the phone)

What's that one do -- flatten tires?

CJ gets up, scribbles a note, hands it to DeBussy.

CJ

Be here at eleven. And remember,
you don't know me.

CJ grabs his bag and leaves, his boots clack down the hall.

AUDIO PRELAP: Boot steps on wooden stairs.

35 INT. ANCIENT THEATER - LOCATION UNKNOWN - NIGHT

Nibel walks onto an abandoned stage, dimly lit, wood planks, dusty.

He faces the dark wing and speaks to Janine Binchois AKA: JANIE B, Music royalty and AGELESS Grand Dame of the spirit world. She speaks like Maggie Smith. Only heard, not seen.

NIBEL

I fear this may not be so easy a task. He is... quite stubborn.

JANIE B (V.O.)

Indeed he is. A necessary trait for a courier of the weapon. Go now. Proceed as planned.

36 EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

37 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - NIGHT

A luxurious office overlooks the NYC skyline. SARA makes a drink.

In the corner is a demo recording area. Instruments and gold records scatter the walls.

E sits on a leather couch, semi-strumming an acoustic guitar.

There with them is DEAN AUTRY (50) Bushy eyebrows, pot belly, dinner jacket. A British Indian music producer who owns Intertwine Music, a man who's heart races at the sound of a cash register.

Dean sits across from E. Sara hands him a drink.

DEAN

Give us a status on radio, Sara.

Sara goes to her desk. She grabs a file, then pours some wine.

SARA

Locals are running. Nationals kick in once the tour hits the pavement.

Sara hands Dean the file, sips her wine.

SARA (CONT'D)

It's all here, Dean. And I have one more candidate for the A/V position.

E

(stops strumming)

Gees, Sara. Why don't you just hire some freak off Craigslist?

(off Sara's glare)

Listen, Dean. I want Bob Dustin.

DEAN
 Forgive me if your choices frighten
 me, E. I prefer--

E strums a loud chord, then hammers out an aggressive strum.

DEAN (CONT'D)
 (glares at E)
 What's his name, Sara?

SARA
 (over the strumming)
 Curt Johnson. Heard his work the
 other night. Pretty amazing.

E strums a power chord and sings out...

E
*Ladies and gents: give it up for
 Freddy Fucking Kruger on sound!*

DEAN
 Bloody hell, E. If he's the one, I
 want him on board.

Sara faces the skyline, wine glass to her lips. Her reflection
 in the glass wall says...

SARA
 Oh, he's the one alright.

E
 (points at Sara)
 No! I won't let you hire someone
 just cause Sara wants to bone him.

Dean turns to Sara.

DEAN
 Postpone the audition, Sara. Until...

E
 (stands proud)
 About time you listened to me.

DEAN
 (turns to E)
 ...we've secured a new singer.

E
 Singer? I'm the --
 (he gets it)
Oh hell no! It's my music!!

DEAN
Which I've secured the rights to.

E
You can't replace me!

DEAN
Can. And will.
(a beat)
My money. My call.

38 EXT. DARK STAR PARKING LOT - BOSTON - NIGHT

DeBussy approaches his car and stops, stares at the dented fender.

39 INT. DEBUSSY'S CAR - NIGHT

CJ sits at the wheel. He hollers at DeBussy, who's outside.

CJ
You need to get that fixed!

DeBussy gets in the car, tosses CJ a set of keys.

DEBUSSY
CJ.
(stares straight ahead)
I'm done helping you.

CJ perks up. Whaa? He throws DeBussy a fake smile. He pulls out his phone, starts swiping, plays with the APP.

DEBUSSEY
Did you hear me? I'm not doing this.

CJ
Stop talking shit.

DEBUSSY
Do you do anything but play with that app? You have a life?

CJ
My grandfather opened this can of worms when I was a kid.

DeBussy holds his hands out... AND THAT MEANS?

CJ (CONT'D)
Sound. It is life -- my life, and it's enough for me. I'm just...
(a beat)
...Taking a different approach.

CJ lifts his phone and attaches the clunky adapter. CLICK. He grabs the door handle, faces DeBussy.

CJ (CONT'D)
Twenty minutes. Don't be late or this won't work.

DEBUSSEY
I'm not coming in.

CJ
D, stop it. I can't do this without you.

DEBUSSEY
Take that touring job and I'll do this. And it'll be the last time for both of us.

CJ
(truly shocked)
What the hell?

DEBUSSEY
I've had enough of this shit. And so have you. You want my help, swear... you'll take the job.

CJ throws his head back.

CJ
I'll look into it.

DeBussy grabs his door handle and turns to leave.

CJ (CONT'D)
All right! All right. I'll...

They lock eyes. DeBussy waits for the right word.

CJ (CONT'D)
You fucking suck. After all--

DEBUSSEY
Swear to me!!

CJ
Fine! Bastard. Pig fucker! *I swear!*

CJ gets out, shuts the door, walks away.

DEBUSSEY
You're paying for a new fender!!

40 INT. DARK STAR NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

A nickel interior with blue sconces, laser light ceiling. A band plays. People drink and mingle about.

CJ pulls his hoodie over his head and ducks behind a faux marble pillar. Out comes his phone.

41 SOUND BOOTH

Against the back wall is a black wire cage. Inside, a young SOUNDMAN is tweaking knobs on the gear.

42 PILLAR

CJ looks around. Coast is clear. He taps his phone as he walks closer to the sound booth.

He nods at the SOUNDMAN when he arrives -- just chillin. CJ leans one arm on the cage, phone tucked in his palm and aimed at the stage. One finger scrolls the screen.

There's a sudden rumble in the room, low but growing louder. CJ's hoodie reveals a dim, blue glow where the amulet hangs.

43 STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Behind the singer, a GUITAR in a stand shakes, then vibrates across the floor -- just a few feet.

44 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

CJ scrolls on his phone, sloooooowly... fine... tuning.

45 STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The guitar rattles big time, then leans and falls into the drums. Shit clashing noises. The drummer leaps up. The band halts.

46 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The Soundman bolts out of the booth, heads for the stage. CJ creeps inside, pulls out a wire, plugs his phone into the gear.

Phone screen shows a DOWNLOAD in process. Then... DOWNLOAD COMPLETE. CJ unhooks the phone and sneaks back out.

47 INT. DEBUSSY'S CAR - NIGHT

DeBussy looks at his watch, opens the car door.

48 INT. DARK STAR - NIGHT

DeBussy enters the main room and he's hit with a loud, static hiss, electronic, annoying as hell. He flinches.

Two men argue at the sound booth. An OLD GUY yells at the Soundman, who -- yells back.

49 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

CJ hops past the employees and goes into the booth, punches a few buttons. The static hiss stops. CJ comes back out of the booth.

CJ
(to the Soundman)
Never loop passive *and* active speakers
through the EQ. Good way to fry it.

The Old Guy glares at the Soundman.

SOUNDMAN
(points to the stage)
That was something else, not the EQ!
Get out of my booth!

DEBUSSY
(approaches)
Hey guys. I'm a soundman, heard the
problem. I'd say the EQ is fried.

Old Guy's hands go to his hips. He's pissed. Shakes his head.

The Soundman loses it. ARGH! He takes a swing at DeBussy.

CJ's hand moves like lightning, catches the moving fist in his palm. He leans in close to the Soundman.

CJ
Touch him -- you die.

The Soundman pulls loose and walks away. Smart move.

CJ heads off, nods at DeBussy as he passes. CJ gets to the pillar and spins around, when, Nibel appears in front of him.

CJ (CONT'D)
 (whispers to Nibel)
Get the hell out of here!

CJ aims his phone at the sound booth, taps it like a remote.

Sparks fly from the sound board and a small flame erupts. The Old Guy goes frantic. SHIT! No one there to help him.

CJ runs in the booth and SNUFFS OUT the small flames. He faces the Old Guy, but his eyes are really probing for Nibel.

CJ (CONT'D)
 (patronizing)
 That could have cost you a whole new system. If you want me to fix this, speak up. Tonight's my only free night.

50 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - NEW YORK - NIGHT

E leans over Sara's desk, thumbing through her files.

Sara enters her office, spots E and briefly stops, then...

SARA
 Why are you digging through my desk?

E
 (sits with one file)
 Wasn't aware you kept things private.

SARA
 Only my desire to be near you.

Sara tosses her purse aside, settles into her chair.

SARA (CONT'D)
 Why are you here?

E
 Hello? Budget meeting? You and me?

SARA
 (types on her keyboard)
 Hello? Three hours ago?

E
 I'm here, aren't I?
 (opens a file)
 These the A/V candidates?

E cocks his head, does a double-take with one photo. He shows it to Sara.

E (CONT'D)
Do I know this guy?

Sara briefly looks, goes back to typing.

SARA
New guy. Curt.

E
Realllly looks familiar. I swear
I've seen him somewhere.

SARA
It's a premonition. You'll be touring
with him.

E
Is this the Craigslist killer? Sara?

SARA
Yes, E. I'm hiring him to knock you
off so we'll get a new singer.

E shutters as Sara faces him head on. She smiles and says...

SARA (CONT'D)
Ready to go over numbers?

51 INT. DARK STAR - BOSTON - LATE NIGHT

DeBussy stands on a ladder across the club. He's working high in the ceiling above the stage. Only his legs are visible.

CJ is in the sound booth, feet up, playing with his phone.

DEBUSSY (O.S.)
This speaker is good, CJ!

CJ
(hollers)
They don't know that. Just replace
it. We'll use it --

Nibel appears a few feet away. CJ jumps up.

CJ (CONT'D)
Dammit! Stop comin' around!

NIBEL
I will not.

DEBUSSY (O.S.)
CJ! I need your help over here!

CJ ignores DeBussy, stares at Nibel.

NIBEL

There is a matter of great importance
we must discuss. I insist.

52 CEILING - CONTINUOUS

DeBussy turns a bolt and CRASH -- a speaker falls. The wires wrap around DeBussy. He catches the speaker, but, he's struggling to stay on the ladder.

DEBUSSY

CJ! Help me!!

53 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Nibel gently reaches for CJ's amulet. CJ steps back.

CJ

(grips his amulet)
That's what you want -- *this!* Screw
you! *Nobody* touches this!

DEBUSEY (O.S.)

God Dammit, CJ! Help me!

CJ holds a finger out to DeBussy, as if DeBussy could see him saying -- HOLD ON.

CJ

Funny how you ignored me when I needed
you. Now you won't fucking go away.

54 CEILING - CONTINUOUS

DeBussy can't hold the heavy speaker, it slips from his grip. The cord twists around DeBussy's neck, YANKS him forward as the ladder falls -- but -- the cord is still attached in the ceiling.

DeBussy hangs from the cord, legs flailing, can't breathe.

55 SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Nibel stands firm, absorbing CJ's attention.

CJ
 (to Nibel)
 You and me are gonna get something
 straight. *Stop comin' around!* Don't
 show up anywhere! I'm not interested!

Nibel fades.

CJ looks around, gets cocky. Hell yeah -- won that fight. Looks to the stage and sees DeBussy hanging in the air. *SHIT!* CJ bolts.

56 STAGE - CONTINUOUS

A frantic CJ stands the ladder back up, starts climbing.

CJ
 No, no, no. I'm coming, D! I'm
 here! Hold on!

CJ gets to DeBussy and cuts the cord. DeBussy drops to the ground. CJ jumps down and hurries to him.

DeBussy isn't moving.

57 INT. BEDROOM - BOSTON - MORNING

A man and a woman are in bed having sex. The man's back is exposed, his physique similar to CJ. The woman is Radine.

A phone chimes. The man looks to the night stand. Radine's phone displays an image of CJ calling.

The humping slows, then comes to a halt. A MALE LOVER (28) rises and supports himself on straight arms. Breathing heavily, he stares at her.

MALE LOVER
 Did he just -- ?

He flings the covers off and rolls to the side, sits on the edge of the bed. Yeah, he's upset. He grabs his pants from the floor.

Radine reaches for her phone, shows CJ has called.

RADINE
 He might be...

Radine catches herself being interested. Puts the phone down.

He slips on his pants and looks around, needs his shirt.

RADINE (CONT'D)
 I didn't ask him to call.

MALE LOVER

You're not sorry he did. When you
gonna get over this guy?

Radine sits up -- been called out.

RADINE

There's nothing to get over!

He laughs.

RADINE (CONT'D)

What do you want? This is what we
do, you and me. Your rules. No
strings, just sex. Let it go.

MALE LOVER

At first, yeah, but I thought that
might have changed.

RADINE

(quietly)

You might have told me that.

He storms from the room, shirt in hand. Radine watches him leave.
Should she stop him? She doesn't.

The front door slams. Then, the front door opens and slams again.
The Male Lover walks back in the bedroom, crosses his arms and
glares at Radine.

Radine jumps out of bed, grabs a few garments and hurries out of
the room.

RADINE (CONT'D)

I'm gone. I'm gone.

58 INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

CJ sits in a waiting room, slumped down, stone faced.

Radine comes around the corner and spots CJ. She goes to him.

CJ sits up, but he dodges eye contact with her.

RADINE

This has you all over it.

CJ

Just... don't!

RADINE

Where were you? Why didn't you
protect him? You should have --

She bites her lip, stands calm, then...

Her chin quivers. She can't hold back. She starts slapping the shit out of CJ, both hands.

CJ grabs her and pulls her close, a serious embrace. Radine is balling, buries her head in his shoulder.

CJ is numb and his face shows it. That, and fear. They sit.

Radine pulls it together, takes a FedEx from her bag.

RADINE (CONT'D)

I watched you going down this path
of self destruction, and I...

(a beat)

I never worried you'd hurt yourself,
But... there were no flags --
nothing. I never realized you would
hurt someone else.

That HURT. CJ can't get words out.

RADINE (CONT'D)

Just...

(hands the FedEx over)

Take this job and please... take
your shit somewhere else.

Radine stands, takes a few steps, then pauses and drops her head.

RADINE (CONT'D)

Death just surrounds you, CJ.

CJ turns white.

Radine walks away.

CJ slides down the wall to his butt, wraps his arms around his shins. He rubs his amulet.

59 INT. JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - DAY - FLASHBACK 2002

A young CJ (15) sits on a military bed across from a young DeBussy, (13). CJ is closed up, arms around his shins, head down, rubbing his amulet.

DeBussy is toying with shit in the room, upbeat, talking whether CJ likes it or not. He faces CJ.

DEBUSSY

Okay, man. You've been here for two
days and haven't said a word. This
place is better with a pal.

CJ
 (head hung)
 Just waiting. I'm outta here soon.

DEBUSSY
 (sits)
 Dude! You killed your parents!
 You're not ever getting out of here.

CJ leaps from the bed and balls his fists, ready to pounce on DeBussy.

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)
 (leans back)
 Easy, Bundy. I'm not your enemy.
 At least you *had* parents.

That threw CJ for a loop. He cocks his head.

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)
 You trying to tell me you didn't do
 it?

CJ goes back to his bed, sits.

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)
 You had blood on you, man. Everyone
 knows the story. It's all over the
 papers. Maybe it's best you just
 deal with it.

CJ
 (barely legible)
 Someone else was there.

DeBussy scoots closer. He's all ears.

CJ (CONT'D)
 Nobody knows that part.

DEBUSSY
 (points to the door)
 Then you gotta tell these guys! You
 can get out of here. Just tell 'em--

CJ
I can't!!

DeBussy is wicked suspicious now, squints his eyes.

DEBUSSY
 (sits back)
 Hey, you and me are a lot alike.
 (MORE)

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)

No parents, both in this shit hole
for a while, and, well, I think I
just met someone as fucked up as me.

CJ cracks a half-ass smile. They talk.

END FLASHBACK

60 INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING - PRESENT DAY

CJ stands, barely, then slowly walks away.

61 INT. ANCIENT THEATER - LOCATION UNKNOWN - NIGHT

Nibel paces, barely, hands behind his back, addressing the wing.

NIBEL

He has suffered a loss, Madame.

JANIE B (V.O.)

(a beat)

And so it begins.

(a beat)

Nonetheless... his tragedy is our
blessing for it will fuel his anger
and bring him closer. Protect the
talisman at all costs.

62 EXT. DARK STAR NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Looking exceptionally shady, CJ sneaks past the front door and
runs to the side of the building.

63 EXT. DARK STAR / SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

CJ studies the deadbolt, pulls out his phone/adapter. He taps
the screen and puts the phone against the deadbolt. He slowly
scrolls with his thumb. A tone rings out. The lock vibrates.

64 INT. DARK STAR /SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The latch on the deadbolt jitters and slowly turns, clicks open.
The door swings open and CJ enters, closes the door behind him.

65 INT. DARK STAR NIGHTCLUB - LATER

CJ walks out of the sound booth and spins a chair around. He sits, turns on his phone and slides it in his hoodie pocket.

CJ
(head back)
I know you're here.

Equipment in the sound booth hums. He waits, foot tapping the floor, until... Nibel emerges.

NIBEL
You have grown tired of running.

CJ
(nods at a chair)
You wanna talk? Let's talk.

NIBEL
(skeptical)
As a child you enjoyed my visits,
yet now you fight me. Much has
changed in such little time.

CJ
Yeah... everyone's dead.

NIBEL
I speak of the methods in which you
apply your skills. Surely a man of
your stature realizes he has surpassed
the instructor.

CJ
Why... did you kill my friend?

NIBEL
Yet, despite your achievements, you
seem to have misplaced your calling.

Nibel steps closer, hands cupped together.

NIBEL (CONT'D)
Techniques are merely half the lesson.
Have you forgotten why these skills
serve a purpose?

CJ bounces a knee, he's struggling. Throws his head back.

NIBEL (CONT'D)
Is it not time to resume your search?

CJ stands, starts pacing. He grits his teeth.

CJ
 Just stop. You know I looked for
 them... back then.
 (faces Nibel)
 I did everything I'd always done.
 Everything I was taught, and got
 nothing. Zero.

NIBEL
 I remember.

CJ
 So why now? Why didn't they appear
 then?

Nibel approaches the chair, sits on the very edge.

NIBEL
 They were not able, and they will
 never be if you do not go to them.

CJ
 (quick head spin)
 Go to your world?

NIBEL
 Precisely.

CJ
 So you want to kill me, too?

NIBEL
 No... Most certainly not. But I'm
 afraid what you are needed for will
 not be easy. And life as you know
 it... well, it shall forever change.

CJ stops pacing, just for a beat.

CJ
 Does it look like I have a life?

NIBEL
 (nods)
 Have you wondered why you wear this
 talisman at your neck?

CJ turns his back to Nibel. He pulls out his phone, fingers the
 screen. The homemade adapter hums.

CJ
 Best forget about getting the amulet.

CJ spins and faces Nibel, aims his phone and thumbs the screen.
 An arc of electricity hits a chair, SHATTERS IT. Smoke rises.

Nibel raises an eyebrow.

CJ (CONT'D)
 (aims at Nibel)
 Now... I'm seriously gonna fry your
 ass if you don't tell me why you're
 really here!

NIBEL
 (perks up)
You dare threaten me!!

CJ shoots the electric arc into another table, sears the wood.

NIBEL (CONT'D)
 (threatening)
 If you eliminate me, another will
 follow.

CJ
 Why? And lose the riddles!

CJ shoots the arc into the floor at Nibel's feet.

Nibel jumps from his chair, eyes gaping.

NIBEL
 We have done so your entire life!

CJ
 I repeat. *Why?*

CJ aims...

NIBEL
 Enough! An enemy approaches!

CJ
 Sucks to be you. *Not my problem!*

NIBEL
 But it is. Only you can sustain the
 journey.

CJ
 What do I get out of it?

NIBEL
 (seriously offended)
It is an honor to gain redemption!!

CJ jabs the phone. Nibel snarls his lips.

CJ fires the electric arc and hits Nibel in the shoulder. Nibel's
 shoulder vanishes in a PUFF OF SMOKE.

Nibel is shocked, then... becomes a rabid dog. Dammit, he's mad.

NIBEL (CONT'D)
You have taken a life!

CJ
He was a murderer, and I paid for
what he did.

NIBEL
Yet he still hunts your parents!
You must protect them!

CJ
That's coo-coo!

CJ aims the phone, threatening...

NIBEL
(pleading)
Stop! It is not! It is why you
could not reach them. They hide
from the one you killed.

CJ is taken aback. A grimace knots his face.

NIBEL (CONT'D)
Defeat this enemy and gain your
salvation. This is the offer we
bring you.

CJ gets soft for a minute, then...

CJ
Fuck your stupid offer.

NIBEL
You must accept. If he does not find
your parents, he will come for you.

CJ
(oh shit)
I don't know who he is!

NIBEL
Hear me now. Make haste to your
home in the forest. You will unearth
the answers if you follow the stones!

CJ
You're fucking with me!!

CJ shoots an arc at Nibel -- just as -- his phone rings. The app fails and the arc fizzles. The phone is suddenly on SPEAKER. CJ is frozen scared. Nibel notices the change in CJ. Uh-oh...

DEAN (V.O.)

A pleasant evening, Curt, It's Dean
Autry, Intertwine Music. Are you
able to come in for a chat?

66 INTERCUT. INT. THE DARK STAR - BOSTON - NIGHT /
INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - NEW YORK - NIGHT

Dean sits at his desk on the phone, tapping a pencil.

Nibel is wicked mad, hisses at CJ -- who's slowly backing away.
He roars a deafening, GHOSTLY WAIL and bolts after CJ.

Dean yanks the phone away from his ear and stares at it. WTHell?

67 INT. DARK STAR NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

CJ runs from Nibel, phone in hand, still on SPEAKER with Dean.
He ducks behind a table and crouches down, peeks over the top.

Nibel slowly approaches, clearing tables with the swish of his
hand. He's pissed off and SNARLING.

CJ

(to the phone)

How'd you get this number?

DEAN (O.S.)

We have our ways. Sounds like some
movie you're watching. Mind turning
it down?

Nibel swishes his hand and CJ flies into a wall. He gets up,
puts the phone to his face.

CJ

Remote is--

(dodges a flying chair)

Broken!

Nibel continues to give chase. CJ maneuvers around scattered
tables and chairs.

DEAN (O.S.)

Then let's get to the gen. I'd like
to speak with you about an A/V
position for a tour I'm producing.

CJ does a loop around Nibel and grabs his tool bag, bolts for the
side door. Nibel screeches out a wail, then vanishes.

CJ
 (eyes probing)
 Yeah, that's probably not the best
 idea for me right now.

DEAN (O.S.)
 What say you take a peek at the
 contract before making a decision.
 It's quite attractive.

CJ gets to the side door and stops abruptly. He hears keys
 jangling outside. The deadbolt is turning.

CJ
 (shakes the phone)
 I'm ... loosing ... you...

CJ hangs up and hides as the door swings open. A Security Guard
 walks in. Sound system is humming and it looks like a bomb went
 off, but no sign of anyone. He pulls out his phone.

CJ slips out behind him.

68 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dean cocks his head and sets his phone down, grabs his drink.

SARA
 Is he interested?

DEAN
 Doesn't seem to be. I wouldn't
 shag the other candidates just yet.

Sara turns away and purses her lips.

69 INT. NISSAN TRUCK ON HIGHWAY - LATE NIGHT

CJ drives, hypnotized by his headlights, stone faced with an
 occasional twitch. His brain is on overload.

A passing sign reads: NEW YORK CITY 48 Miles.

AUDIO FLASHBACKS: Different voices haunt CJ while he's driving.

RANDOM VOICES (V.O.)
Dude, you killed your parents.
 (a beat)
I have to let you go, CJ.
 (a beat)
Death just surrounds you.
 (a beat)
They hide from the one you killed.

A semi ROARS past CJ going a hundred miles an hour. CJ's truck sways, he grips the wheel and gains control, then pulls over. He sits, breathes, stares ahead. Then...

He YANKS! SHAKES! PUNCHES! ...the steering wheel.

CJ

Enough!!

He opens his eyes, distraught and barely focused, and then sees...

... a woman standing on the shoulder beside his truck. Looks like she's talking but he can't hear, can't see. He spins his head, looking for another car.

She walks to the front of the truck. Now lit by headlights, he sees CLARISE, (SPIRIT) 20s, porcelain skin, long brown hair, sculptured lips and green eyes that reach into his soul.

She stands motionless staring at CJ, her sundress outlining her curves. DAYUM. Then... she playfully runs onto the highway.

CJ (CONT'D)

(grabs the door handle)

Stop!

He barely opens the door when ANOTHER SEMI roars by, HONKING, LOUD. Wind pressure slams the door shut -- CJ's truck bounces.

He rolls to the middle of the cab - arms over his head. CRAAAAP!

He spins around. The brunette is gone. The road is quiet.

CJ (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay, okay, okay, okay...OKAY!

70 INT. ANCIENT THEATER - NIGHT

Nibel approaches the dark wing and Janie B.

NIBEL

(scoffing)

He has become a *madman*, Madame.

JANIE B (O.S.)

Had you anticipated a weakling?

NIBEL

(baffled)

He governs a candlestick of mystical forces.

Nibel glances at his missing shoulder, making reference.

JANIE B (O.S.)

Clearly.
 (a beat)
 Did you speak of Artha?

NIBEL

(reluctant)
 I... spoke of the journey, though he
 is unaware of the true mission.

JANIE B (O.S.)

Be nothing if not relentless. If he
 does not search for his parents, he
 will not find the others.

Nibel raises an eyebrow.

NIBEL

And if he attempts this on his own?

JANIE B (O.S.)

Dear no. He is ill prepared to
 approach the wrong portal. You will
 see that he doesn't.

71 INT. CJ'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - MORNING

CJ storms inside and SLAMS his keys down. He opens a desk drawer,
 rifles around until he pulls out a manilla envelope.

A key falls from the envelope and bounces on the desk. He eyes
 the key, then unfolds the paper from the envelope.

INSERT DOCUMENT: The words DEED and NEW HAMPSHIRE are front and
 center. He flips the paper. WHITE MOUNTAINS is watermarked across
 the face of a map.

72 INT. BANK LOBBY - DAY - FLASHBACK - 2001

A BANKER in a suit approaches a YOUNG CJ, (15). He stops short
 of CJ, flings a manilla envelope on the floor. Walks away shaking
 his head.

CJ picks up the envelope, looks around. People are gossiping.

END FLASHBACK

73 INT. CJ'S APARTMENT - DAY - PRESENT DAY

On the wall before CJ is a concert poster. Ticket stubs and
 pictures litter the inner frame.

There's a picture of Mom and Dad standing by a bird-feeder. He stares, takes a deep breath.

A different picture FALLS from the frame. He grabs it.

CJ POV: A picture of him as a child with his father and grandfather in back of Copper's cabin, now his cabin. Behind them is an opening in the dense forrest, a path. FIVE STONES lead the way.

CJ

Follow the--

A phone rings. He fumbles his pockets, puts the red phone to his ear.

SARA (V.O.)

Curt? We haven't met but we need to talk. Dean called you with an offer, a touring gig?

CJ

He did. I'm not able to take it.

SARA (V.O.)

How can I help make this happen?

CJ

I'm headed out of town.
(eyes the map)
Gone for a few days.

SARA (V.O.)

Work or pleasure?

CJ

I'll know that when I find the place.

SARA (V.O.)

Meet with us before you pull the plug. Give me your word on that?

CJ

Not for nothin', but why the sudden interest in me?

SARA (V.O.)

E really wants you on this tour.

74 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - OFFICE - DAY

Sara hangs up, looks at her computer, writes something down. She shoves the note in her purse, grabs her keys and leaves the office.

AUDIO: Deans voice comes through an intercom on Sara's desk.

DEAN (O.S.)

CLICK. Great news, Sara. We've secured a performance in New Orleans prior to the tour. Inform the troupe immediately and secure us a soundman by the end of the week. CLICK.

75 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - EARLY EVENING

CJ opens the FedEx from Radine, eyes the NATHAN JUJU CD. Classic Rock. He slides it in his player.

76 EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

AUDIO: The Nathan Juju song PAID AT MIDNIGHT plays loud.

CJ's truck drives across the bridge, leaving NYC.

77 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - NEW HAMPSHIRE - NIGHT

CJ stops at a fork in the road, a two lane hwy. A sign reads MOOSE CROSSING. He spins his GPS -- useless in the boonies. There's a FLASHING LIGHT ahead, a motel or gas station. He puts the truck in gear.

78 EXT. CROWS NEST - NIGHT

CJ pulls up to a roadside pub. Faded sign reads CROWS NEST.

79 INT. CROWS NEST - MOMENTS LATER

CJ enters. It's lively. Hunters and rednecks. Heck yeah.

He goes to the BARTENDER, old redneck. It's loud. The Bartender makes hand gestures and pointing directions. CJ turns to leave.

The Bartender follows CJ to the door, watches him drive away.

The Bartender walks to the back of the bar, which is now OLD AND ABANDONED, empty, no lights. He walks through a charred doorway.

80 INT. ANCIENT THEATER - NIGHT

The Crows Nest Bartender TRANSFORMS into Nibel, crosses an abandoned stage and faces the wing.

Janie B is now slightly revealed. No face, only a ghostly blur in baroque clothing and a hazy, wide-lace collar.

Her cloudy hands rest on a walking staff.

NIBEL

He will soon approach the weapon,
though unearthing such a legacy is
no guarantee he will embrace it.

JANIE B (V.O.)

Only the voyager will be compelled
to look further. You will allow his
musical abilities to guide him. He
has no trust in mere words.

NIBEL

Should we not consider testing his
abilities? Our world will certainly
perish in the hands of this
incompetent fool. A jester he is.

JANIE B (V.O.)

Nonsense. He will gather forces and
lead them well. It is in his blood.

81 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - LATE NIGHT

The windshield pushes low hanging branches aside as CJ drives
down a long and stretching, overgrown driveway.

82 EXT. OVERGROWN MEADOW - MOMENTS LATER

CJ's truck emerges from the dense driveway and rolls onto an open
meadow. The truck stops. Dust floats in the headlights.

Stars fill the sky. A dark CABIN sits at the far end of the
meadow, a monstrous forest wall behind it.

83 EXT. CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

The truck slowly pulls up to the cabin. The headlights flash to
high beam, illuminating a 55 CHEVY TRUCK, rusted and overgrown by
tall weeds. CJ gets out, leaves the headlights on.

84 EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

CJ inspects the front door, split from top to bottom. He pushes
it open with his foot and reaches just inside the wall. Flips a
light switch up and down. No lights.

85 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

CJ leans the seat back and cuddles up to a furniture blanket.

86 INT. ANCIENT THEATER - CONTINUOUS CONVERSATION

Nibel paces the stage, still speaking to a hazy Janie B. He's unsettled, shaking his head, no.

NIBEL

He is much too unpredictable. And how will he free so many prisoners in such little time?

87 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

CJ stares at the cabin, rubs his amulet, thinking, while Janie B and Nibel continue talking.

JANIE B (V.O.)

He carries the knowledge -- taught as a child, though he knows not why. His ancestors have righted their lives for centuries in order for him to succeed.

NIBEL (V.O.)

If this is true, his recollections are deeply buried.

JANIE B (V.O.)

Then you shall remind him. Bring to light his youthful heart. Upon his arrival in Artha, we will groom him for the Octogeni.

88 INT. ANCIENT THEATER - CONTINUOUS CONVERSATION

NIBEL

Madame, please. If he is killed --

Janie B SLAMS down her staff, an earthshaking thud. Dust rises, walls shake, Nibel flinches.

JANIE B (O.S.)

Proceed!

Nibel walks away sneering. Definitely not happy.

89 INT. MUSIC STUDIO - LATE NIGHT

Nathan Juju is winding down a band rehearsal. Musicians are placing instruments in cases, humming the tune they last played.

E approaches BRANDON (22) half Asian, A/V assistant, cocky tech geek. He's a shit-happens magnet, and, E's spoiled nephew.

E
Pack it up, Neph.

BRANDON
(stops rolling cords)
I got eliminated?

E
Relax your shit reality boy. I got
an assignment for you.

BRANDON
Like?

E
Like hacking Sara's email. You can
do that?
(Off Brandon's nod)
Without her knowing?

BRANDON
Does Kanye use auto tune?

E
Only always.
(strokes his ponytail)
I need you to be my eyes and ears.
Zero in on Dean.

90 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - NEW HAMPSHIRE - MORNING

CJ wakes to a banging noise. A FARM WOMAN (58) overalls, long gray hair, tan fishing hat, is beating on his fender.

CJ gets out, stands behind the open truck door.

91 EXT. NISSAN TRUCK/CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The Farm Woman aims a PITCHFORK at CJ.

FARM WOMAN
Who are ya and what are ya doin up
here?

CJ lifts a set of keys and dangles them.

CJ
This was my family's place. I own
it now.

FARM WOMAN
You're a Fitzgerald -- ain't cha?

CJ
Nope. Singleton.

She winks and lowers the pitchfork, cocks her head.

FARM WOMAN
Yeah... He was kina scraggly like
you.

CJ steps out from behind the truck door, shuts it.

FARM WOMAN (CONT'D)
Why ya comin' 'round now?

CJ
Why not?

FARM WOMAN
You bring protection?

CJ
From what -- killer squirrels?

She stabs her pitchfork in the ground, jabs it up and down as she
turns and eyes the forest.

FARM WOMAN
(uneasy)
I doubt there's any supper in that
old place. Come n' see me now if ya
get hungry.

CJ
I'll pop into Crows Nest. Thanks.

FARM WOMAN
(alert)
You say Crows Nest?

CJ
Yeah. Stopped by last night. Great
name. Looks like it's been there
since the Earth cooled.

FARM WOMAN

You is definitely kin to your granddaddy. He used to make talk 'bout Crows Nest all the time. Place has been *closed* since the Earth cooled.

(turns and walks away)

You Singletons sure are a nutty bunch.

CJ

(louder)

Try a little less pitchfork and little more dining out.

FARM WOMAN

(walking, chuckling)

Okie dokie.

CJ

(even louder)

I was in there last night!

(a beat)

And who the hell are you?

The Farm Woman starts her jeep and drives away, still amused.

92 EXT. CABIN - DAY

CJ walks along the side of the weatherbeaten cabin.

93 EXT. BACK OF CABIN - CONTINUOUS

CJ looks down a sloping hill, twenty feet tops. He holds the PICTURE from his apartment in the air, compares the two settings.

He walks downhill and stops at a path leading into the forest. FIVE STONES the size of punch bowls rest at his feet, almost hidden by weeds.

CJ walks the fringe of the thick forest, hands in his pockets. He pulls limbs aside and peeks into the forest. He stares...

94 EXT. CHARRED HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

CJ (15) comes out of the thick Lake Tahoe forest. He approaches a burnt house - his house. It's the after-fire. Red coals crackle. He stands facing two bodies, both burned to a crisp on the floor. It's too hot to do anything but stare.

He's in the hills. No police yet. It'll be a while. He stands numb by a bird-feeder, backpack dangling from one hand.

Through the wavering heat he spots someone on the other side of the house. CJ grabs a charred board and runs his way.

CROSSFADE AUDIO: A GROWLING ROAR echoes through the trees.

END FLASHBACK

95 EXT. EDGE OF FORREST - DAY - PRESENT DAY

CJ snaps out of it. Branches rustle. Something big is getting closer. SHIT. CJ backs up slowly, then...

A BEAR charges out from the forest. CRAP! CJ bolts.

96 INT. CABIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CJ runs inside the cabin and slams the door. He grips an old frying pan and puts his back to the door.

The bear GROWLS and PUSHES, bounces the door open. One paw reaches in and around the door, scratches CJ's arm.

CJ slams the paw with the pan. The paw retracts.

97 EXT. BACK OF CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The bear drops to all fours, sniffs around and goes to the corner of the cabin, where it TRANSFORMS into Nibel. He smirks.

98 INT. CABIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CJ leans against the door, breathing heavy. He inspects his arm. A five-inch scrape. Not bad, but bleeding. He removes his shirt and wraps it around his arm.

He slams the pan into the door. Then again -- PISSED.

99 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - DAY

CJ pulls into a parking space in a small village, his shirt around his arm. The sign on the wall reads: DRUG STORE.

100 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - DAY

Dean sits on a couch with E. They're sifting through artwork on a coffee table: poster samples for the tour.

Sara sits at her desk across the room.

SARA
Time's running out. Pick one.

E
Speaking of time, who's our soundman?

DEAN
(lifts a poster)
We'll have someone locked down by
the end of the day.

E
(irate)
Never in my career have I seen this
kind of dilemma for a soundman.
It's a fucking soundman. Will
somebody grow a pair and hire someone --
like -- hello? *Bob Dustin?*

SARA
The eighties are over, E. People
aren't exactly lining up to work
with you. Besides cartage, that is.

E
C'mon, Dean. We don't even know
this guy. How do I keep my band
safe?

DEAN
(quick glance at E)
I'll buy you a rape whistle.

E
(hands in the air)
Perfect. Can't wait to tell my band
about your state-of-the-art security,
approved by a woman who drinks wine
for breakfast.

SARA
You little--

E
No offense, Sara. I'd still do you.

DEAN
It would behoove you to remember I'm
saving you from bankruptcy. And...
(Raises his finger)
You'll not bark at Sara.

Sara thumbs out a text and hands her phone to Dean. E storms
out.

101 INT. NISSAN TRUCK - DAY

CJ drives back to the cabin, a clean white bandage around his arm. His red phone chimes. He flips it open, looks down.

INSERT PHONE: A text message reads: CALL ME. DEAN.

CJ

Shit.

He dials, switches the phone to truck speaker.

CJ (CONT'D)

Hey, Dean. Look, I really appreciate the offer. It's just bad timing. I can't be gone for nine months.

DEAN (V.O.)

Perfect. It's a three month tour.

102 EXT. CONDEMNED BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CJ pulls off the road and inches up to a decrepit building. It's abandoned, torched long ago.

CJ frowns. This is where Crows Nest stood last night.

DEAN (V.O.)

Curt?

CJ switches the phone to bluetooth, gets out of the truck and walks toward the building.

DEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Sara warned me you'd be hesitant, but she's vouched for you and I'd like to bring you on board.

CJ wipes a window for a peek inside. Nothing. He backs up and views the weather-beaten facade, heads for the front door.

CJ

Normally I'd be thrilled about...

He rattles the door. It's locked.

CJ (CONT'D)

(To himself)

Are you fucking kidding me?

DEAN (V.O.)

Forgive me, CJ. Am I keeping you from something?

CJ walks along the building.

CJ
Sorry. I'm on an old road.

DEAN (V.O.)
The money is terrific, and you're familiar with Nathan Juju's music. To top it off we're following the Stones.

CJ
(Stops in his tracks)
Come again?

103 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - NEW YORK - DAY

Dean sits at his desk on the phone, eyeing a concert poster for Nathan Juju.

DEAN
(On phone)
The Rolling Stones. They're performing at The Resurrection just before us. Nothing's better than trailing a legend.

104 EXT. CONDEMNED BUILDING - NEW HAMPSHIRE - DAY

CJ paces, scratching his head.

CJ
I promise I'll think about it.

DEAN
I'm afraid that won't do. We're leaving for New Orleans right away.

CJ pauses, contemplates. Job? Secrets? Family? Stones?

CJ
New Orleans. Awesome.
(big sigh)
Sorry, Dean. Just can't do it.

CJ fingers his Bluetooth, turns it off.

A BURNT SIGN sits in a pile of debris. Only the letters C R O, are legible. CJ cocks his head.

105 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - NEW YORK - DAY

Dean hangs up and faces Sara.

DEAN

Secure Bob Dustin for the New Orleans
engagement.

106 INT. CABIN - NEW HAMPSHIRE - NIGHT

CJ starts a fire. The cabin is a mess. Old pictures and paperwork are strewn across the floor. He gathers them in a box.

A few 78 RPM records sit on a low shelf, barely. He sifts through them, pauses at one in a paper sleeve. It's marked with penciled sketches and strange fonts. One corner is gone.

He scoots a crank-style record player closer to the fire, turns the crank. POS doesn't work.

107 EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

CJ's truck is parked just outside the front door, hood open. He clips two wires to the battery, then, bends his head around the door frame to look inside the cabin.

CJ'S POV: The record spins.

108 INT. CABIN - NIGHT

CJ sifts through papers while the record plays. Then...

AUDIO: The mysterious chanson he heard in the nightclub.

He raises his head, turns to the record player. The lyrics in the chanson are: BEHIND THE STONES WE CRY OUR PLEA, THE VOYAGER WHO HOLDS THE KEY, A TORTURED WORLD IT MUST NOT BE, RELEASE THE SPIRITS, SET THEM *FREE*.

Audio: On the word *FREE*, a tone rings and activates his amulet.

CJ removes the record and studies it. The label reads: RECORDED AT THE RESURRECTION IN NEW ORLEANS. He looks down at his amulet.

He holds his red phone, pacing, thinking, torn, until... he dials and walks outside.

109 EXT. FRONT OF CABIN - CONTINUOUS

CJ paces next to the old truck, phone to his ear.

DEAN (V.O.)
What can I do for you?

CJ
(into phone)
Okay, Dean. I'm in.

DEAN (V.O.)
The position has been secured.

CJ
(into phone)
I'll work harder. Let's do this.
I'll meet you in New Orleans.
(desperate)
I'll pay my way down.

DEAN (V.O.)
I'm sorry we missed this opportunity
to work together. Cheers, now.

CJ lowers the phone, mouths the word, *FUCK!* His phone rings.

RADINE (V.O.)
Where are you, CJ?

CJ
(Into phone)
New Hampshire.

RADINE (V.O.)
You took the tour? I thought it was
a few weeks away? What about the
funeral?

CJ stands quiet, phone to his mouth.

RADINE (CONT'D)
No, CJ. Don't you dare--

CJ
(Into phone)
I'm not going.

RADINE (V.O.)
Jesus, CJ. You're the only family
he had. And him you!

CJ
 (Into phone)
 Besides you... For him I mean.
 (chokes up)
 I don't go to funerals, Ray.

RADINE (V.O.)
 Yes... you do! You fly in and fly
 out. How can you even think of not--

CJ
 (Into phone)
Because...

CJ rubs his forehead, paces the field.

CJ (CONT'D)
 I've lost too many people! Okay?
 You get it? And *not* burying someone
 leaves them still alive -- still
 breathing and living and... not lying
 in some box in the dirt. *I'm not*
sayin' goodbye to D!

RADINE (V.O.)
 (softly)
 The funeral is in three days, CJ.
 You better be there.

Radine hangs up.

Branches SNAP in the dark forest. CJ backs away, then runs to
 his truck. He grabs a shopping bag from the cab and takes it in
 the cabin. Slams the cabin door.

110 INTERCUT. INT. THE RESURRECTION - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT /
 INT. INTERTWINE MUSIC - NEW YORK - NIGHT

STEVE (22) Cajun, the Resurrection's bleached-blond Manager, buzz-
 cut, energetic, a real talker, walks the front of a big stage
 with clipboard in hand. His phone rings.

STEVE
 (Into phone)
 Resurrection, home of tha hottest
 shows in N'awlins. Steve here.

Dean pours a drink, phone to his ear.

DEAN
 (Into phone)
 Quite a spiel, Steve. Dean Autry
 here. Nathan Juju.

STEVE
 (Into phone)
 Hiya, Dean.

Dean pulls a pill from his jacket -- Mothers Little Helper --rolls it in his fingers.

DEAN
 (Into phone)
 Be on the lookout for my soundman.
 Name is Bob Dustin. Give us a ring
 when he arrives.

Dean hangs up, pops the pill and sips his whiskey.

STEVE
 (Into phone)
 Well let's make sure I gotcha numba.
 Okay... 212 arycode right? ...Hello?

111 INT. RADINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Radine enters and tosses her keys on a cabinet. She goes in the kitchen, disappears, comes back out with a bottle of wine and a glass. She sets them on the coffee table by her laptop.

She sits on the floor at the coffee table, slides a cigar box her way and pulls out a joint. She lights it, pours some wine, and opens her laptop. TAP. She types.

RADINE POV: The screen displays the Nathan Juju Website. A banner reads: UPDATED TOUR DATES. She hits enter.

RADINE
 Dammit, CJ. You better be there,
 cause I'm bringing you back with me.

112 INT. LOUIS ARMSTRONG AIRPORT/NEW ORLEANS - MORNING

A Man with a choppy crew-cut, bleach-blond and beaming BRIGHT, walks through the arriving metal gates of the airport. A sign above him reads: "WELCOME TO NEW ORLEANS"

The Man scopes out a monitor, then turns around. It's CJ.

113 INT. THE RESURRECTION LOBBY - NEW ORLEANS - MORNING

Steve pulls keys from his pocket and opens a door to the right, exposing a stairway going up.

He feels a STRONG DRAFT and turns around, catches a glimpse of a gray Nibel going THROUGH the showroom door.

STEVE
Well I neva seen you afore.
(swallows hard)
Go on now. Join them uthas.

Kinda rattled, Steve first peeks up the stairway, then goes up. He leaves his keys dangling in the lock.

114 EXT. THE RESURRECTION - MORNING

CJ exits a cab, his tool bag in one hand, ORANGE GAFFERS tape around the handle.

He stares at the old venue's facade, then walks to the row of front doors. One is cracked open. He enters.

115 INT. THE RESURRECTION LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

CJ enters the lobby and stops. Straight ahead is a string of doors that lead to the showroom. To the right is another door with keys dangling in the lock. CJ grabs them.

CJ
Hello!?

116 STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Steve runs down the stairs and stops, puts his ear to the door.

CJ (O.S.)
(hollers)
Someone order a pizza?!

117 LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Steve blasts through the door, clipboard still in hand. He stops, eyes CJ up and down. The bleached hair is like looking in a mirror.

CJ stares back. Chuckles, drops his head. What are the odds.

STEVE
Who're yall?

CJ
We're a soundman.

STEVE

Fo Nathan Juju? You Bob?

CJ

That's me.

(a beat)

Yep. Bob.

STEVE

Aw, thank God. A real person. Fo a minute I thought... Aw, nevamind.

CJ

Long night?

STEVE

There's no tellin' between night and day a'once them doors are closed.

CJ

Just like Vegas.

(Points up)

But you need to hide the clocks.

STEVE

I'm bettin' Vegas has its share'a--

(peeks around CJ)

Aw hell... You'll find out.

CJ

Can we, uh, get moving? Kinda in a rush. You know, make the boss happy?

118 INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Steve heads up the flight of stairs. CJ follows.

STEVE

(Over his shoulder)

This, my friend, is one important set of stairs now. Leads to my office... Central Headquarters...

At the top of the stairs, Steve points to a door on the right.

STEVE (CONT'D)

...and behind that there door is a catwalk. Heads to the sound booth. We'll hit that'n later on the tour.

To the left is another door, closed. Steve goes to it.

CJ steps to the right instead, opens the door to the catwalk. It's dark beyond the light from the open door.

119 INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

The lavatory door opens and out walks a well-built Redhead. She straightens her hair, her dress, then heads down the aisle.

Another head peeks out from the same lavatory. E exits and follows the Redhead until he pulls over and sits next to Brandon.

120 AIRPLANE - FEW ROWS UP

The Redhead sits, glances at Radine, who's sitting by the window. Radine's wearing headphones, her laptop is on the beverage tray. She types, surfs, stops and stares.

RADINE POV: A picture of two little girls in matching pink dresses. Big sigh from Radine.

AIRPLANE PILOT (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, as we begin
our final descent to New Orleans,
the skies are clear and

RADINE
(nibbles her finger)
Question is... would CJ stop being a
dick if knew he had a family?

The Redhead looks over at Radine.

RADINE (CONT'D)
(to the Redhead)
I'm sorry. I'm just out of my mind.

121 INT. THE RESURRECTION CATWALK - DAY

CJ pulls a Mag-Lite from his bag, shines it around on ancient brick walls and a maze of catwalks. He heads across one.

Steve peeks through the door, reluctantly follows.

STEVE
I'm sure ya'll heard The Stones jus
hit our lil' stage. No surprise
there. Shoot, we had everyone from
Sinatra to Metallica up in here,
and... Hey now... Can I get ya'll
some coffee?

CJ
(over his shoulder)
What do you say we get to the booth?

CJ and Steve arrive at the door to the sound booth, a chain-link gate. It's locked. Steve pats his pockets.

CJ lifts a set of keys and dangles them.

STEVE
Well how in the?
(a beat)
You gonna fit right in here.

Steve takes the keys and unlocks the door.

122 INT. THE RESURRECTION SOUND BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

They enter a rectangular cage suspended from the ceiling. Plywood floors under racks of equipment. The chain-link at the soundboard is unscreened for an open view of the stage. CJ goes there.

Steve goes to a row of breaker panels on the back wall, pulls two levers down. The equipment in the sound booth collectively HUMS.

A constellation of red and green pin-lights appear. CJ adjusts a lamp to review the soundboard. He steps up to the light board and hits a switch.

The big stage below becomes softly illuminated.

To his left, a HAZY HUMANLIKE FIGURE sits on a catwalk along the wall.

CJ squints his eyes, curious. He looks at the soundboard, then to the figure. He turns to Steve.

CJ
On second thought, Steve, a cup of
coffee sounds pretty good.

STEVE
Fo sho! Me too. Spresso? Latte'?
Double whammy?

CJ
Triple whammy. Take your time.

Steve scurries off. CJ watches until he's out of sight, then sets his tool bag on a chair and faces the hazy figure.

At the soundboard, CJ pulls the master volume DOWN, then makes some adjustments. He then RAISES one channel slider UP.

The hazy figure brightens and emerges into a WOMAN seated on the catwalk. She's swinging her legs like a child on a bench.

CJ RAISES the slider even more. The hazy woman becomes brighter. He LOWERS the slider and the hazy woman dims.

The Woman lifts her hands and stares at them -- drawn in by the changes in luminosity. She stands and faces CJ.

She walks the catwalk along the wall and reaches an intersection, makes the turn and heads toward CJ.

CJ stands confident as the translucent woman walks THROUGH THE CHAIN-LINK and comes closer. It's Clarise, gray in color.

CJ (CONT'D)

You...

CLARISE

You are different from the others.

CJ

I've seen you.

CLARISE

And I, you.

Clarise TRANSFORMS from a gray image to a flesh and blood, beautiful brunette. Her eyes are green, her skin like porcelain.

CJ stares. INTENSE. Drawn in big time... and... she's staring back. There's a mutual attraction here.

123 STAIRWELL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Radine gets to the top of the stairs and rounds the corner. Two people are in the sound booth on the other end of the catwalk. Suspicious, Radine creeps quietly across the catwalk.

Now closer, she can see that a man and a woman need their privacy. She suddenly spots the neon-orange gaffers tape on the tool bag. Her heart stops. That's CJ's trademark.

Radine slowly reverses her steps on the catwalk, then ducks around the corner and puts her back to the wall. Sad, upset, and PISSED, she runs back down the stairs.

124 SOUND BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CJ and Clarise break their enticing gaze.

CLARISE

You are here for the stones.

CJ

And you know that because...

Clarise points to the stage.

CLARISE
They wait for you, voyager.

CJ looks at the vacant stage, dimly lit, no one there.

CLARISE (CONT'D)
Only the voyager will know what lies
beyond the sound. It was said you
would come one day.

CJ
Nothin weird there...

Clarise bolts down a catwalk.

125 INT. NEUTRAL GROUND COFFEE SHOP - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Brandon sits in front of a laptop, typing feverishly. He taps down, down, scrolling, STOP. His eyes grow big and he leans closer. His head moves in sequence with the thread.

BRANDON
(mumbling)
Concerning Brandon -- bla bla --
sign an opt-out -- yeah yeah yeah --
taken off the tour if -- bla bla--
don't pay him scale --
(Looks up)
Don't pay him scale!?

126 INT. THE RESURRECTION - CATWALK/CAGE - DAY

CJ follows Clarise as she frolics along the catwalk. She comes to a small cage that's mounted to the catwalk.

She MORPHS back into a translucent state and passes through both gates on the cage, then continues down the catwalk on the other side.

CJ stops at the first gate. It's locked. He yanks on the gate -- hard -- the rusted lock snaps.

CJ squeezes inside and steps down. The chain-link floor BENDS. He slides back out and his tool bag SNAGS. He's stuck.

CJ
Dammit!

Clarise watches curiously.

Tools spill from his bag. He reaches for them and FALLS INTO THE CAGE. The wire floor creaks. CRAP! CJ holds his breath.

A cloudy Clarise passes back through one gate and squats close to CJ.

127 SOUND BOARD - CONTINUOUS

Nibel waves his hand above the controls. Channel sliders shift and move on their own. A menacing HUM emerges in the sound.

128 CATWALK CAGE - CONTINUOUS

The HUM causes CJ's amulet to glow a brilliant blue.

Clarise sees the amulet and backs away, horrified.

CLARISE
You are an imposter!

She once again transforms into a full-fledged person. The cage creaks from her weight.

CJ
(afraid to move)
Stay still!

CLARISE
(Snarls)
Tell your warriors you have failed.

She SLAPS his face, hard. Then again, SLAP!

She raises her hand for another slap, but he CATCHES HER WRIST.

She pauses, tugs lightly, but she's really fixated on his amulet.

CJ
That's right. It's mine. You want
it? Get me out of here.

She goes into a rage and tugs violently. The cage shakes.

Bolts POP out from the wall and the cage drops a few feet.

Clarise wails out a wicked SCREAM. It's loud, it's piercing, it's fifty subway cars screeching to a halt. She breaks his grip.

The rusted wire floor rips at CJ's feet. His legs drop. The chain-link sidewall collapses and sandwiches CJ in wire mesh.

He's hesitant to breathe, could fall any minute.

Clarise backs against the wall, still horrified.

She lifts her arms, lets out another HAUNTING SCREAM. The brick walls RUMBLE. A forceful breeze stirs. Her hair and sundress fly to one side.

The cage sways. Now there's the SOUND OF WATER, swishing and flowing.

The showroom becomes a RISING BODY OF WATER.

Water splashes at CJ's shoulders. His tool bag sways.

He takes a deep breath as the water rises above his head.

CJ's POV: From underwater, Clarise is a florescent, wavering image.

There's one FINAL SNAP and the cage drops, pulls CJ underwater. CJ and the cage go into a downward spin.

129 INT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

The chain-link slips off of CJ. He spins frantically, a gravity-free spin in pitch black water.

He's confused, swims in no real direction. His chest spasms. His eyes bulge. He's drowning.

130 INT. NEUTRAL GROUND - NEW ORLEANS - EARLY EVENING

Brandon is seated at the bar when E walks in. E is tense, orders a shot of whiskey.

E
Okay, Snowdon. Whaddaya got for me?

BRANDON
Why doesn't Sara like your music?

E drops his brows. WTHell?

BRANDON (CONT'D)
(leans close)
I just thought... well, from the size of her bonus I thought she was a fan.

E
Bonus??

E pulls his phone out, starts to dial.

BRANDON

Whoa! You can't tell anyone I told you. Then they'll know we're, uh...

E holds a blank stare. It's killing him to bite his tongue.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

I'm curious. Who's at the helm?

E taps his shot glass on the bar, watches a bleach blond guy craft up some cappuccinos in the corner.

E

Not sure about the tour.

(looks around)

Bob should be teching this gig. I'm hoping this will lock him in for the whole tour.

(faces Brandon)

What about Dean?

BRANDON

At the club. Who's Curt?

E

Some internet freak Sara wants to hire.

BRANDON

Well he's getting a cut of the door.

E

(shouts pretty loud)

I'm not paying all these people!

BRANDON

Just -- I got your back, okay? But now that I'm doing two jobs, well...

E grabs his phone and dials, lips pursed.

131 INT. BOB DUSTIN'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

A heavysset man lies on a kitchen floor. Not his fault -- he's tied and gagged. This is BOB DUSTIN, and his big Hawaiian shirt is up over his chin from scooting across the floor. A gray beard peeks out, matches his long and scraggly hair.

A phone rings. Bob's eyes gape, he mumbles, groans, bounces his body. He's not answering any phones.

132 INT. NEUTRAL GROUND - NEW ORLEANS - CONTINUOUS

E hangs up, slams his phone on the bar. He faces Brandon.

E
 Fuck money! You're about to learn
 the ropes from the master.

BRANDON
 Who's that?

E drops his head. UGG.

133 INT. THE RESURRECTION - UNDERWATER - EVENING

AUDIO: HIGH-PITCHED RINGING over a SLOW HEARTBEAT.

CJ's sinking in dark water. His eyes are closed, tiny bubbles leak from his mouth.

Clarise swims down and swooshes herself steady in front of CJ, grips his amulet.

CJ's eyes spring open. He grabs her wrist. She kicks and yanks like a ninja, swims up, pulling CJ to the surface.

134 EXT. ARTHA - POND - NIGHT

CJ emerges from the water, sees a drifting log. He clings to it, puking, choking. He watches Clarise climb onto an ancient dock.

135 ARTHA - DOCK - CONTINUOUS

CJ climbs up and scoots away from Clarise. He looks around.

The dock extends over a small pond, sphere-shaped to precision. Two large moons hover above in the dark sky, one behind the other.

A ring of short grass grows along the shore, behind is a field of trees with corkscrew trunks, each covered in a pine-needle fur. They grow from luminescent, lime-green bulbs.

At the foot of the dock is a path leading into the strange trees, defined by a lime-green fog that hovers ankle deep. Clarise is near the water.

CJ
 (jumps up)
 This shit stops right here.

CLARISE
 You said you were the voyager. You
 have lied.

CJ
 (eyes probing)
 No. You said I was.

CLARISE
 You possess the key! Who sent you?

CJ
 One of your people! A minstrel guy.

Clarise's anger takes a turn for curious.

CLARISE
 You have been summoned?

CJ
 More like harassed... but yeah.

CLARISE
 (Stands)
 And you thought I would help you?

CJ
 Uh ... *yeah*.

CLARISE
 You must go back.

CJ
 Nope. Not leaving till I find my
 parents. And someone else who--
 (takes a deep breath)
 I have to finish something. I'm not
 giving up this time. Not until...

He's mixed up. He paces the dock scratching his head.

CJ (CONT'D)
 (faces Clarise)
 Did I... you know? Is this place...?

Clarise stares at him.

CJ (CONT'D)
 You're not gonna make this easy,
 are you?

CLARISE
 (frightened)
 I have brought you here by mistake.

CJ
Mistake is my middle name, so I'm in
the right place. Now... you take me
to the stones. Let's go.

CLARISE
(Softly)
The stones are in the music hall.

CJ throws her a hateful look. He's beyond pissed -- but, God,
she's beautiful.

CJ grabs her shoulders, faces her head on.

CJ
This is important. *If you're lying,*
I'll poke around without you.

Clarise stares. No words.

CJ (CONT'D)
Enough of this.
(nods at the path)
Is that the way?

CLARISE
(grabs CJ's arm)
Do not go into Artha!

CJ shakes her hand off and approaches one tree at the foot of the
path. He fondles it. The pine needles extend and seize his hand
with an iron grip. He tugs to break free. It's no use.

CJ
(yanking)
Get it offa me!

Some rustling happens nearby. Clarise is frightened.

CLARISE
I must go!

CJ
Noooo you don't. Make it stop!

Clarise puts her hand over CJ's mouth, demands he be quiet. CJ
stares ahead as she gently pulls her hand away.

CJ (CONT'D)
(hollers)
*We're over here!! This weed has got
me!!*

Clarise covers his mouth again, forcefully. She's not playing
around. CJ gets it. Eyes gaping, he nods okay.

Clarise goes down the trail and out of sight, her feet swishing through the green fog. She's back in a flash.

CLARISE
We have not been seen.

CJ
That's peachy. Get this thing offa me.

CLARISE
It will soon release you. Then we go back.

CJ
After I find my parents.

She scowls at CJ just as the Artha tree releases his hand.

CJ (CONT'D)
(rubs his wrist)
Damn, that thing is strong.

They hear barking not far away. Clarise flinches, grabs CJ's arm.

CLARISE
Come with me. Quickly!

136 EXT. ARTHA - PATH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They go ten feet down the path and stoop down next to an Artha tree. Clarise peeks farther down the path.

CJ has no choice -- has to stare at the luminescent bulb at the base of the tree. There's a cloudy torso inside. Its limbs and legs are intertwined with the roots of the tree.

CLARISE
(faces CJ)
Stay *here* until I return.

CJ
Nope. Going with you.

CLARISE
We will soon visit a stone. I promise.

CJ
Yeah... not feeling so good about trusting you.

Clarise takes his hand, tenderly inspects it. She drops her guard a bit more. She kinda likes CJ.

CLARISE
There are many music halls with
stones. Find them and you will find
your parents.

CJ likes his hand in hers, likes her eyes, her smile.

CLARISE (CONT'D)
I will help you with your mission.

Clarise softly strokes his palm, then SHOVES it into an Artha tree. The pine needles take hold and seize his hand.

CJ
For real?

CLARISE
Where I go you cannot follow.

Clarise bolts down the path. CJ tugs.

CJ
God dammit! Stop!

137 EXT. THE RESURRECTION - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

Dean gets out of a cab, approaches the front doors. One is cracked open. He enters.

138 INT. THE RESURRECTION OFFICE - NIGHT

At his desk, Steve hears something and raises his head. He goes to the catwalk door and tugs. It's locked. He looks down. Water is seeping under the door.

Steve rushes down the stairs.

139 INT. THE RESURRECTION LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Steve flings the lobby door open and flies into Dean.

STEVE
Ahh! Who are yall?

DEAN
Fuck's sake, boy! Calm down. Dean
Autry. Nathan Juju.

Steve turns to the row of showroom doors. Water seeps underneath the doors and into the lobby.

STEVE

Intros later. We got utha problems.

More water trickles into the lobby, this time from the stairwell. Steve notices and bolts out the front door.

DEAN

(Watches Steve leave)

Bloody rookies.

Dean opens a showroom door. Water squishes under his feet. He glances at his shoes, shakes his head, and enters the showroom.

140 INT. ANCIENT THEATER - NIGHT

With a swanky stride, Nibel approaches the dark wing and Janie B.

NIBEL

I have seen him safely to Artha.
(bows his head)

JANIE B

And the weapon?

NIBEL

He was..
(looks away)
...distracted from the forest. As I said, he is not as courageous as you seem to think.

JANIE B

You dare cross me? He cannot face the portals without the weapon.

NIBEL

Oh no, Madame. He is being groomed as we speak. Soon he shall have everything he needs.

JANIE B (O.S.)

See that he and the talisman remain unharmed. Do not fail me again.

NIBEL

But of course.
(a curtsey)
La ci fare mi, Madame.

141 EXT. ARTHA DOCK - NIGHT

CJ sits on the dock, rubbing his wrist. A dog runs out from the foggy path and leaps onto the dock.

CJ
Holy shit. *Pitch??* Is that you?

The dog runs up to CJ, rubs him, licks him, happy to see him. CJ pets him ferociously.

CJ (CONT'D)
Wow! Good to see you, boy. I haven't seen you since... Aw man...

A MAN appears. He's standing in the green fog at the foot of the dock. He's holding a bright lantern, raised high to HIDE HIS FACE. *Pitch* runs to his side.

MAN
I'll take the amulet.

CJ
Don't know what that is.

MAN
Give it here!

Pitch shows his fangs, growls and approaches CJ.

CJ
You turned my own dog against me?

MAN
(a beat, then calmer)
So you took my advice after all, huh *Curt*? Colored your hair. Go figure.

CJ cocks his head, heard that before. The man lowers the lantern. It's *DeBussy*, and he has a newfound confidence about him.

CJ
DeBussy?
(long pause)
You're...

DEBUSSY
Yeah, I am. And it's your fault.

CJ stares at *DeBussy* -- frustrated, hurt, puzzled.

CJ
D, no. I tried to help you!
(MORE)

CJ (CONT'D)

I didn't do this. Believe me, what happened to you is killing me.

DEBUSSY

I'm through feeling sorry for you, CJ. You're a quitter.

CJ

No, D. I quit that. I mean, I'm done quitting. I'm doing something important now. I can see my parents. Get some answers. Even help them! That's why I'm here.

DeBussy swings the lantern at CJ.

DEBUSSY

(furious)

Give me... the amulet.

CJ

No. Why do you want it?

DEBUSSY

Cause you do.

Pitch LUNGES at CJ. CJ flinches and falls on his back.

DeBussy snaps the amulet from CJ's neck and steps back, raises the lantern high. Pitch stands guard, keeps CJ at bay.

DEBUSSY (CONT'D)

(threatening)

You are so fucked.

CJ

C'mon, don't. This is important!

DeBussy lifts the lantern high and the light becomes blinding, then... it flashes like a fusion bomb.

142 INT. THE RESURRECTION - SHOWROOM - NIGHT

Dean looks up at the sound booth. The work lights are on. He turns his gaze to the dimly lit stage across a sea of empty seats. Someone lies on the stage floor.

143 STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Dean gets to the front of the stage when his phone rings. He pulls his phone from his jacket and answers.

CJ lies onstage, hears the ringtone and wakes. He lifts his head, totally confused.

Dean talks on the phone, one eye on CJ.

CJ stands and gets his bearings. He's back! Is it real? He pats his body, his neck, his arms. Whoa! His arm. The wound is healed. WTHell?

Now he's torn. Glad to be back. But...

CJ

DeBussy...

Dean hangs up and faces CJ. His intense, beady eyes meet CJ's 'what the fuck just happened' eyes.

DEAN

Who the bloody hell are you?

FADE OUT.