

The Chaos Affair
by
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BLACK. In the darkness, we hear an audio track fade in: a strange, cacophonous mix of chattering, unintelligible voices; angel choirs; digital distortion; out of sync drum patterns; and the sound of wind in distant high ceillinged chambers. It builds slowly to a strange climax over a period of perhaps a full minute.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

We see MARTIN, in bed, his eyes snapping open to the sound of the alarm. He is in his early thirties, hasn't bothered shaving in days and looks weary and haggard much of the time.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Day One, in which I hear the voice
of God for the very first time, and
begin losing my mind entirely.

EXT. SEATTLE - MORNING.

An establishing shot of Seattle downtown, Space Needle and skyscrapers in relief against the sky. It is summer in Seattle, sunny and bright and surprisingly beautiful.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - MORNING.

Martin walks down one of Seattle's many hills in Monday morning sidewalk traffic, carrying a cup of coffee, wearing a shirt and tie, headed for downtown.

MARTIN (V.O.)
I should point out that I didn't
believe in God when it started.
That's how it always starts, I
imagine. It never happens to a
true believer. That would be too
easy. That's not the way He does
things.

EXT. BUSY INTERSECTION - MORNING.

As the light turns, Martin begins crossing the street, narrowly avoids an early morning jogger and barely manages not to spill his coffee all over himself.

MARTIN (V.O.)
No... God's a bastard, with a sick
sense of humor.

EXT. FRONT OF OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin enters a large, looming office building downtown.

INT. RECEPTIONIST'S DESK - MORNING.

Martin arrives at MARY the receptionist's desk. She is young and overdressed, looking as though she were answering phones at the White House instead of a tiny software shop, trying to make the most of her first professional position.

MARY

Good morning, Martin.

MARTIN

Good morning, Mary.

MARY

(hands Martin his mail)

There you go.

MARTIN

Thank you, Mary.

MARY

Linda from Vantec has called for you three times since 8:00.

MARTIN

She knows I don't come in until 9.

MARY

Apparently not. Also, Cynthia's been looking for you. She said you had some reports for her.

MARTIN

What reports?

MARY

I honestly don't know.

MARTIN

What time did Cynthia get here?

MARY

8:00. She wondered where you were.

MARTIN

I don't come in until 9.

MARY

That's what I told her. She didn't seem too happy about that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

Well, that's fantastic, Mary.
Thanks for the great news to start
my morning off right.

He tries to go, already demoralized before even reaching his desk.

MARY

Oh, one more thing.

Martin stops, waits for it...

MARY (CONT'D)

Payroll sent me a note. They seem
to have lost your time report for
the last pay period. You probably
aren't getting paid today.

Martin grimaces.

MARTIN

Anything else?

MARY

(unnecessarily chipper)
I think that's it.

MARTIN

Thanks, Mary.

MARY

No problem.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

Martin sets his mail down on his desk, wearily hangs his jacket up on his chair. His desk has several framed photographs of Martin with WANDA, a vivacious young woman who is obviously his lover in these photos.

MARTIN (V.O.)

It was shaping up to be just
another miserable day in my
pathetic little life.

Telephone rings, Martin answers.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

This is Martin... Oh, hi, Linda,
yes, I just got your message...
Ten o'clock is fine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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MARTIN (CONT'D)

We should have a build ready by then... Yes, this one will work... Right, I know the last one didn't work. That's why we're doing this one... Well, I don't know what we'll do if this one doesn't work. I imagine we'll fix it...

The morning begins to pass rapidly for Martin...

INT. DEVELOPERS' BULLPEN - MORNING.

The developers' bullpen is where a dozen or more young programmers and designers work at a variety of cubicles, most looking like high school lockers, with toys, posters, CDs and stacks of computer books scattered everywhere. Most of the workers wear headphones and ignore management whenever possible. Martin charges in, already frazzled.

MARTIN

Has anyone seen Carl?

A nearby DEVELOPER responds without looking away from his screen.

DEVELOPER

He called in dead.

MARTIN

What? He called in dead last week!

DEVELOPER

I'm just saying.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING.

Martin sits across a table from two older professionals, MARTIN'S CLIENTS on an important project. They treat Martin as though he were an indentured servant.

CLIENT

I'm afraid the schedule has been shortened just a tad.

MARTIN

A tad?

CLIENT

Just a tad.

MARTIN

(with extreme trepidation)
What exactly is a tad?

INT. DEVELOPERS' BULLPEN - MORNING.

Martin stands behind HANK, a crazy older developer who has been in the business long enough to openly regard Martin with contempt and get away with it. Hank wears a t-shirt that says "Chicks Dig Unix."

MARTIN
(pointing out something on
Hank's monitor)
How did this get here? These
images are completely screwed up.

HANK
It's a memory issue.

MARTIN
It's not a memory issue. It's a
somebody fucked up issue.

HANK
You're smoking crack, dude, this is
a memory issue.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING.

Martin nearly crashes into his boss, CYNTHIA, as he attempts to run to a meeting. Cynthia, a stern professional in her late forties, crisply attired, has no patience for Martin whatsoever.

CYNTHIA
There you are. I need that hours
report going back to the start of
the Vantec project. I know you're
busy, but I've asked you about
eight times now.

MARTIN
I'm busy.

CYNTHIA
(condescending)
I know you're busy. We're all
busy.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

Martin attempts to answer an email as the phone rings. He answers almost absent-mindedly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

This is Martin...

Then suddenly, realizing who it is, he snaps to life.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, Wanda...

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Wanda, Martin's ex-girlfriend, is packing boxes as she talks to Martin on her cell phone. She's a marketing professional, a crisp young yuppie-in-training. The apartment is a bit run down. Most of Wanda's belongings have been removed already, except for a few stray items, and so the apartment has a very half-empty feel to it, gaps where furniture should be, etc. The remaining half is a completely messy disaster, showing no evidence of cleaning or organizing whatsoever. There are clothes on the floor, piles of CDs and books scattered about, dirty dishes on windowsills, clothes dumped on chairs, etc.

WANDA

(impatient)

Hi. I'm here at your apartment to get the rest of my stuff, like we discussed, but I see you forgot to leave me the key to the storage space.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

Martin tries to downplay his nervousness as he talks to her.

MARTIN

Yeah, I'm sorry, I woke up late this morning, and I just... I just forgot.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

Wanda shakes her head, clearly not believing him.

WANDA

Very cute. I suppose you did that just so you'd have an excuse to see me after you get off work, is that it?

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

MARTIN

Well, I did think we could talk one more time before you actually move out... just for old time's sake.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

WANDA

Old times... You mean back before you deliberately became an alcoholic? Back when you occasionally did want to spend five or ten minutes talking to me every now and then? Those were the days, they really were.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

MARTIN

(winces)

Look, I'm sorry--

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

WANDA

Yes, yes, I know. I don't suppose you've seen that journal anywhere.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

MARTIN

Journal?

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

WANDA

(suddenly very impatient)

The journal I've been looking for ever since I started moving? The really important journal with the blue cover that's been missing for I don't know how long? Do you ever pay attention to anything anymore, or have you just completely turned into a zombie?

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

MARTIN
 (slight pause)
 Well, to be honest, that's a very
 good question.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

WANDA
 (determined)
 Traci is coming by tonight with her
 brother's truck. You need to be
 here with the key to the storage
 space. Please do not stop and get
 drunk on your way home from work.
 I know what a massive disruption
 that is from your regular schedule,
 but the truck will be here tonight.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

MARTIN
 Wanda--

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

WANDA
 Goodbye, Martin.

She hangs up, shakes her head, resumes packing.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - MORNING.

Martin hangs up, sinks back in his chair, momentarily dazed.

A co-worker - CARRIE - interrupts him via the intercom.

CARRIE (V.O. ON INTERCOM)
 Martin, can you come back here and
 look at something?

MARTIN
 Yeah, I'll be right there.

INT. DEVELOPER'S BULLPEN - CARRIE'S DESK - AFTERNOON.

Carrie sits at her terminal, very irritated. She is a zany
 and stylish woman in her late twenties, and one of Martin's
 only friends at work. Martin arrives behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN
What's the problem?

CARRIE
Who worked on this last?

MARTIN
Richard.

CARRIE
Well, he completely forgot an
entire table for the admin page.
They need to be able to add not
just division info, but each branch
office individually, and modify the
data whenever they want.

MARTIN
You're kidding.
(pause)
Shit.

CARRIE
We're supposed to deliver this
first thing Monday morning.

HANK
(walking by)
You're slipping, Martin.

MARTIN
Shut the fuck up, bitch.

HANK (O.S.)
Hey everyone, Martin fucked up
again!

MARTIN
This is going to take some time,
isn't it.

CARRIE
It is, and I can't stay late
because I have a very important
party to go to tonight.

MARTIN
Fuck.

CARRIE
You really should have caught this
like a week ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN

I know. I've been a little
preoccupied.

Carrie gets a devious look on her face, then smiles
mischievously.

CARRIE

If you come up with a really good
bribe, I'll stay til 7 and fix it.

Martin leans in close to her and whispers conspiratorially.

MARTIN

I know someone who has pure Ecstasy
from Amsterdam.

CARRIE

I think we know the same someone.
I have some already.

MARTIN

Well, what do you need?

CARRIE

Got any acid?

MARTIN

Hmmm... I believe I can track down
a few hits for you.

CARRIE

Kickass. It'll be done by 7.

Cynthia appears in a nearby doorway, angry.

CYNTHIA

Martin, do you have those reports
yet?

MARTIN

(wincing visibly)
No, actually, I don't.

HANK (O.S.)

Aha! He fucked up again!

CYNTHIA

If you do decide to do some work
today, Martin, by all means please
let me know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

And Cynthia briskly disappears from the doorway.

Carrie notices the pained look on Martin's face.

CARRIE

You want to get lunch?

MARTIN

Lunch? People still eat lunch in this city?

CARRIE

C'mon, let's hit the pasta bar. I'm having a tortellini emergency.

MARTIN

If we eat lunch, will you--

CARRIE

Yes, I will still be able to finish this by 7. You forget, I am the wizard of time and space.

MARTIN

I thought that was David Copperfield.

CARRIE

Cute. Let's go.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK - AFTERNOON.

Martin and Carrie stop by Martin's desk, so that he can grab his jacket.

MARTIN

I wish I'd never heard the word Vantec.

CARRIE

Now, now, they're making the world safe for insurance companies, and you know that's an important job.

MARTIN

Please don't make me hurt you.

MARY (V.O. ON INTERCOM)

Martin, there's a messenger here with a package for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN
I'll be right there.

CARRIE
Maybe Linda is sending you a nice
care package from Vantec.

They start to leave...

MARTIN
Please shut up.

CARRIE
Maybe it's a fruitcake, or a DVD of
"Look Who's Talking"!

MARTIN
Please shut up.

INT. RECEPTIONIST'S DESK - MORNING.

A young BICYCLE MESSENGER stands at Mary's desk. He is clad in high-tech spandex, a Mariners baseball cap, and a large messenger bag. He seems to smile almost constantly. He greets Martin earnestly as Martin and Carrie arrive.

MESSENGER
You Martin Reilley, care of Fast
Consulting Group?

MARTIN
That's me.

MESSENGER
I got a package for you. You need
to sign for it.

He hands Martin a clipboard, which Martin quietly accepts.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)
Fast Consulting Group... What do
you guys do here?

MARTIN
Suffer, mostly.

MESSENGER
Ah, you must be in middle
management.

Martin shoots the Messenger a dirty look as he returns the clipboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Messenger pulls a medium-sized package from his bag, wrapped in nondescript brown wrapping paper.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

I guess this is for you. Maybe it's something that'll cure your ills.

CARRIE

That would be tough. He's got a lot of ills.

MESSENGER

(laughs)

Maybe it's time for a career change.

MARTIN

They're all the same.

MESSENGER

Maybe it's time for a lifestyle change! Dye your hair!

MARTIN

Yeah, that'll fix everything. Can I have that already?

The Messenger hands Martin the package.

MESSENGER

There you go, Mr. Reilley. It's all yours. I'm sure you'll figure out what to do with it.

We can't help but notice the Messenger's offbeat, weirdass grin, and then he leaves.

Martin hands Mary the package.

MARTIN

Can you hold on to that til I get back from lunch?

MARY

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARRIE

And if Linda from Vantec calls,
tell her that Martin will be
getting out of brain surgery any
minute now and he'll get right back
to her.

MARTIN

Brain surgery?

CARRIE

Well, they have to put one in
eventually, don't they?

MARTIN

Remind me again why I hang out with
you?

CARRIE

I think it's because I'm so
vivacious. Or maybe it's my
effervescent personality.

And as they wander off to lunch, we come to a CLOSE UP of the
package, sitting innocuously on Mary's desk, with no return
address whatsoever. As we get closer to the package, we
begin hearing some of the same sounds we heard at the
opening: STRANGE UNEARTHLY WHISPERING and BIZARRE ETHEREAL
NOISES...

EXT. PIKE PLACE MARKET - OUTDOOR TABLE - AFTERNOON.

Carrie and Martin sit at a small table in an outdoor food
court at Pike Place Market, an open area of shops,
restaurants, and vendors on Puget Sound. They are enjoying
tortellini and soda pops from the pasta bar. Carrie shovels
food into her mouth, while Martin mostly picks at his food,
disinterested.

MARTIN

I think I worked seventy-two hours
last week.

CARRIE

Avoiding Wanda?

MARTIN

She'll be all moved out after
tonight.

CARRIE

You doing okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

I don't think so. It's hard to tell. I wasn't doing okay before she decided to leave me, either.

CARRIE

Is this the part where you beat yourself up again for being so stupid? Because I think I'm caught up on that part.

MARTIN

I just want a second chance.

CARRIE

You'll get a second chance. It'll just be with someone else. Hey, I know what'll cheer you up. You should be my date to Marcy's party with me tonight. It's an 'All Holiday Party.'

MARTIN

What does that mean?

CARRIE

(through mouthfuls of pasta)

The party starts at 8 pm, at the beginning of the calendar year. You start with Valentine's Day, and every fifteen minutes you celebrate another holiday, so you go through St. Patrick's Day, April Fool's Day, May Day, a random birthday in the middle, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and every holiday you have to celebrate completely, so you're changing clothes, hauling out new food, giving people presents, wearing costumes, and then at midnight you celebrate New Year's Eve.

MARTIN

That sounds exhausting.

CARRIE

(pointedly flirting)

Yeah, maybe it's just an excuse to change clothes a lot in a room full of people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

I think it'll be a blast. I'm sure there will be sexy women there who go for the brooding, existential type.

MARTIN

Do I brood?

CARRIE

Martin, if there was an Olympic brooding team, you would be captain, hands down.

EXT. SIDEWALK. AFTERNOON

Martin and Carrie walking up from the market back to the office, talking in an animated fashion as they go.

MARTIN (V.O.)

My problems as a person were exceedingly mundane. I hated my job, but so what? Everybody hates work; it's the American way.

INT. MARTIN'S DESK. AFTERNOON.

Martin returns to his desk with the mysterious package, which he sets down on the corner of his desk. He takes his jacket off.

MARTIN (V.O.)

There was no magic in the modern world... none that I could find, at least.

CARRIE (V.O. ON INTERCOM)

Martin, I forgot to ask, can you see if Jerry will stay late to test this stuff?

MARTIN

I'll ask him.

Martin eyes the package sitting on his desk, then pulls a leatherman key chain out and opens it up. He slices open the packing tape and unwraps the package. Inside is an ornate black box, with an extremely polished sheen to it. Martin examines it for a moment or two, before opening it. Inside, resting perfectly in a black velvet seat is a small black rod, made of shining black steel, perhaps six or seven inches long and one or two inches in diameter. Slowly, Martin removes it from the box and sets the box down.

(CONTINUED)

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Inscribed in raised gold lettering across the side of the rod is a series of numerals: 0 3 4 2 6 3 4 9 5 3 4 5 9 3 9 4 0 4 (etc.).

It is very clear Martin has no idea what this thing is or where it came from. He stares at it for a long moment, before the telephone rings, breaking him out of his reverie.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

This is Martin... Hi, Mom... Yeah, same old same old. Hey, did you send me a package?... Oh... I just got this package, but I... I don't know where it came from. I don't... I don't really even know what it is...

He hefts the object in his hand, getting used to the feel of it. It shimmers in the light.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

It's this... uh, well, it's this black tube, it's heavy, it's like a shiny lead pipe or something. Never mind, I'll figure it out...

He sets the object back in its case.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Uh, yeah, Wanda and I are... Wanda and I are working things out. Yeah... No, we are, it's just... It's just taking some time...

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON.

Martin comes out of the office building with the black box under his arm, headed home for the day.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

Amidst the boxes, Wanda is chatting happily on a cell phone.

WANDA

I think it all started to go really downhill when he wouldn't take that job at PriceWaterhouseCoopers. That just pissed me off. He used to be so ambitious, and I don't know why that changed, but I can't spend my life with someone so unmotivated...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Martin comes into the room.

WANDA (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

Wanda hangs up her phone. She doesn't even acknowledge Martin with a glance as he enters, staying very focused on putting books into the box in front of her.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Getting my boxes out of storage will go a lot faster if you help load the truck.

Martin slowly takes off his jacket and hangs it up, watching Wanda the whole time.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Actually I was thinking my journal might be in one of your boxes by mistake, so you should go down and look before Traci gets here.

MARTIN

Why don't we go downstairs and look together?

WANDA

Because I'm busy.

MARTIN

When does Traci get here? Maybe we could go get a drink first.

WANDA

Traci will be here any minute. Also, you were going to give me my half of the deposit on this place since you're staying and I'm going, and I wanted you to write me a check for that before you forget. Okay?

MARTIN

Can you please look at me when you talk to me?

WANDA

(ignoring him)

I think the deposit was \$700, right? So you can write me a check for \$350.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN

I know what half of \$700 is, Wanda.

WANDA

Great. Oh, and I still need to pack up my wine glasses...

Wanda heads into the kitchen. Martin stands alone in the living room, momentarily dazed, before deciding to follow her.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON.

The kitchen is an absolute disaster of unwashed dishes, empty cereal boxes and Spaghettios cans, and dozens of empty wine bottles scattered about. Wanda pulls dirty wine glasses out of the sink one at a time.

WANDA

Don't you ever do the dishes anymore? It's going to take a blow torch to get the mold off these glasses.

Martin sets the black box down on the counter next to her and grabs a mug from the cupboard.

MARTIN

Can we please just have one last conversation?

He pours himself a mug of wine and faces her.

WANDA

We're having a conversation.

MARTIN

I want to have a different conversation.

WANDA

(facing him at last)

I'm pretty sure we've already had that conversation. I'm pretty sure we know where it goes. I'm pretty sure we both wish this had turned out some other way, but it didn't. This is what's happening, and more conversation won't change it.

She notices the black box and picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANDA (CONT'D)
What's in here?

MARTIN
Open it and take a look.

She opens the black box, withdraws the object, sets the box down on the kitchen table.

WANDA
What is this?

MARTIN
I have no idea.

WANDA
What do you mean, you have no idea?
What is it?

MARTIN
I don't know what it is. A bike messenger delivered it today. No return address. No instructions. It's just... a *thing*. I don't know what it's for.

WANDA
Are you bullshitting me?

MARTIN
No, actually, I'm not.

WANDA
What do these numbers mean?

MARTIN
(shrugs)
I don't know.

WANDA
Martin, quit bullshitting me. What is this thing?

MARTIN
I said *I don't know*, Wanda.

WANDA
Oh, spare me. I don't have time for this crap.

She throws the object down on the table and storms out of the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Martin watches her go, takes a long pull off his mug of wine, then grabs the object and follows her into the living room.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

Wanda resumes packing books and files into her giant box. Martin wanders in and heads over to his computer desk, a complete ecological disaster area of empty wine glasses, dirty dishes, piles of unopened mail, etc. He sits down to check email, sets the object on the desk next to Wanda's cell phone.

They very deliberately avoid looking at each other.

WANDA

Why do you have to be such a jerk, right up to the last minute? Why don't you just tell me what it is?

MARTIN

Look, you're just going to have to believe me when I tell you that I honestly don't know what this thing is.

WANDA

Fine, keep your toy to yourself, I really don't care.

Wanda's cell phone rings. Martin looks down at her cell phone, sitting next to the object, and unexpectedly makes a connection.

Wanda grabs her cell phone and answers it.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Hello?... Hi, Lisa, what's up?...
No, I'm packing right now
actually...

(laughs)

No, you don't need to send your
brother to beat him up. He seems
sufficiently beaten at this
point...

Martin picks up the object, examines the numbers on it for a moment or two. Then he pulls his own cell phone out of his pocket. Slowly he begins dialing, using the numbers on the object as a phone number. He puts the phone to his ear and waits a long moment, only half convinced someone will answer.

And then, suddenly, a look comes over his face, as though he has been jolted by some sudden, immense surprise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We see Wanda talking on her phone; we can't hear a word she's saying, however, because...

...all we hear are the LOUD AND STRANGE SOUNDS that Martin is now hearing: a variation on the sounds heard at the opening of the film, but much more intense, much more cacophonous. Martin is vividly affected by the noise; he sinks back into his chair, gripping the cell phone tightly against his ear.

MARTIN (V.O.)

That first call didn't make any sense.

Wanda notices Martin's shaken state, stops talking to her phone.

WANDA

What's wrong?

Martin is completely dazed and mystified. A wild array of images is superimposed on top of him in a crazy barrage: forests, black holes swirling in space, thousands of faces, etc.

MARTIN (V.O.)

It was the most insanely mystical experience I had ever had.

Wanda takes a step closer to him.

WANDA

Did I miss something? You look like you just got yourself incredibly high.

(pause)

I thought you didn't like pot. Martin? Hello?

A dizzying MONTAGE centering on Martin begins, fading in and fading out, circling around him, his expression one of complete bafflement and wonder. The sounds from inside the telephone are plainly audible to us, though not to Wanda. He tries to speak to her, but no words come out.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Who are you talking to?

The dizziness increases. At some point, the black object falls from Martin's hand, almost in slow motion, hits the floor and rolls to Wanda's feet. She picks it up, examines it as best she can, peers at Martin from across the room, slightly concerned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Martin shakes his head, trying desperately to clear his mind. At some point, it finally occurs to him to hang up the telephone, and he frantically punches the 'end call' button on the phone and then drops the phone onto the desk in front of him. He is sweating profusely, breathing heavily.

A long silent moment follows, as Wanda stares at Martin, waiting.

Wanda actually seems slightly concerned.

WANDA (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

MARTIN
(dazed)
What just happened to me?

WANDA
You made a phone call.

MARTIN
Who did I call?

WANDA
I don't know.

He realizes Wanda is holding the object, and he reaches out his hand for her to return it to him. She does, not really wanting to hold onto it in the first place. He looks down at the object, then back up at Wanda.

MARTIN
I called this number.
(pause)
You should call this number.

WANDA
What?

MARTIN
Call this number. I want you to
hear what I just heard.

WANDA
(pause)
Look, I don't have time to fuck
around with you. I have to finish
packing before Traci gets here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARTIN

Please, just call it and listen,
just for a second.

WANDA

Just stop it.

MARTIN

What are you so worried about?

WANDA

I'm not worried about anything.
I'm just not interested in playing
desperate little games with you.

The doorbell rings.

WANDA (CONT'D)

That's probably Traci.

She goes to let her friend in, happy to disengage from
dealing with Martin.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

Martin collapses onto the bed, cell phone in hand. Slowly he
dials and then places the phone next to his ear. An enormous
jolt of energy seems to pass through his body as he connects,
as the sound of God's heavenly voice hits his ears.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE BEDROOM DOOR - EARLY
EVENING.

Wanda's friend TRACI has arrived. Wanda knocks on the
bedroom door, Traci standing nearby.

WANDA

Martin, dammit, you said you would
open the storage space!
(to Traci)
I don't know what he's doing in
there.

TRACI

Probably jerking off.

WANDA

(knocking again)
Martin!

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING.

Martin is in a complete reverie, the sound filling the inside of his head, his eyes wide open, a thin line of drool running down the side of his face.

MARTIN (V.O.)
That was my introduction to the voice of God. I know it sounds completely crazy, but I *knew*. I could *feel* it. It was unquestionable.

EXT. SEATTLE SKYLINE - NIGHT.

We see the beautiful Seattle skyline at night, on a crystal clear evening.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Somehow, in the midst of it all, I realized that this was God's voice. That this was God speaking to me in His own majestic language. I lay in my bed for what seemed like an eternity, listening, downloading information directly from heaven itself.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Martin on the bed.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Until, of course, the battery on my cell phone died.

His eyes snap open, as the connection dies. He stares at his phone in disbelief.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Martin stumbles into the room, cell phone in one hand, the black object in his other hand. Wanda and her boxes are long gone. He stares at the half empty room, wondering what to do. He plugs his cell phone into its recharger, and then collapses into a battered old easy chair.

And as he sits in the chair, he spots the home phone on the end table next to him. Frantically, he grabs it, and dials the number.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A huge jolt passes through him once again, and a serene smile hits his face, as he sinks back into the chair, connected to God once again....

WIDE SHOT of the room, slowly moving through and past Martin, eyes closed, phone pressed to his ear, body slumping just a bit.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE UP of his free hand, twitching in an irregular fashion.

DISSOLVE TO:

His phone hand, which is clenching the phone so hard that the muscles are shaking violently.

DISSOLVE TO:

Shot of the artifact, lying on the floor next to his feet.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE UP of his face, a mixture of pain and pleasure.

MARTIN (V.O.)

I listened for as long as I could.
I suspect if given a choice, I
would have listened to that voice
indefinitely.

His eyes snap open suddenly.

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

However, it seems there are
physiological limits to how much
God the human body can handle at
first.

He leaps out of the chair.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT.

From out in the hallway, we see Martin collapsed over the toilet bowl, throwing up over and over again.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Martin slowly staggers out of the bathroom, stops in the doorway to the living room, looking incredibly dazed and damaged.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

The phone receiver is lying on the chair.

MARTIN (V.O.)
It took me a while to piece
together what had happened.

The artifact, meanwhile, is lying on the floor.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Martin is beginning to panic.

MARTIN (V.O.)
But then it dawned on me. I'd just
been listening to the voice of God.
There was really only one thing
left to do at that point.

Martin begins screaming at the top of his lungs. Then,
abruptly, he stops, stares forward for a long, silent moment.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Martin rushes in, hangs up the phone. Then he backs away
from it rapidly, severely distraught.

MARTIN
What the fuck... what the fuck...

The telephone suddenly rings. Martin screams, extremely
startled. The phone continues ringing. Against his better
judgment, he answers it.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
(right into the phone)
What the fuck?

CARRIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
Martin? Is that you?

MARTIN
(confused pause)
Carrie?

INT. PARTY SCENE - NIGHT.

Carrie on the phone, while a few people party in the
background. They are all dressed in green, drinking green
beer, and Celtic music is playing on the stereo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nobody looks particularly excited to be there -- except Carrie, of course. She has little green clovers painted on her cheeks.

CARRIE

Martin, where are you? You're missing the All-Holiday Party! It's already St. Patrick's Day!

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Martin begins pacing frantically.

MARTIN

(having trouble with words)

Oh, God... uh, Carrie, you know, I don't think I'm coming to the party tonight.

INT. PARTY SCENE. NIGHT.

CARRIE

What do you mean, you're not coming? We're having a blast! You can't just mope about Wanda for the rest of your natural life! Besides, I told everyone you were my date! Get your stupid ass over here!

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

MARTIN

No, I mean... I'm just, I'm not feeling well, Carrie, I think I should stay home....

INT. PARTY SCENE - NIGHT.

CARRIE

Damn it, Martin, it's not every day you get to celebrate all the holidays of the year in one night! We're totally having a blast! Aren't we having a blast, guys?

She holds the phone up so that the people in the background can make a half-hearted yell for Martin to come over; they're entirely pathetic, and immediately go back to talking about work and drinking green beer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Someone comes up to Carrie and places bunny ears on her head, preparing her for Easter.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
See? I really want to see you.
Let's just have some fun tonight.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

MARTIN
No, look... uh, how can I explain
this, uh...

He picks up the artifact off the floor and gives it a long, hard look.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
(very slowly)
I... I think I have been talking to
God tonight.

CARRIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
What?

MARTIN
I've been... well, I guess I
haven't actually said much. He's
been doing all the talking, really.
But it's God, it really is. I've
been hearing God's voice on the
telephone.

INT. PARTY SCENE - NIGHT.

CARRIE
(completely suspicious)
Listen, are you on drugs right now?

MARTIN (V.O. ON PHONE)
No, that's not it at all!

CARRIE
You can't lie to me. Did you eat
my acid? That was *mine*, Martin.
You don't even believe in God!

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

MARTIN
(exasperated)
Carrie, I am NOT on drugs!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I swear! I just happen to have a way to get hold of God by telephone!

INT. PARTY SCENE. NIGHT.

CARRIE

Yeah, just like the time you took all those mushrooms and thought you could call the mother ship down from outer space with the power of your *mind*.

(she begins trying to fuck with him)

Martin Martin Martin.... Martin, can you hear me? Can you hear me over the VOICES IN YOUR HEAD?

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

MARTIN

Look, Carrie, I'm going to let you go.

INT. PARTY SCENE. NIGHT.

CARRIE

(on a mission)

Oh, no you don't. I don't care how much acid you just ate. I'm coming over to rescue you from Planet I'm So Depressed, and we are going to be back here in time for Halloween.

MARTIN (V.O. ON PHONE)

No, Carrie, that's not a good idea--

CARRIE

(interrupting)

Sure it is. You can dress up as a Haight-Ashbury acid casualty, won't that be fun?

MARTIN

Carrie, I'm not--

CARRIE

See you soon!

She hangs up on him.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

MARTIN

Fuck!

He hangs up the phone, angry, then turns to face the doorway.

Standing in the doorway is a clean-cut man in an immaculate white suit, perfectly groomed, a completely charismatic presence. A noticeable white glow surrounds the man - GABRIEL.

GABRIEL

Hi, do you mind if I come in?

Martin, startled once again, makes as if to scream, but Gabriel cuts him off.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

No, no, don't scream. I hate it when they scream.

And so, Martin stands silently, mouth open to scream but no noise is coming out.

Gabriel enters the room, takes a look around. Martin watches him, silently. Gabriel walks about slowly but surely, looking at the room, then at Martin, then at the room, then at Martin. Finally...

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Boo.

And Martin screams like mad, falling over into the chair trying to get away from Gabriel.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Now that that's out of the way, allow me to introduce myself. On behalf of the nine celestial orders of the angelic heavenly host, and the angel rulers of the seven celestial halls; on behalf of the celestial angel princes, and the angels of punishment; on behalf of the angelic governors, the angels of the throne, and the seven archangels Jehudiel, Sealtiel, Barachiel, Uriel, Raphael, Michael, and myself, Gabriel, I come to you this day with great tidings of vast import.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Martin is not amused.

MARTIN

Great tidings of what?

Gabriel continues, ignoring him entirely.

GABRIEL

I bring you a message from Akatriel, revealer of the divine mysteries. Ordinarily he would deliver this message himself, as angel of proclamation, but he's come down with a bit of celestial laryngitis. It happens sometimes, if you get really enthusiastic with the whole 'praising His holy name' bit.

Martin appears absolutely stupefied. Gabriel withdraws a scroll from his inside suit pocket.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Now this may be a little rough, because I haven't had time to rehearse, so go easy on me, all right, champ?

Martin nods. Gabriel clears his throat.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

'Greetings, and thank you for using the Voice of the 72 Names, another fine product by Raziel, chief of the supreme mysteries. The Voice of the 72 Names is a one of a kind holy artifact that has traveled the pathways of reality for aeons, but only now, thanks to advances in modern interdimensional communications networks, can you, the consumer, truly appreciate the fine craftsmanship and attention to detail embodied in this elegant, yet powerful tool.'

He looks up to see if Martin is paying attention. Martin is indeed paying attention, a mortified look on his face.

Satisfied, Gabriel continues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Okay, let's see... 'dialing heaven in the comfort of your own home, blah blah blah,' I think you've already figured that part out... 'dangerous to use in combination with drugs or alcohol,' yeah, that's an important one for you...

MARTIN

(indignant)

Excuse me?

GABRIEL

Hey, it's nothing personal... ah, here we go. 'The Voice of the 72 Names is covered under the Warranty of the 72 Names. If for any reason you are dissatisfied with this product, you can return it at your convenience to the supreme judgment council of the heavenly court, and make your appeal before the Irin and the Qaddisin, exalted hierarchs of fairness and wisdom. Be advised that Raziel is not responsible for misfortune caused by use of the product.' Yeah, that's the important bit there, the heavenly court is pretty conservative, they typically don't award damages since Raziel is, of course, a perfect being of holy light. But it's nice that they give you a chance, you know?

Martin remains completely baffled, unable to respond.

Gabriel continues cheerily.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Okay, let's see, there was one other thing... ah, right, here it is. 'One final note about the product's use and proper application. The Voice of the 72 Names can never be forcibly taken from its current owner; it can only be given away of free volition.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

This handy feature has been incorporated into the product to prevent unscrupulous beings from stealing the product from an unwary owner. Rest assured, until you're finished with the Voice of the 72 Names, the Voice of the 72 Names will never be finished with you!

Martin seems absolutely shocked. He looks at the artifact with newly found respect.

Gabriel begins rolling the scroll back up and puts it away.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Well, I think that about wraps it up, really. If you have any questions, I'm pretty hard to get a hold of, so maybe you could ask me before I leave--

Martin interrupts, severely perturbed.

MARTIN

Now wait just a God damn minute!

Gabriel winces.

GABRIEL

Oh, hey, language, language...

Martin gets out of the chair.

MARTIN

You can't just... You can't just barge in here like...like some kind of...

GABRIEL

(ever helpful)
Archangel?

MARTIN

With all of your...your heavenly pronouncements, and that...that...

GABRIEL

Manual? Here, you should probably just take a look.

Gabriel produces the scroll and hands it to Martin, who unrolls it - it's very long - and tries reading it. He doesn't have much luck at first.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARTIN

What is all this?

GABRIEL

Oh, right, they always do these manuals in several languages. That's the German, there's the French, the Japanese... that's the Hebrew, there's the Enochian, that's the Babylonian...

Martin gets an extremely pained look on his face, and begins shouting 'Ouch!' over and over again.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, don't look at that one, that's the translation for the unholy Yezidic devils, you don't want to look at that... Here, down here, there's the English.

Martin tries to read the English translation, as Gabriel stands patiently by. The experience doesn't leave him feeling any better.

MARTIN

So let me see if I understand this correctly.

(waves the artifact)

This little... this fucking... *thing*...

GABRIEL

It's called the Voice of the 72 Names.

MARTIN

And I can use this *thing* to call *God*?

GABRIEL

Right.

MARTIN

Whenever I want.

GABRIEL

Exactly.

MARTIN

And nobody can take it away from me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GABRIEL

Nobody except God himself. Here,
I'll show you.

Gabriel reaches over, grabs the artifact, and tries as hard as he possibly can to yank it out of Martin's hand, but to no avail; Martin merely stands there, exerting no effort whatsoever, while Gabriel struggles mightily. Finally Gabriel gives up.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Amazing, isn't it? I'm a member of the heavenly host. I could break your neck with my pinky if I wanted to, but I can't take the Voice of the 72 Names away from you without your consent.

MARTIN

That *is* amazing.

GABRIEL

It really is. Let me offer you a warning: you need to be wary. Your life may change radically as a result of possessing the Voice. It is not something to be trifled with. It is an object of incredible power, and it may overwhelm you. Also, as long as I'm here, you definitely need to improve your diet and get more exercise. You're drinking far too much alcohol for your own good. And you haven't stepped foot inside a church in a long time, and I don't suppose I need to remind you that you're only hurting yourself here.

MARTIN

I know.

GABRIEL

(big smile)

Excellent. Hey, who knows? If things go well, we may see each other again someday. You know, after your imperfect human body finally gives out and your divine soul ascends to heaven.

(gives Martin the scroll)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I'll leave you this copy of the manual, but now I've got to get back to heaven. Things to do, people to see, and besides it's really annoying having to stuff 140 pairs of wings inside a human body.

As Gabriel heads for the front door, Martin continues studying the English translation on the scroll, and calls after Gabriel:

MARTIN

Hey, wait, wait, wait, this manual doesn't say anything at all about why I got this thing in the first place!

Gabriel shrugs as he heads out the door.

GABRIEL

I have no idea. The Lord works in mysterious ways.

MARTIN

Oh shut the fuck up about mysterious ways already.

GABRIEL

It's true!

MARTIN

Can I call you if I have questions?

GABRIEL

(waving goodbye)

You sure can't! Good luck, Martin!

The moment the door closes behind Gabriel, we hear the doorbell. Martin crosses to the intercom and speaks into it.

MARTIN

Who is it?

CARRIE (V.O. ON INTERCOM)

It's Carrie, let me in.

He shakes his head, then buzzes her in and heads back to the living room. He throws down the scroll, exasperated, and heads to the kitchen to get himself a glass of wine.

Carrie charges in, not bothering to knock, still dressed for St. Patrick's Day, but also wearing bunny ears for Easter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

All right, I hope you're dressed
and ready to go, because we need to
get moving.

Martin emerges from the kitchen holding a glass of wine.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

There you are.

(before Martin can say
anything, she interrupts
him)

No, no, let me just try to guess
what drugs you're on.

MARTIN

I'm not on drugs, Carrie.

CARRIE

Did you take my acid? Are you on
mushrooms?

MARTIN

I'm not on drugs, Carrie.

CARRIE

Acid *and* mushrooms? Did you throw
in some Ecstasy for good measure?

MARTIN

I'm not on drugs, Carrie.

Martin very calmly shows Carrie the artifact.

CARRIE

What is that?

MARTIN

Remember that package I got at
work?

CARRIE

Yeah.

MARTIN

This is what was in it.

CARRIE

What is it?

MARTIN

It's the Voice of the 72 Names.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

CARRIE

The what?

MARTIN

It's a metaphysical artifact. I just saw the archangel Gabriel. He told me all about it.

CARRIE

(playing along)

Yes, yes, I see. Fascinating. And what are those numbers for?

MARTIN

That's God's telephone number.

CARRIE

How convenient. I always figured it was unlisted.

MARTIN

I'm telling you, it's God's telephone number. If you dial that number, you will be connected directly to heaven, and you will hear God's voice.

(pause)

It's true. I tried it. It works.

(pause)

I'm not on drugs, Carrie.

CARRIE

(laughing)

You have got to be on so many drugs, it's not even funny.

MARTIN

There's an easy way for me to prove it. We can pick up the phone, and we can dial that number, and we can have you listen to it. If I'm on drugs, hey, no big deal, the joke's on Martin and we can leave for the party. If I'm *not* on drugs, then you'll get to hear the voice of God, right here in my living room.

(pause)

I'll just dial the number.

He reaches for the phone, but she interrupts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

CARRIE

(suddenly intimidated)
Hold it. Don't touch that phone.
(a long pause, as she eyes
him warily)
Let me get this straight. That
thing you're holding--

MARTIN

It's called the Voice of the 72
Names.

CARRIE

Just shut up for a second.
(pause)
That thing you're holding... has
God's phone number inscribed on it.
And you... are not on any drugs
whatsoever.
(pause)
Gimme a pupil check.

He leans in close and she studies his pupils carefully.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

No dilation.

MARTIN

I'm not on drugs, Carrie.

CARRIE

Oh, now, just cut this shit out
already. What is that thing
really?

MARTIN

(points to the scroll)
There's the manual. I got it from
an archangel.

CARRIE

Will you shut up? Some of us
believe in archangels!

MARTIN

I believe in the one that was just
here, I'll tell you that much.

Martin picks up the phone and begins dialing the number. As
he dials, Carrie picks up the scroll and unrolls it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

CARRIE
Martin, I don't like this at all.
What is going on here?

MARTIN
Just chill, Carrie.

Carrie starts reading and suddenly has the same extremely pained reaction that Martin did earlier, suddenly shouting in agony.

Martin grabs the scroll from her, which stops the pain.

CARRIE
What the fuck was that?

MARTIN
Sorry, my bad, you're not an unholy
Yezidic devil.

CARRIE
A *what*?

He finishes dialing, and then holds out the receiver to her. She refuses to take it. They stand there for a moment, eyeing the receiver between them.

MARTIN
Aren't you at least going to listen
to it?

CARRIE
What just happened to me?
(long pause)
I don't want to listen to that.

MARTIN
You don't want to hear it for
yourself? You don't want proof?

CARRIE
Proof of what, Martin? How could
it be proof? How could it be proof
over the telephone?

MARTIN
That's what it is. That's what I'm
telling you.

CARRIE
(backing away)
No, no, no, no...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

I don't know what's going on here,
but I think you're playing a very
mean prank on me, and I don't like
it.

MARTIN

If you don't want to listen to it,
I'm going to listen to it.

CARRIE

You go right ahead.

MARTIN

I'm going to.

CARRIE

That's fine, and I'll just... I'll
just go back to the party. We were
having a *really good time* at that
party.

Martin peers at her, making absolutely sure she doesn't want
to hear the Voice.

Carrie is damn sure she doesn't like what's going on, but is
compelled to watch Martin as she backs up very slowly away
from him.

Martin places the phone receiver to his ear.

We get CLOSER AND CLOSER to Carrie, as we hear Martin in the
background, the MOANS that escape him as he is subsumed by
connection to the voice. The look on Carrie's face is abject
terror.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

(very quietly)

Martin, if this is some kind of
joke, I am so totally not laughing.

(pause; very concerned)

Are you okay, Martin?

She waits for a response, which is not coming. CLOSER AND
CLOSER to Carrie's frightened face, as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

FADE UP on the mess that is the living room. Martin is on
the floor, phone to his ear, in a deep reverie. Several feet
beyond him, Carrie sits on the floor staring at him,
exhausted but unable to sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN (V.O.)

The more time you spend listening to the voice of God... the harder it is to stop. There's no reason to stop, really, since it's the most exquisite sensation on earth. If you suddenly realized that world peace was spontaneously breaking out all over the planet, and you somehow knew that there'd be no more starving, and no disease, and no war, just endless years of harmony among the people of earth... well, I don't actually know what that would feel like, but listening to the voice of God sure felt fan-fucking-tastic.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING.

In the alley behind the apartment building, as seen from the living room window, we see Wanda's fancy little Jetta pull up and stop.

Wanda gets out of the car, in a hurry (as usual), and heads toward the building.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

CLOSE UP Carrie, exhausted and freaked out.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Carrie didn't know what to do. She had some latent Catholic programming that made her scared shitless of talking to God. But at least she knew I was telling the truth.

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE OF APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING.

Wanda walking toward the back entrance of the apartment building, as seen from several floors up.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Wanda, on the other hand...

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRWELL - MORNING.

Wanda lets herself in and heads up the stairs, humming a pop song to herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN (V.O.)
 ...well, I knew Wanda would
 probably never believe anything I
 had to say ever again.

As she hums, we see that she's actually got a grim and determined look on her face, as though she is heading into battle.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

Wanda comes out of the stairwell, heads to the apartment, uses her key to unlock it and goes in.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Carrie looks up at the sound of Wanda entering.

Wanda enters and charges into the room.

WANDA
 (shouting)
 Martin, are you home? I came to
 get my--

She stops dead in her tracks.

POV shot, from where Wanda is standing: the living room is a mess, Martin is lying on the floor completely unresponsive, Carrie is huddled against the couch looking mildly terrified and wearing bunny ears.

WANDA (CONT'D)
 (disgusted)
 So it's been one of *those* nights.

She crosses to Martin and kicks him in the leg, trying to get his attention.

WANDA (CONT'D)
 Hey, I came to get my chair. It
 would look a lot nicer in my new
 apartment than it does here.
 Besides, you apparently seem to
 think it's more comfortable to lie
 on the floor in a puddle of your
 own drool.
 (frustrated at his lack of
 response)
 Hello! Martin!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

I don't think he can hear you.

WANDA

And why is that? Because you guys spent the entire night whacked out on acid and now he's finally broken his tiny little brain?

CARRIE

(softly)

I think he's listening to the voice of God.

Wanda notices the artifact lying on the floor, suddenly tears into Carrie.

WANDA

I don't know what kind of moron you think I am, but let's get something absolutely straight: the only thing Martin ever listens to are the demented little voices in his head. You should be completely ashamed of yourself for falling for his bullshit.

(wheeling around, tearing into Martin)

Martin, get off the floor and help me carry this goddamn chair to my car.

Wanda rips the phone away from Martin's ear and throws it onto the couch. Martin recoils as though he has been punched, then tries getting to his knees as Wanda continues shouting.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Come on. I don't care how much acid you sucked down last night. I don't care if there are thousands of colorful little elves dancing tuneful jigs inside your skull. I wasn't impressed the *last* time that happened to you, and I'm not impressed NOW, either! Let's go, I'm late for my acupuncture appointment.

In an attempt to steady himself, Martin winds up holding onto the side of the chair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN

Hi, Wanda...

WANDA

Don't 'hi, Wanda' me, you little shit. You could have at least waited til I moved out to start fucking your coworkers.

Abruptly, Martin leans over and vomits into the chair.

Carrie looks away, shaking her head.

Wanda becomes insanely furious, is so angry she can hardly speak for a few moments.

WANDA (CONT'D)

You... incredible... bastard...

Carrie notices the phone on the couch next to her. Her eyes lock in on it, wondering if she should sneak a listen.

Martin shakes his head, still a little dizzy.

MARTIN

(very apologetic)

I'm sorry, sweetie, I'm sorry...

WANDA

Don't call me sweetie.

MARTIN

(on his knees, looking for his shoes)

I'll help with the chair... I'll get my shoes on, just hang on...

Carrie spots Martin looking for her shoes, grabs the phone and hangs it up, and goes to help him find his shoes and his coat.

WANDA

(supremely furious)

Why don't I just... why don't I just go in there and piss on your bed, you little moron, would that make you feel better?

(she notices Carrie's bunny ears)

And *why on earth* are you dressed like that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARRIE
(matter of factly)
It was Easter.

Martin struggles into one of his shoes, while Carrie hands him the other one, and starts looking for his coat.

WANDA
Both of you: just get out. I'm
going to get the rest of my stuff
before you puke all over that too.

Wanda charges off into the kitchen.

CARRIE
(whispering to Martin)
How long did you date her?

MARTIN
Does the phrase 'an endless
lifetime of pain' mean anything to
you?

Wanda continues shouting from the kitchen as Martin scrambles into his coat. He grabs his keys, his cell phone, and the artifact, and motions to Carrie that they should leave, and the two of them sneak out of the apartment.

WANDA (O.S.)
Oh, wait, Martin! I need the key
to the storage space!

Wanda charges back into the living room, finds it empty, stops in her tracks.

WANDA (CONT'D)
(long pause; feeling very
defeated)
Well, fuck.

EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin and Carrie stumble out, looking very disheveled. It is a gorgeous sunny day, enough to drive Martin a bit crazy due to too much sunlight.

CARRIE
I swear, Martin, you could have had
more fun dating a parking meter for
the last four years.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

I know.

CARRIE

What you need is a good solid rebound relationship.

MARTIN

You're right. Know any available parking meters?

CARRIE

(frustrated)

Martin--

MARTIN

I feel like shit.

CARRIE

You look like shit, too.

MARTIN

You're one to talk. Oh, hold on.

Martin leans over and vomits into a bush, just out of the shot.

CARRIE

I don't understand why hearing the voice of God makes you so sick to your stomach. Shouldn't it be something completely remarkable and wonderful?

MARTIN

(recovering)

It is. It's *not* hearing that voice anymore that makes me sick. Can we go to your place? I need to lie down.

CARRIE

Yeah, can you walk a few blocks or do I need to go get my car?

MARTIN

I can walk.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - MORNING.

Martin and Carrie walk briskly through a quiet neighborhood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

Tell me what it sounds like.

MARTIN

I can't put it into words.

CARRIE

It must be completely amazing, to do all that to you.

MARTIN

It's beyond amazing.

CARRIE

You have your cell phone with you, right?

MARTIN

Yeah.

CARRIE

(quietly eager)

Can I call?

MARTIN

Not while we're walking. We'll get to your place, we'll lie down, I'll set you up right.

CARRIE

I can't believe this is happening. How did you get that thing?

MARTIN

It just showed up out of the blue.

CARRIE

What are you going to do with it?

MARTIN

What do you mean, what am I going to do with it? I'm going to keep calling.

CARRIE

No, no, look, you should share this number with people. You should let people know that God exists. It will change everything. This is an awesome responsibility!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN

Would you stop it? You're giving me a headache.

Martin suddenly stops dead in his tracks.

CARRIE

What is it?

MARTIN

Are we being *followed*?

Very, very slowly, the two turn to look behind them. Sure enough, there is a FIGURE in the distance, perhaps a block away, walking toward them.

The figure is a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN dressed entirely in black and red, black lipstick, long wild hair, a cool sophisticated figure who happens to also look tough enough to win a bar fight.

Carrie and Martin turn back around and begin walking again, this time faster than before.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

How much farther til your apartment?

CARRIE

Couple blocks.

MARTIN

I'm not saying we're being followed necessarily, you understand.

CARRIE

Maybe she lives in the neighborhood.

MARTIN

Right. She might live around here.

CARRIE

And that incredible creeping sense of foreboding I get just from thinking about her--

MARTIN

That's all just a product of your imagination, really.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARRIE
You don't feel it?

MARTIN
Actually, I do feel it.

CARRIE
An incredible creeping sense of
foreboding?

MARTIN
Yep.

CARRIE
We are totally being followed.

The mysterious woman's black coat trails behind her in the breeze. There is a slight smile on her face.

Martin and Carrie peek back, then look forward again, very agitated.

MARTIN
Would you perhaps be interested in
picking up the pace?

CARRIE
Yeah, you mean, like power walking?

MARTIN
We could try that, yeah.

They speed up significantly.

CARRIE
Is this fast enough?

MARTIN
I don't know, do you feel like
sprinting?

CARRIE
It's only a couple of blocks.

They suddenly take off into a mad dash.

We see them rounding a corner at top speed...

...and charging up the next block, then suddenly peeling off into the entryway of Carrie's apartment building.

EXT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ENTRYWAY - MORNING.

While Martin waits anxiously, Carrie unlocks the door and lets them both in...

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MORNING.

Carrie and Martin burst in. Carrie frantically locks all the locks, leans against the door, exhausted.

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Carrie's apartment is very small but very smartly decorated, a combination of slick Ikea fashion and zany theatre-style decorations, with props and curtains scattered about.

Martin, also exhausted, suddenly finds himself on the verge of getting sick, teeters as if about to vomit on one of her chairs.

CARRIE
Whoa, slow down!

She intercepts him, leads him O.S. to the bathroom. We hear vomit sounds in the distance, followed by flushing, followed by Carrie gently walking Martin back into the living room.

He collapses onto the living room floor, the artifact landing next to him with the numbers facing up. A long pause, as Carrie's eyes fixate on the artifact.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Can I call the number now?

MARTIN
(exhausted, doesn't open
his eyes)
Yeah, you can totally call it now.

CARRIE
I want to... there's a phone in my
bedroom, can I call in there?

MARTIN
Yeah, do whatever you want.

After a beat, she grabs a piece of paper and a pen and starts writing the number down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

I'm just going to write this number down, I don't actually want to have to touch that thing.

MARTIN

That's fine with me.

It takes her a few beats to get the whole thing transcribed onto paper. The moment she is finished, she suddenly gasps -- the piece of paper is ON FIRE!

CARRIE

Oh my god oh my god oh my god...

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING.

Carrie dashes into to her tiny little economy kitchen and throws the burning paper into the sink.

CARRIE

(incredibly shaken)
Oh my god!

MARTIN (O.S.)

What happened?

CARRIE

Oh my god, I can't even write that number down on a piece of paper!

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Martin's eyes pop open.

MARTIN

What are you talking about?

Carrie charges back into the living room, sits down next to Martin.

CARRIE

Okay, this is just totally freaking me out. That paper just burst into flames. What the hell is this thing? Where did you get it? How do you *know* it's the voice of God and not some other weird voice?

MARTIN

Because the archangel Gabriel told me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN (CONT'D)

He even brought me a manual-- fuck,
we left the manual at my place.
Look, why don't you just call it
and find out?

CARRIE

Because I'm scared to, isn't that
obvious?

MARTIN

What are you scared of? It's just
the voice of God. You believe in
God, don't you?

CARRIE

I do believe in God, but--

MARTIN

So you'll know this voice when you
hear it. You'll recognize it.

CARRIE

This is too incredible, you have to
understand. I never in a million
years expected I'd someday have
this kind of proof of God's
existence. It sounds absurd. It
sounds wrong.

MARTIN

The Lord works in mysterious ways.

CARRIE

Yeah, I've heard that shit before,
but thank you for sharing.

MARTIN

(climbing to his feet)
Come on. You got a phone in your
bedroom. Let's settle this right
now.

He holds out his hand to help her stand. Reluctantly, she
takes his hand and rises...

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

Martin pulls down the window shades as the two of them enter
the room. The bedroom is very tiny but very quirky and cool;
a beautiful homemade canopy covers the bed itself.

MARTIN

Go lay down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

(climbing into bed)

You're not going to leave, are you?
You need to stay right here while
this happens.

MARTIN

I'll stick around.

Martin grabs the phone from the bedside table.

CARRIE

This is so freaky.

MARTIN

Just chill out, it's going to be
fine. How long have you believed
in God?

CARRIE

I've always believed in God.

MARTIN

Well, then, think of this as a
reward for believing in him all
those years. For having faith,
right? Now you get to *feel God's*
presence, and you don't have to die
and go to heaven to feel it.

CARRIE

Martin, you don't understand. I
have *always* felt God's presence in
my life. That's what it means to
have faith.

MARTIN

Well, I think that's absolutely
beautiful.

(holds up artifact)

This is even more beautiful.

Carrie grabs Martin's hand.

CARRIE

Look, I mean it. I need you to
stay with me.

MARTIN

(a bit surprised)

Don't worry, Carrie. I'm not going
anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARRIE

Promise?

They hold eye contact with each other for a long moment. Martin finally realizes that Carrie might have stronger feelings for him that he previously understood. The idea catches him off guard; he is not sure how to respond.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Just say yes, Martin. It'll make me feel better.

MARTIN

(smiles)

Yeah, I promise.

Slowly he begins dialing the number. Carrie watches in complete nervous anticipation.

He holds out the phone for her to take. After a long hesitation, she takes it, and slowly, gingerly places it to her ear.

There is a long moment, wherein it seems as though Carrie is having no reaction. Then a change comes over her face...

...and she slowly sinks back into her pillow, oblivious to the world around her...

Martin watches her closely.

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

Knowing that Carrie was at that very moment hearing the voice of God gave me a deep satisfaction, and tempered my own longing to hear it again. I could now delay my next phone call a little longer, build some delicious anticipation, like an alcoholic forcing himself to wait a few more minutes before having his next drink.

Martin's cell phone rings. He reaches into the pocket of his coat, takes it out, looks at the caller ID. After hesitating as long as he can, he answers it.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Hello, Wanda.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Wanda on the phone.

WANDA
(calm, even-tempered)
You have the only key to the
storage space downstairs.

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

Martin on the phone.

MARTIN
(exhausted)
That's true.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

WANDA
I just heard from Traci. She can
bring the truck over in a half
hour.

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

MARTIN
I thought you had an acupuncture
appointment.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

WANDA
I would rather get those boxes.
(pause)
I'm sorry I yelled at you when I
came in. That was very
inappropriate of me, especially
when you had company.
(pause; reaching out to
him)
Look, I know you don't want to hear
this, but this isn't easy for me
either.

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

Martin is silent.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

WANDA

It seems like you're driving yourself crazy just because of me, and you shouldn't. I want you to take care of yourself.

(pause)

Look, let's not do this over the phone. I owe you that one last conversation you wanted, for old time's sake, remember?

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

MARTIN

(long pause, sigh)

All right. I'll be home in a few minutes.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

WANDA

Thank you, Martin.

Carrie is heard moaning in the background.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Was that Carrie?

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

MARTIN

UH...

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

WANDA

(shaking her head)

You don't waste any time, do you. See you soon.

She hangs up.

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

Martin hangs up the phone.

Carrie is still caught up in the experience.

CLOSE UP on Carrie's face, which is screwed up tight in a ball of agony. She moans again...

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Martin grabs Carrie's keys off a table near the door, and then lets himself out.

EXT. FRONT OF CARRIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin comes out the front door, stops suddenly. He can see the wild woman in black across the street.

The woman smiles and waves.

Martin stands momentarily frozen. A beat later, he breaks into a mad run.

The woman continues smiling, only this time, she too begins to move, seeming to take flight toward the camera.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALKS - MORNING.

We sail above Martin as though we were in flight, watching him sprint crazily toward home. Occasionally he looks up at us, but for the most part he simply sprints, terrified.

The woman is a blur of motion above his head, suddenly outpacing him and vanishing.

EXT. FRONT OF MARTIN'S BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin charges around the corner and up to his front stoop. He suddenly careens to a halt.

An enormous blur lands in front of him on the stoop, which quickly resolves into the figure of the woman -- ASTARTE -- leaning casually against the side of the building, as though she has been standing there all along. She takes a long, cool drag off a cigarette.

ASTARTE

Hi, Martin.

He is exhausted from running, and leans over, breathing heavily.

She sits down on the stoop next to him, looks up into his face, smiles at him, trying to make him feel comfortable.

ASTARTE (CONT'D)

Have a seat. I'm not going anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reluctantly, Martin sits next to her, and tries to catch his breath.

ASTARTE (CONT'D)
My name is Astarte.

MARTIN
Have we met?

ASTARTE
I doubt it.
(casually)
I spend my time traveling the
ethereal planes. I don't imagine
you visit the ethereal planes very
often.

MARTIN
You'd be surprised.

ASTARTE
Drug use doesn't count.

MARTIN
Yes, it does.

ASTARTE
No, it doesn't.

MARTIN
Yes, it does.
(pause)
Just who exactly are you anyway?

ASTARTE
Astarte. Goddess of Love and War.

Martin looks at her closely; he's seen enough to know he's in over his head with this woman already.

MARTIN
(exasperated)
Love *and* war, so you're the goddess
of shitty breakups, is that it?
Have you been living in my closet
for the last three months?

ASTARTE
That's cute. So listen, I'm sorry
about chasing you over here like
that. I wasn't trying to scare
you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASTARTE (CONT'D)

There's not much I can do about that nagging sense of total, uncontrollable fear you're feeling around me; believe me, I'm doing everything I can to contain my explosive goddess energy within this human body. If you saw me in my true form, you'd be a babbling, blithering idiot right now, and we can't have that.

MARTIN

Wait a minute. Did there used to be... a person in that body?

ASTARTE

Oh, that's right. You humans have a weird thing about possession. Like, you seem to think if someone wants to take over a human body, it's some kind of ugly situation where your head spins around and your skin breaks out and you spit green puke all over the place. It's actually not a big deal, because of the design flaw.

MARTIN

Design flaw?

ASTARTE

Yeah, the human consciousness has a few serious security issues. See, watch.

MARTIN

(without changing his demeanor)

I have *got* to be the most incredible dork on this entire pathetic planet. The only reason I haven't killed myself already is the amazing joy I receive from fucking stray cats and dogs.

ASTARTE

Isn't that neat?

MARTIN

(back to himself)

Holy shit, don't do that again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ASTARTE

It's an easy fix, but *somebody's* a little too busy screwing heavenly nymphets to ever get around to updating it.

(takes a drag from
cigarette)

I recommend we postpone the rest of this heavy ontological discussion until we've had a drink.

(she produces a bottle of
wine)

Would you consider inviting me up to your apartment?

MARTIN

(hesitates)

My ex-girlfriend is waiting for me up there.

ASTARTE

She went to the store. I decided she needed something.

MARTIN

How convenient.

ASTARTE

Isn't it?

And against Martin's better judgment, he nods.

She smiles a very beautiful smile at him...

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Martin and Astarte enter. Martin heads for the kitchen with the wine bottle.

MARTIN

I'll go pour a couple of glasses.

ASTARTE

What a pro.

(taking in his apartment
after he leaves)

Your apartment's a bit of a drag, Martin. You ever heard of this new thing called 'feng shui'?

MARTIN (O.S.)

I'm in transition at the moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASTARTE

Perhaps the 'new you' should incorporate some taste and creativity, what do you say?

(smiles)

This whole place reeks of love and war.

MARTIN (O.S.)

I don't remember hearing about a goddess named Astarte.

ASTARTE

(making herself comfortable)

Of course not. You grew up Christian. If you had grown up Phoenician, or Sumerian, or Babylonian, that'd be different. I was fashionable for a time with the Hittites and the Akkadians, and the Canaanites too. The Hebrews hated me, though, so I don't get too much ink in that thing they call a holy book, but that's all right, I get plenty of press in other places these days.

Martin returns from the kitchen with two glasses of wine. Astarte gets up from the couch and takes a glass. They face each other, taking stock of each other.

MARTIN

Don't spend much time on planet Earth?

ASTARTE

Of course not. The place is a pig sty.

MARTIN

(proposing a toast)

Welcome to my apartment.

ASTARTE

Thanks. I'll try not to stay too long.

They clink glasses and sip. She keeps her eyes locked on him the entire time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASTARTE (CONT'D)
Should we cut the small talk?

MARTIN
Is that what this is?

ASTARTE
I've been looking for something
that recently landed in your
possession.

MARTIN
Sure, I can spare some acid if
you've got the money.

ASTARTE
I was referring to the Voice of the
72 Names.

MARTIN
Yeah, that was a joke. I don't
even do acid any more.

ASTARTE
You realize that thing is just
going to bring you trouble.

MARTIN
You mean strange goddesses are
going to show up and ply me with
alcohol?

ASTARTE
(smiles)
Do I seem strange to you?

MARTIN
Listen, if you want to use the
Voice, I would be happy to dial the
number for you. You can use my
bedroom--

ASTARTE
(shakes her head)
Doesn't work that way.

MARTIN
It doesn't?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ASTARTE

Didn't you read the manual? If anyone calls the number other than the person who possesses the Voice, they won't get connected to God at all. They'll just go crazy.

MARTIN

(shocked)

But... But I just let Carrie call the number...

ASTARTE

Then Carrie is probably crazy by now. You know, that's why they give you the manual in the first place. You do need to read it.

There is a loud knock at the door. Both Astarte and Martin turn toward the door, startled.

MARTIN

Wanda must be back from the store.

ASTARTE

(concerned)

It's not Wanda.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

Two demons -- BEELZEBUB and AZAZEL -- stand impatiently in front of his door. The two are dressed in some strange amalgamation of punk rock / glam / homeless / circus reject. Beelzebub, a woman who wears an extremely tall and goofy Dr. Seuss style hat, is obviously in charge; Azazel is more of a wimpy sidekick, with ridiculous Elton John style sunglasses adorning his face.

AZAZEL

Should I knock again?

BEELZEBUB

Yeah, knock again.

AZAZEL

Okay.

(starts to knock)

BEELZEBUB

(suddenly irate)

What the hell is taking you so long, dammit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beelzebub kicks the door open and charges in.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Beelzebub charges in, followed by Azazel.

BEELZEBUB

All right, who the fuck's in charge here?

Martin watches Astarte to determine if he should be worried or not...

ASTARTE

I'm in charge here, actually.

Beelzebub swaggers into the room, with Azazel tagging along behind.

BEELZEBUB

Well, let's just get a few things straight. We can do this the easy way, or we can do this the hard way. The easy way involves me getting what I want. The hard way also involves me getting what I want, but I have to tear several city blocks apart and kill all of your loved ones first.

AZAZEL

(correcting him)
Rape and kill.

BEELZEBUB

Right, right, *rape* and kill all of your loved ones first. Actually, Azazel here does most of the raping, I handle most of the killing, we're kind of a team like that.

A glimmer of recognition crosses Astarte's face.

ASTARTE

Beelzebub? Is that you?

BEELZEBUB

(alarmed)
Who the hell are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASTARTE

You know, you look like shit inside
a human body.

BEELZEBUB

(defensive)

Hey! It's the best I could do on
short notice! Who the hell are
you?

MARTIN

(getting in between them)

I'm sorry, I'm not being a very
gracious host. This is Astarte,
Goddess of Love and War, she just
dropped by to shoot the shit, talk
about old times, you know we went
to college together--

Beelzebub grabs Martin by the throat and pins him against a
wall with one hand.

BEELZEBUB

Do we start the raping and killing
with you? Is that it?

Martin shakes his head, unable to speak.

ASTARTE

Put him down, Beelzebub. If you
came here for the Voice, you're out
of luck. I got here first.

BEELZEBUB

Oh *really*.

Beelzebub casually flings Martin into the entryway of his
apartment, turns her attention to Astarte.

BEELZEBUB (CONT'D)

(totally charming)

So you've got the Voice, do you?

ASTARTE

Martin's got the Voice, actually.

(condescending)

You do realize you can't just beat
it out of him, right? He has to
give it to you of his own free
will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEELZEBUB

And I suppose that's why you've got
such a lovely skin on, is it? So
you can seduce it out of him
instead of beat it out of him?

Martin, in the entryway, sees a fight brewing in his living
room, considers making his escape unnoticed out the front
door...

Back in the living room, Beelzebub and Astarte are definitely
in each other's faces now, inches away from each other,
verbal jousting at a high level of intensity...

ASTARTE

Listen, Beelzebozo, I'm very
impressed that you managed to find
your way here, but you're too late.

BEELZEBUB

As far as I can see, you Babylonian
slut, you don't have the Voice yet.

ASTARTE

Babylonian? Is that supposed to be
a cut? Do I have to remind you yet
again which one of us was actually
worshipped by the Philistines?

AZAZEL

Oh, now that's just mean spirited.

BEELZEBUB

(inching even closer to
ASTARTE)
I'm giving you one chance to--

ASTARTE

(very precise)
Let me give you a hint. If you're
trying to disguise yourself as
human, you shouldn't overlook the
smell.

Azazel, meanwhile, notices the empty entryway...

AZAZEL

Hey, wait a minute... where's
Martin?

Beelzebub realizes Martin has slipped away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEELZEBUB

Oh, shit.

Beelzebub turns back toward Astarte, only to find himself on the receiving end of a FILING CABINET that Astarte is hurling straight at his head...

INT. STAIRWELL INSIDE BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin dashes down the stairs, and nearly plows right into Wanda headed up the stairs.

WANDA

(almost contrite)

Oh, hey, thank you for coming back,
I--

MARTIN

(grabs her arm, tries to
take her with him down
the stairs)

C'mon, we gotta get out of here!

WANDA

(resisting immediately,
yanks her arm away from
him)

Excuse me, Traci's on her way over--

MARTIN

(grabs her arm again,
actually gets them
started down the stairs)

Look, I don't know any easy way to
tell you this, so I'm just going to
be frank: there are a number of
demons in that apartment, and I
don't think we should go up there
right now.

WANDA

Dammit, I'm not in the mood for
your pseudo-psychological bullshit,
I'm just trying to get my fucking
stuff!

MARTIN

C'mon, Wanda!

As the two of them get up to speed charging down the stairwell, they suddenly bump directly into another demon, ASMODEUS, who looks much like an old railway hobo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is holding a tattered sheet of paper with Martin's address on it, looking slightly confused.

ASMODEUS

(overly polite)

Uh, excuse me, my name is Asmodeus,
I was wondering if you knew of a
Martin Reilley who might live in
this building?

WANDA

(pause)

Your name is what?

ASMODEUS

(very cordial)

Asmodeus. Demon of lust and anger,
maybe you've heard of me...

MARTIN

Wanda, *c'mon!*

And the two of them charge off down the stairs, leaving Asmodeus behind...

EXT. FRONT OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin and Wanda come charging out of the building, Wanda yanks them to a halt.

WANDA

What on earth is going on here?

MARTIN

(yanks the artifact out of
his inner coat pocket)

It's this *thing*, Wanda. There are
demons in the apartment, and they
all want it!

WANDA

(confused)

Demons?

MARTIN

Demons, goddesses... did I tell you
I met an archangel the other day?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANDA

You have always had a serious communication problem, we know this, but you haven't made ANY FUCKING SENSE for the last THREE DAYS!

Martin grabs Wanda's arm and begins power walking as fast as he can with her away from the apartment building.

MARTIN

Yeah, and you know what your problem has always been? You only hear what you're listening for, which may or may not have anything to do with what I'm actually saying.

WANDA

And just what exactly are you saying?

MARTIN

There is a phone number on this *thing*, and when I call it, I get connected to the voice of God. I realize this is very hard to believe, but it's the truth!

Wanda yanks them to a halt.

WANDA

Let go of me!

MARTIN

Will you just OPEN YOUR FUCKING EYES long enough to see what's ACTUALLY GOING ON??

(long pause)

This *thing*...

(holds up artifact)

...is a metaphysical artifact. It's some kind of holy *thing*, do you get it? This number... it is God's phone number. And when you call it... when you call it, God answers. He doesn't answer in words that you can understand, but you still know it's Him, and it's the most beautiful thing you've ever experienced.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She stares at him sadly. He has a wild, feral look in his eyes, and she doesn't like it at all.

WANDA

(softly)

You want to know the most beautiful thing I've ever experienced?

His rant is interrupted; he stares back at her.

WANDA (CONT'D)

You remember my birthday party, four years ago? I was all dressed up. And I'd been having such a rotten night, and I got a little drunk, you remember? And you finally cornered me in the bathroom. And finally... that night, I must have been just tipsy enough, because I just blurted it out... "I think I'm falling in love with you, Martin." And for a split second I was terrified of what you might say.

(pause)

And you said, "I've been falling in love with you quite some time now."

(smiles sadly)

I remember how it felt to hear you say that. It was such a beautiful feeling. Remembering that night kept me going with you through so much of your shit... your depression, your loss of hope...

(pause)

You gave up on me long before I gave up on you. And all this crazy bullshit can't change any of that. It can't make me forget.

Martin is left speechless.

WANDA (CONT'D)

I want the key to the storage space. Now.

Martin fumbles for his keys in his pocket.

MARTIN

I know how this sounds--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDA

Please don't say anything.

He finds the key, takes it off his key chain, tosses it to her.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Now I'm going upstairs to get my kitchen stuff out of the apartment. Then I'll get the rest of my stuff out of storage. I'll leave the key to the storage space on your desk. And you will *never*... hear from me again. Do you understand me?

Martin is silent. He is definitely heart-broken.

Wanda turns around and heads back into the building.

Martin turns toward the street, looks around, spends a moment feeling helpless... then begins running down the street away from his building...

INT. STAIRWELL. MORNING.

Wanda passes Asmodeus on her way back up the stairs.

ASMODEUS

Uh, excuse me, this *is* 516--

WANDA

Get a job, for god's sake.

INT. ENTRYWAY TO MARTIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

Wanda comes through the doorway, looking grim...

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

...and proceeds into the living room, where she suddenly comes to a complete, shocked halt.

The entire living room has been violently trashed. There are no demons or goddesses in sight, but the living room is a complete disaster area, furniture and major appliances broken or smashed, broken glass everywhere, wreckage everywhere, etc.

Wanda is incredibly shaken.

WANDA

Holy shit...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - MORNING.

Martin running...

MARTIN (V.O.)
I had to get back to Carrie's
before it was too late.

EXT. FRONT OF CARRIE'S BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin heads up the stairs, unlocks the front door, lets himself in.

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

Martin comes into Carrie's bedroom looking for her. To his chagrin...

...the bed is empty, the phone receiver lying on the bed.

MARTIN (V.O.)
But it was definitely too late.

He slowly hangs the phone up.

EXT. FRONT OF CARRIE'S BUILDING - MORNING.

MARTIN comes out, shakes his head, then starts running again...

MARTIN (V.O.)
I scoured the neighborhood for
her...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - AFTERNOON.

Martin running... it's getting darker...

MARTIN (V.O.)
...but she was long gone.

EXT. PARK NEAR THE WATER - AFTERNOON.

It's even darker, as Martin comes across the grass toward the water...

MARTIN (V.O.)
She was the only person I had left,
and she was probably crazy and
alone on the streets somewhere.

EXT. BENCH NEAR THE WATER - EARLY EVENING.

Martin, exhausted, plants himself on a bench near the water, underneath a street lamp.

MARTIN (V.O.)
Eventually I needed to rest. I
needed to clear my head.

He holds the artifact in one hand, his cell phone in the other, steeling himself.

And then he dials the number, and slowly puts the phone to his ear.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON.

Martin staggers through the city, Seattle skyline in the background.

MARTIN (V.O.)
The cell phone died during the
night, but I had no urge to go back
home to recharge it. I spent all
day Sunday searching for her...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING.

Martin crosses against traffic to head into his office building.

MARTIN (V.O.)
...and on Monday, I went into work,
thinking she might go there.

INT. RECEPTIONIST'S DESK. MORNING.

Martin barrels up to the desk.

MARY
(hands him mail)
Good morning, Martin.

MARTIN
Hi, Mary. Has Carrie come in?

He begins skimming through envelopes, casually tossing them each into a trash can and muttering 'Crap...' with each one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Carrie hasn't shown up this morning, and she hasn't called in. Oh, and Cynthia's been looking for you. She wants to see you in her office as soon as possible.

MARTIN

(pretending to be concerned)

Yes, yes, I'm sure there's some kind of crisis with the Vantec project. I'll get right on that, I know they're a valuable customer and we've got to do everything humanly possible to ensure their happiness and satisfaction with our work.

The phone rings. Mary tries to answer it, but Martin places his hand on the phone and holds it down. He leans over next to her, while the phone continues ringing. They speak very rapidly.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Mary, do you ever get tired of answering this telephone?

MARY

(taken aback)

It's my job.

MARTIN

I know, and you do a great job, but doesn't it make you sick down deep knowing that every single person who calls this company is the exact type of asshole that *would* be calling this company?

MARY

Not every single person.

MARTIN

Oh?

MARY

Sometimes my boyfriend calls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN

Now Mary, you know that's an abuse of company resources. I could have you let go for that.

MARY

You wouldn't.

MARTIN

Of course I wouldn't. That would require me to give a shit about this company. You really want to answer this phone, don't you. I can tell, it's just driving you crazy, your mission unfulfilled, a potential customer about to slip through the cracks, the tension mounts, will they stop calling, will they ever stop calling...

(picks up phone, answers it)

Fast Consulting Group, can I help you?

(pause, disgustingly bright)

Oh, hi, Linda, how's your morning?
(whispers to Mary)

It's Linda from Vantec! We're fucked!

(back to phone, bright again)

Oh, you know me, Linda, I'm never more thrilled than Monday mornings here at the Fast Consulting Group. What's the problem?

(pause, whispers to Mary)

The database is down! We're so fucked!

(back to phone, bright again)

You're kidding, the database is down again? I'll bet that's probably Hank's fault. I'll go have him beaten severely with a lead pipe as soon as humanly possible. No, I'm not joking, Linda, Office Depot stocks lead pipes now for disciplinary purposes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Of course, I can't really blame poor Hank, since the Vantec site has got to be the most mind-numbingly stupid project any of us has worked on since we started in this industry.

Mary gasps, reaches forward and disconnects the call.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(impressed)

Mary! I never knew your passion for the Fast Consulting Group ran so deep. We should get you a t-shirt or something!

MARY

(quietly)

Martin, are you on *drugs*?

MARTIN

(sternly)

Waste good drugs on *this* place? I don't think so.

(pause)

If Linda calls back, tell her I'm busy masturbating in the bathroom to a copy of the Vantec project plan.

He stalks off. Mary watches him go, stunned. After a beat, the phone rings, and Mary jumps, startled.

INT. DEVELOPERS' BULLPEN - MORNING.

Martin marches in to a busy Monday morning in progress. He stops in the doorway and announces:

MARTIN

Good morning, everyone. On behalf of all of us in management here at Fast Consulting Group, I'd like to just take this moment to extend my sincere apology for facilitating this dismal working environment, and for caring more about the health of our projects than about the health of *you*, our valued employees.

At first, the developers pretty much ignore his ranting, the way they ignore most anything management says whenever possible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEVELOPER
(casually)
Shut the fuck up, Martin.

MARTIN
It's true! And to demonstrate my sincerity, I want you all to take the rest of the week off. Go out and see the city. Take a moment to really slow down and appreciate the extent to which you people are all desperately trapped in a capitalist hell from which you'll never escape.

The developers begin to stare awkwardly at Martin.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
And while you're out and about, maybe it'll occur to some of you deviant, miserable sinners to stop by a church or a temple and get your affairs in order before God punishes you with a heart attack or an aneurysm or a promotion.

We see one developer mouth to another 'Is he on drugs?' No one moves.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Let me guess. They finally implemented the developer manacles I've been recommending, and you folks are actually chained to your desks physically as well as psychologically, is that it?

Hank walks up, not at all impressed.

HANK
The Vantec database is down.

MARTIN
That's what I heard.

HANK
What are you going to do about it?

MARTIN
I don't know, what do you recommend?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HANK

We can't very well fix it if we take the week off, now can we.

MARTIN

You know, your devotion to Vantec is astonishing. I'll call Linda and see if her eldest daughter is available for marriage.

HANK

You may think it's funny coming in here on drugs, Martin, but it's not very professional. I don't care what you do in your spare time, frankly, but when you're here, we expect you to behave in a responsible manner. You're letting the whole team down.

MARTIN

Do you actually believe the bullshit that's coming out of your mouth?

HANK

Of course not. What drugs are you on? You know I could trade you some--

Cynthia walks up behind Martin, visibly upset, and Hank immediately changes his sentence in mid-stride.

HANK (CONT'D)

--open issues on that Vantec database, but I'll get it taken care of right away, don't you worry.

Hank hurriedly excuses himself and walks off.

CYNTHIA

Martin, can I see you for a moment?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING.

Cynthia sits at one end of the conference room table, Martin at the other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

You may think it's funny coming in here on drugs, but it is completely unprofessional. I don't care what you do in your spare time, frankly, but when you're here, we expect you to behave in a responsible manner. You're letting the whole team down.

Martin is nonplussed.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I called Linda at Vantec to apologize. As long as we get the database up by five, she'll pretend this never happened, but she wants me to assign another project manager to the project. Under the circumstances, I can hardly blame her. What were you thinking? Vantec is one of our most valuable customers and we've got to do everything humanly possible to ensure their happiness and satisfaction with our work.

Martin leans back in his chair, saying nothing.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Answer me. This isn't a joke. You've made a serious error in judgment today. The company manual is very clear about substance abuse. What do you have to say for yourself?

Slowly Martin leans forward, sets the artifact on the table and rolls it down the length of the table to Cynthia. After some hesitation, Cynthia picks it up and examines it.

MARTIN

I've spent the entire weekend listening to the voice of God, and you want to know what I have to say for myself? Where would you like me to start?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Should we start with my incredible disdain for this company and everything it supposedly 'stands for,' or should we just skip right ahead to my vehement disgust at the fact that corporate America is essentially the physical manifestation of Satan himself snorting coke off the dismembered bodies of 12-year-old hookers? Or should we get right down to business and discuss how you personally have made me sick to my stomach ever since I started working here? You do make me sick, you understand, you and all the 'vice presidents' in charge of evil, wickedness, and God knows what else -- and believe me, Cynthia, God does know, and God is not amused.

Long pause. Then Cynthia rolls the artifact back down the table at Martin, and leans forward.

CYNTHIA

(tight, controlled at first)

Now you listen to me. Perhaps someday we can all live on a giant commune and harvest our own beans and carrots and make our clothes out of hemp and drink mushroom tea every night for the rest of our natural lives. We'll just shut down all the power plants and throw our computers into the ocean, and at night, bards and minstrels will entertain us all with ribald tales of love and romance. But until that happy day arrives, I guess we'll just have to make do with our pitiful jobs. For me, that means making do with an office full of know-it-all brats who think they're entitled to all their toys, but I've got news for you. You're not entitled to a goddamn thing. More specifically, you're definitely not entitled to the job you used to have, working for me. Remember that job, the one you had until about two minutes ago?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARTIN

Hold that thought.

He reaches for the conference room phone, and sets it on speakerphone. A loud dial tone fills the room. Martin calmly dials the number as Cynthia watches.

CYNTHIA

If you're calling Linda, you had really better hang up that phone right now.

MARTIN

Just listen.

A sudden burst of noise begins to fill the room. We see a CLOSE UP of Cynthia's face suddenly transformed into an agonized expression...

INT. DEVELOPERS' BULLPEN - MORNING.

MARTIN staggers slowly out of the conference room. HANK approaches.

HANK

What's going on, man? Cynthia looked pissed.

MARTIN

(nonplussed)
I just got fired.

HANK

No way.

MARTIN

Way.

Hank turns to the developers, giddy.

HANK

Hey everyone, Martin actually got his stupid ass fired!

(to Martin)

I always knew you were a dumbass, I really did. Well, if you'll excuse me, I've got a database to troubleshoot, I'm sure my *new project manager* is going to want that thing up by the end of the day!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hank starts to leave, but Martin stops him.

MARTIN

Let me give you a piece of advice.
Don't go in that conference room.
Don't let anyone else in that
conference room. Got it?

Martin starts to leave, then stops.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Actually, there's one more piece of
advice. Feel free to shower on
occasion. Just every now and then
would suffice.

And with that, he makes his way out of the bullpen.

EXT. BACK OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY.

From outside the building, looking up through the window, we can see Wanda standing inside Martin's apartment. She is talking on her cell phone, as usual.

Standing behind the building are DERALD and JANSZEN, in crisp business attire with trench coats. They remind us of Mulder and Scully, if Mulder and Scully were from another planet. Derald holds a Palm Pilot, which he is using as an interdimensional computing device.

DERALD

516 Banister Avenue, Apartment 303.
That's it.

JANSZEN

That must be the ex-girlfriend in
the apartment.

DERALD

We may as well question her in case
she's liable for some of the
charges.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Wanda is talking on her phone. The buzzer sounds.

WANDA

Oh, hang on, someone's here.

She goes to answer the door.

INT. HALLWAY OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Wanda answers the buzzer.

WANDA
Who is it?

DERALD (V.O. ON INTERCOM)
It's the phone company. Can we
come up?

Wanda looks puzzled, for a moment, then responds.

WANDA
Sure.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Wanda returns to the living room, talking on the cell phone again.

WANDA
Someone from the phone company is
here. I wonder if Martin is having
something done with the DSL...
Maybe it's some kind of fancy new
service where it always works or
something. Of course, I'm sure
that's *really* expensive.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MARTIN'S DOOR - DAY.

Derald and Janszen emerge from the stairwell. Derald puts his Palm Pilot away, and then the two of them withdraw science fiction style handguns. Derald knocks on the door.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Wanda wrapping up conversation...

WANDA
Right, well they just knocked, so
I'm going to let you go. But let's
still meet for drinks tonight,
okay? I could really use some
company right now... Okay, take
care.

She hangs up the cell phone and heads toward the door.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MARTIN'S DOOR - DAY.

The door opens and Wanda looks out.

WANDA

So the guy who lives here is--

With lightning fast precision. Janszen pushes the door open and Derald grabs Wanda by one arm and pushes her back into the apartment.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Hey!

Once Derald and Wanda are inside, Janszen slams the door shut behind them.

INT. HALLWAY OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Derald maneuvers Wanda such that she is pressed face first against the wall. Janszen strides past them and heads into the living room.

WANDA

What's going on--

DERALD

It's all right, ma'am, we're with the phone company.

WANDA

What phone company--

DERALD

(shouting)

QUIET!

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Janszen scopes out the living room, to make sure the situation is safe. She peers into the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Derald puts his weapon away, begins searching Wanda for weapons.

DERALD

Now just be patient, ma'am, I'm going to search you--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Unfortunately, he has underestimated Wanda, who suddenly and viciously elbows him in the stomach. She wheels around and smashes him in the face with her palm, causing him to reel against the opposite wall.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Janszen turns, aims her weapon, and fires. A bright white bolt leaves the weapon.

INT. HALLWAY OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT - DAY.

The bolt smacks Wanda in the chest, knocking her backward onto the floor, completely stunned.

Janszen comes to help Derald up. His nose is bleeding.

JANSZEN

You all right?

DERALD

I'm fine. I swear, the people on this planet have no fucking respect for anybody.

JANSZEN

Get her legs.

They start to pick her up.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Wanda sits with her eyes closed on the couch.

Across from her, Derald sits in a chair, smoking a cigarette, a wad of bloody cotton bandaged to his nose. Janszen paces nearby.

Slowly Wanda rouses, with a massive headache, somewhat confused.

WANDA

What happened?

DERALD

I'll tell you what happened. You fucked with the phone company, and the phone company fucked with you right back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANSZEN

Shut up, Derald.

(to Wanda)

This is Derald. My name is Janszen. We're the phone company representatives assigned to your area. We've got a few questions to ask you, if you don't mind.

WANDA

Look... I don't know when the phone company started carrying stun guns, but let's be clear... I don't live here any more. The phone bill is not my problem.

JANSZEN

I'll explain why we're here, if you don't mind. Several phone calls from the Voice of the 72 Names were placed from this location last Friday. Two more phone calls from the Voice were placed from various locations around the city on Saturday. Were you responsible for any of these calls?

WANDA

I'm... not sure I know what you're talking about.

DERALD

The Voice of the 72 Names.

(pause)

God's phone number? A small black artifact with a number inscribed on it?

A strange look of recognition comes over Wanda's face.

JANSZEN

So you do know what we're talking about. The first phone calls were made from this location, ma'am. If you're the one currently in possession of the Voice, then you're responsible for those charges.

DERALD

Are you currently in possession of the Voice, ma'am?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WANDA
(almost to herself)
Martin...

DERALD
What was that?

JANSZEN
What did you just say?

WANDA
Who are you people?

JANSZEN
We're with the phone company,
ma'am.

WANDA
Qwest?

DERALD
(loudly)
Hah. You call that a phone
company?

JANSZEN
No, ma'am. Telecom traffic of such
a powerful nature can hardly be
contained within your simple
earthly networks.

DERALD
You think a phone call to God just
travels through a fiber optic cable
straight up to heaven? Hah!

WANDA
But... I just thought Martin was
crazy...

JANSZEN
He may be crazy, ma'am. That's not
our business.

DERALD
I'll tell you one thing. If he
keeps making phone calls without a
proper payment plan in place, he's
definitely crazy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDA
(dazed)
Payment plan?

DERALD
Do you think calls to heaven are
free? HAH!

JANSZEN
This is a very serious matter,
ma'am. I assume by 'Martin' you
mean the current resident of this
location. Do you know where Martin
is currently? We're trying to
help, ma'am. It's in his best
interests for us to intervene
before the ELD charges grow any
higher.

WANDA
ELD?

JANSZEN
(deadpan)
Extremely long distance.

EXT. FRONT OF CARRIE'S BUILDING - DAY.

Martin sits alone, clutching the artifact tightly, in
somewhat of a daze...

MARTIN (V.O.)
I couldn't risk going home. There
wasn't much there for me anyway.
All I could think to do was wait
for Carrie to turn up, and wonder
how much worse things could get.

An extremely tough looking individual -- CAIN -- pulls up in
a battered old Impala and stops in the alley near the
building.

MARTIN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
It got a lot worse.

Cain gets out of the car, approaches Martin and confronts him
directly. He has long black hair, wears a black leather
jacket, blue jeans, and a black bandana around his forehead.

CAIN
I see you've got the Voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

(pause)

Yeah.

CAIN

I'm going to give you exactly one opportunity to give me the Voice of your own free will.

MARTIN

I can't do that.

CAIN

(looks around)

Hey, what do you know... there it went. Your one opportunity to give me the Voice.

MARTIN

(tired)

Look. I know how this works. The Voice is mine until I decide to give it away. That means you can't threaten it out of me. It's mine.

CAIN

Threaten it out of you... what an interesting idea.

Cain withdraws from his pocket a Palm Pilot, and taps a few things into it, aiming the infrared end at Martin. Moments later, Martin is wracked with an enormous amount of pain, collapsing onto the sidewalk at Cain's feet. Cain is nonchalant about the entire episode.

After a few moments, the pain stops and Martin is left in a very damaged state, blood running out of both nostrils, unable to move.

CAIN (CONT'D)

Don't go anywhere. You and I are going for a ride.

Cain heads off to his car.

Martin is left on the sidewalk.

Moments later, Gabriel strides up, wearing a bright Hawaiian shirt and a pair of flowery shorts. He leans down next to Martin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABRIEL

(bright)

Hey there, Martin, how you doing?
Just thought I'd check in with you
since I'm still on planet Earth,
and you were so clingy the last
time I saw you.

Martin struggles to sit up, but cannot. Gabriel smiles cheerfully and carefully avoids touching Martin, for fear of getting blood on his nice Hawaiian shirt.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

You know, it'd been so long since
I'd visited the planet that I
decided I may as well take some
time off, roam around a bit, see
the sights, you know how it is.
I've got a couple dozen millennia
racked up in vacation time, but you
know, I just love my job so much, I
hardly ever leave the left hand of
God.

Martin almost makes it to his knees, then collapses again.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

But boy howdy, this planet has some
neat cities now! I mean, have you
checked out Spokane recently? Wow!
Anyway, I figured before I headed
back up to heaven, I'd stop by to
see if you were enjoying the Voice
of the 72 Names, and it looks like
you're certainly having a crazy
time. I've gotta say, you do run
with a rough crowd.

Cain digs through his trunk to get duct tape and a crow bar.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I mean, I haven't heard from Cain
since he killed his poor brother
Abel, but I figure he hasn't
improved his attitude much since
then.

Gabriel kneels next to the battered Martin.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

(whispering, almost
conspiratorially)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Let me guess. Cain's here to get the Voice.

(shakes his head sadly)

Well, I can't say I didn't warn you.

Martin tries to speak, fails.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I know, I know, and believe me, I'd love to help, but we have a very strict policy of nonintervention these days. You know, back in the old days, we were authorized for all kinds of missions... delivering glad tidings of great joy, rescuing holy men from furnaces, destroying Sodom and Gomorrah... you know, good clean fun. These days it's all just praising His holy name and guarding the gates of Paradise -- not that I'm complaining! At any rate, I've got to be on my way. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

Gabriel rises to leave, just as Cain returns to the prostrate body of Martin, holding rope and a crowbar.

CAIN

Do I know you?

GABRIEL

(adopts a very goofy pretend voice)

Uh, no, no of course not! I'm just an innocent passerby!

CAIN

Yeah, well, pass on by then.

GABRIEL

Sure thing, sure enough, I'll just, I'll just pass right on by, don't mind me!

(stage whisper to Martin)

See you in the afterlife, Martin!

(pretend voice to Cain)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Yes sir, I was just, I was just on my way to the movie theatre, to catch myself a matinee, why I hear 'The Ten Commandments' is showing up the street, and goodness gracious, I hardly ever miss a chance to see God's glory on the big screen!

(checks watch)

Holy Toledo, I'm running late!

And with that, Gabriel scoots off down the sidewalk.

CAIN

What an asshole.

POV Martin: Cain bends over a dismayed Martin.

CAIN (CONT'D)

Now then... why don't we head back to my place and discuss this a little further, shall we?

And with that, Cain raises the crowbar and brings it down viciously toward the camera...

SUDDEN BLACKOUT.

EXT. A BEAUTIFUL OUTDOOR PARK - DAY.

Fade up on Martin, opening his eyes, lying in a beautiful field of flowers.

He stands slowly, looks about in a confused state. He is still clutching the artifact.

Wanda and Astarte wander up. Both are dressed in very high fashion.

WANDA

(tickled to see Martin)

Oh, hiiiiiiii, Martin!

MARTIN

(dazed)

Wanda? Is that you?

WANDA

Martin, have you met my good friend Astarte, the goddess of love and war?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASTARTE
Hiiiiiii, Martin.

WANDA
We just got back from giving Astarte here a makeover. That whole 'doom and gloom' look was just not working. But now look at her! She's practically ready for the prom!

ASTARTE
And I owe it all to Wanda.

WANDA
Oh, stop...

Stunned, Martin turns another direction...

Several feet away, in this same wide-open field, Beelzebub, Hank, and Azazel sit at a fancy table. All three are dressed completely in red, and the tablecloth is also red. Azazel goes to pour wine for Beelzebub -- it is green slime, poured from a red laundry detergent bottle.

Martin turns back to Wanda & Astarte.

WANDA (CONT'D)
(gossiping to Astarte)
Well, he drinks so much, he's just no good in bed anymore at *all*.

ASTARTE
Oh my *word*...

WANDA
I *know*...

And the two giggle ferociously...

Martin turns yet another direction, and finds Carrie standing alone, wearing a very simple dress and bunny ears, facing away from him.

MARTIN
Carrie!

Carrie turns toward him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Carrie, I've been looking all over
for you! I've been so worried
about you! Where have you been?

Carrie shakes her head sadly.

CARRIE

(straightforward)
I'm sorry this had to happen,
Martin.

Cut to the red table...

HANK

Yeah, you fucked up again, Martin!

Martin turns, unable to process.

Astarte & Wanda giggle like mad...

Carrie turns away...

The camera SPINS SWIFTLY about Martin...

INT. DARK BASEMENT - DAY.

...and we cut to Martin's eyes snapping open again...

...only this time, he is tied to a chair in a dark, menacing
basement space, underneath a harsh light. Dried blood is
caked underneath his nose, and blood is still essentially
leaking from his head all over his face and shirt. He still
clutches the artifact in his hand.

Sitting opposite him is Cain, who smiles.

CAIN

Now... why don't we start this
conversation over. Out of the
goodness of my heart, I'm going to
give you one more opportunity to
give me the Voice. What do you
say?

Silence, while Martin attempts to process what is happening.

He apparently does not respond fast enough. Cain shrugs,
points his Palm Pilot at Martin.

Martin is suddenly wracked with pain...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...while Cain simply watches, unmoved...

EXT. GASWORKS PARK - LATE AFTERNOON.

While the following voiceover runs, the WANDERING JEW appears in the shot at a distance, walking toward us in one long shot during the voiceover. His hair is long and gray, and he also has a very long gray beard. He is dressed like a modern day hiker, complete with high-tech hiking gear and a large backpack. He is an ancient man, yet surprisingly athletic-looking at the same time. The rusted steel machinery of an old abandoned gasworks plant rise up in the background.

MARTIN (V.O.)

The Voice of the 72 Names was acting like a beacon, drawing trouble to me like moths to a light bulb. And for some reason, the only appropriate response was to hold onto the Voice for dear life. It didn't matter who wanted it... it was mine. I wasn't about to just hand it off to some homicidal maniac just because he had the audacity to torture me. If it wasn't this homicidal maniac, it'd be some other maniac, or some demon, or some goddess, or some other crazy fool, thinking they were smarter than me, thinking they deserved it more than me.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CITY SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON.

Carrie is wandering the streets, with her bunny ears flopping about. CLOSE UPS reveal her mascara is streaked from tears running down her face, and the clovers on her cheeks from St. Patrick's Day are smeared. She looks shell shocked, and people get out of her way, the way most crazy people on city streets are often ignored.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Sure, I was worried about Carrie, but giving up the Voice wasn't going to help her. In fact, maybe the Voice was the only thing that could cure her if she was actually crazy.

INT. DARK BASEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON.

Martin tied to the chair, writhing in pain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN (V.O.)

To find out, all I had to do was survive...

Cain deactivates the device. He lights a cigarette, while Martin comes around again. They stare at each other for a long, long while.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Nice place you got.

CAIN

Thanks. I just moved in this morning. The owners are tied up in a closet upstairs, but I'll probably let them out before they starve to death.

MARTIN

Is the story about you true?

CAIN

You mean, what it says in the Bible?

Martin nods.

Cain pauses, then smiles.

CAIN (CONT'D)

It's the inspired word of God, isn't it? Of course it's true.

(takes a long drag off the cigarette)

I had a brother once. I killed him. It's all true. Does that make you think less of me or something?

MARTIN

(nonchalant)

People kill other people all the time these days. You should be very proud. You started a trend.

CAIN

(laughs)

Yeah. I shoulda got me a patent on murder, since it was my idea.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAIN (CONT'D)

I'd be a rich mother fucker right now, wouldn't I, people paying me royalties every time they whack someone else.

He takes another drag off his cigarette.

MARTIN

Shouldn't you be dead by now? Or is that too personal a question?

CAIN

Ask and ye shall receive. I'm pretty easy going about most things.

(pause)

You see, the Almighty's got a sick sense of humor.

MARTIN

You know, I've started to realize that.

Cain recites a few Bible verses wistfully, without anger.

CAIN

'And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.'

He slowly removes the black bandana around his forehead, to reveal an elaborate, blood red tattoo in the shape of a crescent moon. It glows eerily.

As Martin gazes on it, he is visibly stunned by the sight.

CAIN (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Thanks to this mark, no one... not even the angel of death... will slay me.

MARTIN

Presumably I have a similar protection, as long as I've got the Voice. I bet something tricky happens if you kill me while I've got it... does it revert back to its previous owner? Vanish forever from the face of the earth?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CAIN

You piss me off too much, maybe I'll kill you anyway and take my chances with the next sucker who gets the Voice.

MARTIN

So it does wander from person to person.

CAIN

There's a list. I don't know how you get on the list.

MARTIN

Listen, if you have a phone, I could dial the number for you. And you could listen.

CAIN

(shakes his head)

Nice try. I know what happens if you do that to me.

MARTIN

Why do you want it so badly?

CAIN

(softly)

I was a tiller of the soil, and I brought my gift before God, and it wasn't good enough.

(pause)

Do you know what it's like to be personally rejected by God? To be told straight to your face you had no respect? I was... devastated, and I thought... if sheep were a good enough gift of blood... how much greater a gift would mine be, if I offered my own brother's blood...

(pause)

And I was rejected again.

He lights another cigarette.

CAIN (CONT'D)

Well, of course, I've had years to try to figure out what it all meant. I've come to no conclusions.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CAIN (CONT'D)

But I have made many more...
sacrifices... since then.
Unfortunately the Almighty doesn't
wander the earth the way he used
to. And I know he's not listening
to anyone's prayers the way he used
to. But if I get the Voice... I
can finally... after all these
years... properly offer my
sacrifices. And I know he'll hear
me.

MARTIN

You think he'll overlook the random
acts of torture and cruelty along
the way?

CAIN

I do! This is the Lord God
Almighty we're talking about! He
always does things the hard way!
He can't just free the Israelites
from Egypt, he's gotta torture the
Egyptians first! He can't just
lead the Israelites into the
Promised Land, he's gotta butcher
all the natives first! He can't
just send his only begotten Son
down to spread the good news, he's
gotta make a big dramatic fucking
show out of everything, I mean, if
there's one thing that bastard
appreciates, it's well placed
torture and violence.

MARTIN

You've got a point.

CAIN

So what's it to you? You had your
turn with it. I bet you haven't
even used it right. Have you even
once asked him for any kind of
forgiveness? Isn't there anything
you regret?

MARTIN

I didn't kill my brother, if that's
what you're asking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CAIN

Yeah, a guy like you is more of a
"screwed over his girlfriend" kind
of guy.

Cain can tell from Martin's reaction that he's struck a nerve. He watches silently, letting Martin incriminate himself.

MARTIN

I regret that I drove Wanda away.
(shakes his head)
I really fucked that one up.
(smiles bitterly)
The funny thing is, it would *have*
to be God who forgives me for that,
because God knows *she* never will.

CAIN

This your girlfriend?

MARTIN

Ex-girlfriend... she's leaving me.

CAIN

So she hasn't left yet?

MARTIN

She's still... still packing her
stuff... getting out of the
apartment...

Cain gets up suddenly, moves behind Martin.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Hey, what's...

Cain removes Martin's wallet from his back pocket, finds his driver's license.

CAIN

516 Banister Avenue, Apartment 303.
(leans in close to Martin)
Maybe your sweetheart Wanda is at
your apartment right now. As long
as you're being such an
uncooperative little prick, I think
I'll go introduce myself to your
sweetheart. Who knows, maybe you
will get a chance to ask her for
forgiveness. Maybe we'll see just
exactly how much regret you've got.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

CAIN (CONT'D)

Or how much regret you'd like to have. It's all the same to me.

And with that, Cain stalks off...

...and still Martin refuses to give up the Voice...

EXT. A PARK NEAR THE WATER - EARLY EVENING.

Carrie stands alone against a railing, trying desperately to come to her senses. The Wandering Jew comes up next to her. He speaks gently.

WANDERING JEW

You seem distressed.

She doesn't answer.

WANDERING JEW (CONT'D)

My name is Ahasuerus.

CARRIE

What kind of name is that?

WANDERING JEW

Hebrew. You might also know me as the Wandering Jew.

(pause)

I recognize your distress, young lady. I have seen it before. On the faces of those who have heard the Voice of God.

CARRIE

(turns to him slowly)

I can't get it out of my head.

(starts to cry again)

It hurts.

WANDERING JEW

I know, my dear, believe me I do. Once I taunted the Son of God, as he made his way to his crucifixion. He turned to me and in a voice I will never forget, he condemned me to walk the Earth from that moment until Judgment Day.

CARRIE

No shit?

(pause)

Dude, that sucks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANDERING JEW

Indeed. Do you know where I might find the Voice of the 72 Names, young lady? I would dearly like a chance to plead for forgiveness. I have suffered enough.

CARRIE

Martin's got it.
(she shakes her head as though experiencing a terrible migraine)
I can't make it stop.

WANDERING JEW

Take me to Martin, young lady, and we will see about clearing your mind. I have learned a few tricks in my journeys about the Earth.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING.

A knock at the door disturbs the silence. Derald motions for Wanda to answer it. She gets up from the couch and heads to the front door, with Derald following a few steps behind her.

She opens the door, to find Cain standing in the hallway, smiling.

CAIN

(smiling)
You must be Wanda.
(pause)
Are you alone?

Before she can respond, Derald and Janszen pull her back out of the doorway, and face Cain with their own weapons drawn.

DERALD

Who are you?

Cain smiles and slowly removes his bandana, revealing the glowing mark on his forehead. Derald and Janszen slowly lower their weapons.

JANSZEN

What are you doing here?

Cain replies by drawing a weapon of his own - a very large chain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAIN
Just visiting.

He charges into the apartment, and slams the door shut behind him. We hear Derald and Janszen shriek on the other side of the door.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND MARTIN'S BUILDING - EARLY EVENING.

From atop the building, we see Cain forcing Wanda into his car. Astarte watches the scene from the roof. As the car speeds off, she takes flight, and we fly with her, as she follows Cain through the city...

INT. DARK BASEMENT - NIGHT.

Cain charges in, gripping Wanda severely by the neck. He practically throws her into Martin's lap. She recoils with disgust at first, finding herself covered in blood -- then realizes who it is, and gasps with shock.

WANDA
Martin!

MARTIN
Hi, Wanda.

CAIN
What a happy reunion.

WANDA
(turns to face CAIN)
What's going on here?

CAIN
When he gives me the artifact, I'll let him go. If he doesn't give me the artifact, I'll kill you and make him watch.

WANDA
You can't just--

Cain steps forward, and strikes Wanda across the face. She recoils, falling back onto Martin's lap -- but then Cain stops, frozen for a moment, as the expression on his face changes, from one of anger to one of near complete ecstasy.

Astarte appears from out of the darkness, smiling, coming up behind Cain, circling him seductively as she speaks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASTARTE

Now now, my dear. I know how long it's been since you've enjoyed the touch of a woman. Perhaps you should let me... *distract* you from these silly people.

It is clear from Astarte's gestures and the way Cain is suddenly enraptured that she is using supernatural powers to completely seduce him. His face is transformed from anger to bliss.

CAIN

(overcome)

That sounds like a fine idea.

ASTARTE

Is there a bedroom in this place?

CAIN

There sure is. That's where I stashed the people who live here.

ASTARTE

Excellent. I'm all about the voyeurism.

Astarte produces two sets of handcuffs, and hands them to him.

ASTARTE (CONT'D)

I want you naked, handcuffed to the bed, waiting for me. Can you do that?

Cain grins a big grin, which she returns.

ASTARTE (CONT'D)

If you're a really good boy, I might even whip you before I fuck you. Now get moving!

He scampers off up the stairs. She turns to face Wanda and Martin.

ASTARTE (CONT'D)

He may be an old-timer, but he's still human, and I'm still the goddess of love. Which brings me to you two fine upstanding citizens of the human race.

(she sits in Cain's chair)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASTARTE (CONT'D)

I'm impressed, Martin. You've lasted a lot longer than I expected.

MARTIN

Are you going to take a turn torturing me now? Is that it?

ASTARTE

(grins a wicked grin)

In a manner of speaking.

Without warning, Wanda suddenly turns to Martin, and begins caressing his face. She is utterly and sincerely concerned about him, and her previous disdain for him has vanished altogether. Astarte watches from the background, as Wanda begins lavishing attention on a suddenly very uncomfortable Martin.

WANDA

Martin, are you okay? What did that man do to you? How badly did he hurt you? I've been so worried about you.

MARTIN

I'm... I'm fine.

WANDA

You don't look fine. You haven't sounded fine. Not just this whole 'voice of God' thing. I just... look, I'm sorry about the way I've been treating you. I don't know what came over me, but I'm really, truly sorry.

(she begins to cry)

I just thought I needed to be alone, but... I don't really want to be alone. I want to be with you. I need to be with you. Do you think we could still be together?

MARTIN

Wanda--

WANDA

No, shush, just let me finish. I realized after I got my new apartment and spent my first few nights alone what a mistake I had made. But I'm just...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDA (CONT'D)

I'm just too proud to admit to you that I'd fucked everything up, and that I wanted a second chance. But I do. I love you, and I just want things to be the way they were in the beginning, when we really did love each other. I mean, we did, didn't we? That wasn't just an illusion? We did love each other, right?

MARTIN

(slowly)

We did love each other.

WANDA

And maybe, maybe if we look hard enough... maybe we still do?

MARTIN

(long pause)

I do still love you.

WANDA

(still crying, she nearly explodes with joy when she hears that)

Then maybe you should just forgive me, and we can get back to our lives together. And we can learn from all this. I won't let it happen again, I promise. I can be whatever you need me to be, just don't walk away from me. Okay?

Martin stares deep into Wanda's eyes. There is no questioning her sincerity.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Martin?

Martin looks past Wanda, at Astarte.

MARTIN

All I have to do is give you the artifact... and I can have Wanda back?

ASTARTE

It's a pretty straightforward arrangement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARTIN
(looks to Wanda, then back
to Astarte)
It wouldn't be real.

ASTARTE
It would be as real as it ever was.
I'm a goddess, not a stage
magician.

Martin weighs the artifact in his hand against the love in Wanda's eyes. He considers it for a long, long moment, then gently shakes his head.

MARTIN
I couldn't do that to Wanda.

ASTARTE
(frustrated)
She won't even notice the
difference!

MARTIN
And I'm not done with the artifact
yet.

ASTARTE
(grim)
You dumb fucking bastard.

MARTIN
Oh, chill out.

ASTARTE
I have waited *years*--

MARTIN
Just wait a few more.
(pause)
I just need to ask a few questions.
That's all.

They eye each other warily. Then finally, she produces a small red business card out of thin air, and flips it onto the floor in front of them.

ASTARTE
All right, Martin. Call me when
you're finished with it. Please.

MARTIN
What do you need it for anyway?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ASTARTE

(pause)

Let's just say *someone* took me out on a really nice date... took my phone number... and then never bothered to call me ever again.

(pause)

Someone is going to get an earful.

MARTIN

What are you going to do with Cain?

ASTARTE

(smiles)

I'm going to fuck the living shit out of him. Then I'll send him on his merry way, let those people out of the closet, and make sure they forget all about today.

MARTIN

That's very sweet of you.

ASTARTE

There's a reason people worshipped me, baby. I'll see you around, Martin.

She turns to leave, and disappears into the darkness.

Moments later, a look of confusion crosses Wanda's face -- then a look of disgust, as she jumps up off of Martin's lap.

WANDA

You bastard! You almost took her up on that!

MARTIN

Yeah, but I didn't.

WANDA

You almost did! You almost had me right where you wanted me, didn't you?

MARTIN

Yeah, I almost did. Let's talk about this later. Can you untie me?

EXT. CAIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Wanda helps Martin down the stairs and onto the sidewalk.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK. NIGHT.

They walk silently, Martin limping, wrapped around Wanda who helps him along.

As they walk, we begin to see people noticing them, pointing to them, following them. Slowly but surely, a PROCESSION OF STRANGE INDIVIDUALS falls in line behind the two of them. It is as though the entire city has been looking for Martin, and now they are finally starting to find him.

WANDA

This is fucking crazy. You've got to get rid of that thing.

MARTIN

I'm keeping it.

WANDA

Why? What good is it doing you to talk to God? What's he got lined up for you? More torture? More crazy people trying to kill you and everyone you care about?

On the opposite side of the street, a band of street punks taunt Martin, laughing viciously. One grins, baring a wicked set of vampire teeth.

WANDA (CONT'D)

You could barely hold your life together before this. Can't you see what's happening to you?

MARTIN

Why don't I give it to you? Then you can call.

WANDA

Sure, why don't I just shoot heroin into my eyeballs while I'm at it.

MARTIN

Oh, now that's a bit harsh.

WANDA

EARTH TO MARTIN, you are SUCH A JACKASS!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Martin stumbles and collapses in severe pain. She immediately picks him back up and gets them moving again, extremely concerned at his condition, but also desperate to find a taxi, a bus, a passing police car, anything that will get them away from the weirdos who are accumulating behind them.

A TAUT LITTLE MAN in a crisp suit rushes up to them. He looks like an investment banker, but he also wears jewelry that seems completely alien.

BANKER

I can line up untraceable bank accounts!

WANDA

Get lost.

BANKER

Your fortune will be impossibly immense!

WANDA

So will your swollen face after I finish punching it.

The banker backs off, receding into the crowd.

The procession grows louder and longer as they turn corners, looking for traffic that is mysteriously nowhere in sight. Occasionally someone tries to run forward to talk to them, and other members of the crowd intercept them and yank them back.

MARTIN

You should call the number. Just once. Just so you can understand.

WANDA

(sadly)

I understand just fine. You're oblivious, like always.

MARTIN

I'm not oblivious.

WANDA

You just keep medicating yourself. Now you've got the ultimate crack pipe. It's pathetic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN

It's a supernatural artifact,
Wanda!

WANDA

It's a supernatural crack pipe, you
JACKASS!

They drag themselves down the street, with a teeming mass of demons, minor deities, freaks, lunatics, and seekers following behind them.

A man dressed much like a MEDIEVAL FRIAR appears next to them.

FRIAR

I can offer you this potion.

He withdraws a vial from his robe. It's filled with a murky purple fluid.

FRIAR (CONT'D)

It can give you immortality and
eternal youth.

MARTIN

Eternal life on *this* shit hole? I
don't think so.

They charge on down the street. The friar shakes his head sadly and vanishes into the crowd.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF MARTIN'S BLDG. NIGHT.

As they reach Martin's neighborhood, the sidewalks are fully lined on either side, while the procession behind them keeps a respectful distance. The shouts and catcalls are a mixture of desperation and threatening.

WANDA

You could just give it to one of
them. You could just toss it over
your shoulder. You've had your
time with it. You can still get
your life back.

MARTIN

I can't get you back.

WANDA

You don't want me back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

If I get rid of this, will you stay
with me?

They come to a halt before Martin's apartment building.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I'll just... leave this on the
street. And you can... come
upstairs with me. And we'll
just... hang out for a while,
maybe.

For the first time, Wanda truly has a chance to appreciate what a battered state he is in: covered in blood, potentially broken bones, and a hollow, vacant, searching expression that shocks her to see in him.

Somehow the crowd actually realizes this is a pivotal moment, and silence spreads eerily, leaving Martin and Wanda facing each other.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I don't know how I got this way. I
don't. I'm sorry. I don't know
why I just... gave up. It wasn't
you.

(pause)

I just got so hopeless.

WANDA

And that *thing* doesn't give you any
more hope than you had before, does
it.

MARTIN

No.

(pause)

It just feels good.

(pause)

But so do you.

WANDA

I can't solve your problems.

MARTIN

Just come upstairs.

She eyes him sadly.

WANDA

I don't live here any more, Martin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She steps in to him, kisses him on the cheek.

WANDA (CONT'D)

If you find my journal, will you
please call me?

MARTIN

What's in that journal that's so
important?

WANDA

(sadly)
Memories of you.

And then, she slowly backs away from him, as though being too close to the artifact gives her the creeps. She turns to find herself being stared at by hundreds of people. They look at her with a mixture of fear and admiration. She deliberately makes her way through the crowd and vanishes.

Martin stands alone for a moment, then collapses onto the ground.

There are dozens of concerned faces in the crowd, but no one will approach him.

Martin does not move for a long, long moment.

And then, we hear a familiar voice, pushing its way through the crowd to get to Martin. Soon Carrie emerges and rushes to him, followed by the Wandering Jew. She is in significantly better shape than she was the last time we saw her, although she is, of course, still wearing bunny ears.

She kneels next to him, tries to rouse him.

CARRIE

(extremely concerned)
Hey! Martin! It's me, it's
Carrie. Are you all right?

MARTIN

No.

CARRIE

Man, you look like shit.

MARTIN

I feel like shit too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARRIE

What happened to you? Are you okay?

She carefully helps him stand, then turns to the Wandering Jew, who watches closely.

WANDERING JEW

He is on the verge of dying.

CARRIE

No!

WANDERING JEW

The Voice can heal him.

CARRIE

There's a phone in his apartment.

She searches Martin's pockets, finds his keys, and the two of them help him inside.

The crowd watches carefully, buzzing with anticipation. No one knows what will happen if Martin dies while he still possesses the Voice...

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Carrie and the Wandering Jew set Martin down gently on his bed. Through all of it, Martin has clasped the artifact tightly in his hand, and now is no exception.

CARRIE

Okay, Martin, you gotta do the dialing. I'm not touching that damn thing.

MARTIN

Where have you been? I've missed you.

She hands him a telephone.

CARRIE

(smiles)

We can talk later.

Somehow, instinctively, he knows what to do. He dials slowly, pauses for breath, and places the phone against his ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Immediately a shock flows through his body, and Martin is subsumed by the energy of the Voice.

The Wandering Jew motions to Carrie, and the two of them excuse themselves, leaving Martin alone on the bed, writhing.

MARTIN

I knew this was the last time I'd ever hear this Voice. I had so many questions I wanted to ask. About human experience, good and evil, war and injustice, genocide and starvation, and why did Wanda have to leave... but I didn't ask any of those questions.

Tears pour down his face.

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

I didn't bother asking for forgiveness, either. I figured I could find forgiveness on my own someday, if I really wanted it.

Through Martin's bedroom window, we can see the sky, deep space, brilliant stars above Seattle.

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

No, there was only one question I felt like asking. One little favor I wondered about.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND MARTIN'S BUILDING - NIGHT.

Wanda opens the door to her car. A blue journal falls from inside the car and lands at her feet. She cries out and scoops it up, looks inside to be sure it's really the one.

Then she slides to her knees with the journal in her lap, crying a mixture of sadness and relief.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Martin staggers into the room. He is no longer weeping; the bleeding has stopped, and he is no longer limping.

Carrie and the Wandering Jew stand up from the couch. Both eye him closely.

CARRIE

Martin?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

Hi, Carrie.

CARRIE

Are you okay?

MARTIN

I'm fine.

(pause)

It's good to see you. I was really worried about you.

CARRIE

Yeah, well... my friend here kind of talked me down.

Martin and the Wandering Jew make eye contact for the first time, and regard each other.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

He's a really good guy. He's been around forever.

Martin knows why the Wandering Jew is here. He looks down at the artifact, looks up at the Wandering Jew.

Then slowly but surely, he holds out the artifact to the Wandering Jew.

MARTIN

Thanks for helping Carrie out.

(pause)

Take it. I want you to have it.

Carrie's eyes grow wide with excitement; clearly she's happy at this development.

The Wandering Jew's hand trembles as he reaches for the artifact, grabs it, and takes it from Martin.

A noticeable sigh of relief escapes from Martin. In his other hand, he's got the phone, which he also hands to the Wandering Jew.

CARRIE

I suppose you want to be alone, right?

WANDERING JEW

No. I have been alone long enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The Wandering Jew dials as slowly and deliberately as he can, unwilling to risk misdialing.

Martin makes his way next to Carrie, who grabs his hand.

MARTIN
(whispering)
Who is this guy?

CARRIE
The Wandering Jew. He's been
wandering the earth for two
thousand years.

MARTIN
Damn, that sucks.

CARRIE
No kidding.

Then, just as deliberately as he dialed, the Wandering Jew places the phone to his ear.

His entire body tenses and pulses, then regains its composure. We see him muttering and whispering a prayer that he has rehearsed for just this moment.

And then, an enormous thunderclap is heard, and the Wandering Jew topples over backward with a heavy crash, smashing through a layer of debris on the floor.

The artifact falls from his hand and bounces across the floor.

Martin and Carrie stare silently for a moment, completely stunned. Then Carrie jumps up and shakes the Wandering Jew, trying to rouse him.

She slaps him a few times. Then, she takes his pulse.

She turns back to Martin in shock.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Holy shit. He's dead.

MARTIN
The Lord works in mysterious ways.

CARRIE
That's not mysterious. The Lord
just whacked this guy! Sheesh.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Get on the phone and ask the Lord
to help us hide the body.

There is a loud knock on the door. Martin goes to answer it.

INT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT.

Martin opens the door, to find the bicycle Messenger from the beginning of the movie standing in the hallway, the same weird grin on his face he had the last time we saw him.

MESSENGER

Hey there! I'm here to pick up a
package.

MARTIN

Right. Come on in.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Martin and the Messenger enter. Martin begins digging through the wreckage of his apartment to find the black box that the artifact came in.

The Messenger surveys the scene with admiration.

MESSENGER

Seems like you had a good time,
just like I thought you would. You
did better than most, that's for
sure.

Carrie spots the box and hands it to Martin, who scoops up the artifact, carefully places it inside the box, and closes the lid. Then, without hesitation, he hands the box to the Messenger.

The Messenger stuffs the box inside his messenger bag.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

Thanks a bunch! You folks have a
great day.

MARTIN

Do I owe you anything?

MESSENGER

Messenger service is all prepaid,
pal. You're going to have to
settle the phone bill on your own.
Take care!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Messenger excuses himself, leaving Martin and Carrie alone.

MARTIN

What did he mean, settle the phone bill?

CARRIE

Actually, you should take a look in the kitchen.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Martin turns on the light in the kitchen, to find an extremely battered and bloody Derald and Janszen on the floor, tied together back to back with duct tape and electrical extension cords wrapped around them.

MARTIN

Carrie says you guys are with the intergalactic phone company.

DERALD

(derisive despite being severely wounded)
Interdimensionary.

CARRIE

Same diff.

JANSZEN

(barely conscious)
Are you Martin Reilley?

MARTIN

(immediately suspicious)
Why?

DERALD

(snaps)
Just answer the question, punk.

MARTIN

Yes. I'm Martin Reilley.

JANSZEN

You have... some ELD charges to pay... you've been using the Voice of the 72 Names for several days now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DERALD

And it ain't free, buddy.

MARTIN

(exasperated)

Now wait just a minute. Exactly what kind of charges are we talking about here?

DERALD

Well, that's an interesting question. You see, there isn't enough money on this entire planet to cover it.

MARTIN

What? Why didn't somebody warn me--

DERALD

A description of the charges is in the manual, which you clearly didn't read.

CARRIE

You didn't even bother *reading* the manual?

MARTIN

(defensive)

Things happened pretty fast--

CARRIE

(she smacks him)

What are you, the Greatest American Hero? Would you please make a mental note: next time you receive a metaphysical artifact from *God*, take a couple minutes to *read the fucking manual!*

MARTIN

(defensive)

I didn't notice you reading it!

CARRIE

Yes, yes, that falls under the category of "trust Martin," and I must say, your score in that category has plummeted dramatically because of this business.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JANSZEN

Uh, excuse me, folks, I always hate
to interrupt a domestic squabble...

Martin and Carrie shoot each other a surprised look.

JANSZEN (CONT'D)

...but I do believe we need to get
ourselves to a hospital soon.

Martin and Carrie hesitate...

JANSZEN (CONT'D)

(wearily)

If we die here, they'll just send
more of us to find you.

Martin and Carrie begin untying the cords and slicing through
the duct tape.

MARTIN

So what's going to happen here? If
there isn't enough money on this
planet, how do I possibly--

A cell phone rings. Everyone has a cell phone moment as they
try to establish whose phone is ringing.

JANSZEN

It's mine.

(she answers)

Janszen... Yes, sir, he's right
here.

(hands phone to Martin)

The boss wants to talk to you.

MARTIN

(hesitant)

The boss?

CARRIE

Bruce Springsteen?

MARTIN

Carrie, you are not being helpful.

JANSZEN

The boss. Just take the call.

Reluctantly, Martin answers the phone. He speaks as Janszen
and Derald slowly climb to their feet, assess damage, wipe
off blood, etc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARTIN

Hello?... Yes... Yes... Yes... Are you serious?

CARRIE

What? What is it? C'mon, what's going on?

MARTIN

Uh huh. Hold on.

(aside, to Carrie)

They want me to go to work for the phone company. They garnish my wages until the debt is paid off.

CARRIE

They must pay pretty good, huh?

Derald and Janszen exchange a knowing look as Martin and Carrie fall for the pitch. They make their way out of the kitchen slowly.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

(suddenly vehement)

Tell him I want a job too! Tell him I want to work for the phone company too!

MARTIN

Are you sure?

CARRIE

I'm not staying here while you get to run around the universe! Ask him!

MARTIN

(nods)

My friend Carrie is looking for work too. I can vouch for her. She's a really smart cookie.

Carrie blushes at the unexpected compliment.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Excellent.

(he nods to Carrie)

When do we start?

Carrie is visibly relieved.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Derald and Janszen are retrieving their misplaced Palm Pilots from the wreckage of the living room.

Martin and Carrie emerge from the kitchen.

MARTIN

(a bit stunned)

So I guess we've got your jobs now.

DERALD

Yeah, aren't you the lucky ones.
We're officially retired, and the
new recruits are now on duty.

CARRIE

(to Janszen)

Do we get cool outfits like yours?

JANSZEN

(shakes her head)

They make you buy your own uniform.

DERALD

And they make you pay for all your
own dry cleaning too. Oh, and they
give you meal vouchers, but they
cleverly *don't* give you booze
vouchers. You're really gonna love
that one.

Derald tosses Martin his Palm Pilot, then his cell phone.

JANSZEN

Derald, don't start.

DERALD

(shakes his head)

We are *paid up*. I don't owe that
company a damn thing anymore. I'm
on my own time now, and I can say
what I want about our former
employer.

He fishes his ID out of his pocket and tosses it to Martin.

As Derald speaks, Martin watches Derald's photo on the ID
card erase itself, and a photo of Martin magically replaces
it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DERALD (CONT'D)

Let me tell you what you get to look forward to. You're on call 24 hours a day. You're constantly chasing broke, crazy assholes who'd rather shoot at you with a planet-buster particle beam than pay their goddamn phone bill...

JANSZEN

(quietly to Carrie)

That only happened once.

Janszen hands Carrie her Palm Pilot, cell phone and ID.

DERALD

And let's be clear: You think your life was crappy before? Well, it may sound glamorous at first, flying all over the damn multiverse, from planet to planet, dimension to dimension, but I got news for you. They're all hell holes, just like this place. Although I will admit, this place is one of the worst.

MARTIN

What, my apartment?

DERALD

No, I meant the planet, actually.

(pause)

But your apartment really does kind of suck, doesn't it.

MARTIN

(shrugs)

I had demons over.

JANSZEN

Don't listen to Derald. He's just burned out. Some people don't adjust well to never sleeping.

CARRIE

Never sleeping?

DERALD

On call! 24 hours a day! And not just for the rest of your natural lives, either...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DERALD (CONT'D)

For the rest of your *unnatural* lives! They got *pills* that keep you alive and wide awake, Martin! You *will* pay off that debt, I guarantee it!

Janszen prods Derald toward the door.

MARTIN

(realizing what a mess he's in)

How... how long have you two been working for the company?

JANSZEN

(shaking head)

Don't ask. There are some things you just don't want to know. Trust me on this one.

Janszen and Derald are almost out the door, when Carrie stops them with one last question.

CARRIE

Is that how they got you two? You used the Voice... just like Martin?

An angry look crosses Derald's face.

DERALD

No. I've never heard the Voice.

Derald stalks out. Janszen offers a half-hearted smile.

JANSZEN

Let's just say there are certain 1-900 numbers you should never, ever call.

(pause)

Good luck.

And with that, she nods and leaves.

INT. STAIRWELL OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT BLDG - NIGHT.

Derald and Janszen make their way out down the stairwell, Derald in the lead, a maniacal gleam in his eye.

DERALD

We are totally free, baby! We can go anywhere, do anything, party our goddamn asses off...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANSZEN

How are we supposed to get off this stupid planet anyway?

DERALD

Don't sweat it. The grays have a shuttle running every week, we just gotta get to Nevada...

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF MARTIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

From above, we see Derald and Janszen stagger out of the building. A crowd is slowly dispersing out front. A few people have engaged the Messenger in a bit of pleading, but he deftly shoos them away, and soon he is alone.

Derald and Janszen catch the Messenger's eye, and nod and wave to him. He smiles and returns the gesture, and Derald and Janszen head off down the street.

The Messenger climbs on his bike and rides off the opposite direction. He pedals off into the distance, the bike's little red safety lights flashing as he goes.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Martin and Carrie slump together on the couch. They each begin playing with their fancy new Palm Pilots, intrigued and vaguely terrified at the same time.

CARRIE

So now we work for the interdimensionary phone company. I suppose we should call Cynthia and tell her we're not coming in any more.

A small look of concern briefly crosses Martin's face, then vanishes.

MARTIN

I'm guessing she's not going to be too concerned.

(pause)

You know, it's my debt, Carrie, not yours. I bet you could still get out of it.

CARRIE

Nah. I spent a little time with the Voice on your tab.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Besides, it's gotta be better than working for a damn *consulting* company.

(noticing something on her PDA screen)

Holy cow, look at who I have in my contact list.

Martin looks and is duly impressed.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Man, I bet I would go *straight* to hell if I started prank calling St. Peter.

MARTIN

So the boss said we're going to be partners.

CARRIE

(brightens)

Really? The boss said that?

MARTIN

(nods)

That's what the boss said.

CARRIE

(pause)

Martin... would this be a bad time to admit that I've had an enormous crush on you for about a year and a half?

MARTIN

(pause)

Strangely enough, I think this would be a *great* time to admit that.

(pause)

I'm really sorry about driving you crazy like that.

CARRIE

Yeah, well, you've been driving me crazy for a while now, but I will admit that was a bit much.

They eye each other for a second, then suddenly Carrie begins smiling serenely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 (mischievous)
 So when do we start? We could go
 over to my place and *pack*...

Martin's new cell phone begins ringing in his hand. They both eye it with extreme discomfort. A long silence follows as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PATROL CAR - NIGHT

TITLE: Years later

Martin and Carrie sit inside a beat-up, lived in patrol car, Martin in the driver's seat. Both of them are dressed similarly to Derald and Janszen, in trenchcoat and suit, although naturally Carrie somehow manages to look stylish. They are eating fast food on a dinner break, judging by the deep dark sky and the bright stars visible through the back window of the car. Carrie is working on a milkshake, which she is clearly unimpressed with. Martin is eating something that looks somewhat like a hamburger.

CARRIE
 (distastefully)
 Damn, they are still not using milk
 in these milkshakes.

MARTIN
 What do you expect?

CARRIE
 I have asked them 38 times. It's
not that hard to get milk out here.

MARTIN
 You done with your french fries?

CARRIE
 If by french fries you mean
 "vaguely potato flavored slices of
 something theoretically biomass in
 origin," then here, I'm done.

She tosses him a small bag of unusually shaped french fries, then fishes out some condiment packs and tosses them to him as well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Oh, and don't forget this delicious "ketchup-style" topping, which comes from matter that may have actually brushed against a tomato on a long truck ride a long time ago.

(slurps her milkshake)
So who's next?

Martin finishes his burger and consults his Palm Pilot.

MARTIN

The guy's name is... Roger...
Roger... Hmm, I can't pronounce that.

He shows it to Carrie.

CARRIE

Oh, right, you need an extra larynx to pronounce his last name.

MARTIN

And me without my extra larynx.

CARRIE

So what'd he do?

MARTIN

(tapping his Pilot once more)
Let's see... Looks like he somehow managed to... steal someone's credit card number, and used it to... make some ELD calls to his lover, who is... apparently trapped in the 8th circle of hell for the rest of eternity.

CARRIE

Damn, whose card has that much available credit?

MARTIN

(another tap)
Ah, of course. It's Satan's credit card.

CARRIE

Again? Sheesh, he needs to be more careful with that thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARTIN

So of course the credit card company is contesting the charges on Satan's behalf...

CARRIE

Of course. The king of deceit has the best fraud protection.

MARTIN

...and now Roger whatshisname is in a world of hurt. And so, I might add, is his lover, who did *not* have phone privileges at the time.

CARRIE

Ouch.

MARTIN

Yeah.

Martin tries a fry, and then tosses them over his shoulder into the back seat. He leans over and kisses her on the cheek. Then he holds up an envelope.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

So I was thinking, it looks like we're almost due for a vacation.

CARRIE

Are you crazy? We can't afford a vacation.

MARTIN

Well, funny thing about that... The phone company's got some kind of special deal going. Now that we're actually paying off that debt, turns out we've accumulated a fuckload of frequent flier miles.

Carrie's eyes grow wide, and she snatches the letter from him.

CARRIE

(reading the letter)

Oh my god... You mean we can finally go to *Cancun*???

Martin nods, and she squeals with delight as she leans over and starts kissing him.

EXT. GALACTIC FAST FOOD JOINT

From a distance, we see the equivalent of an Earth-style drive-in fast food joint, except this one is FLOATING IN OUTER SPACE, and the cars are actually SPACE SHIPS of various sizes. We see one small space capsule break away from its stall... A small rocket at the back of the capsule fires... And the capsule flies straight into the camera, rocketing off on yet another mission...