

ANGEL

"The Beginning of the End"

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REVISED DRAFT

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ANGEL

"The Beginning of the End"

TEASER

FADE IN:

A T.V. SCREEN. Blank. CLICK. A flickering image appears, projected. The print is dirty and washed out, but we can see a happy family celebrating a birthday in the same cliché fashion any other family would. These are the RILEYS.

Their son: CONNOR, eight years old and loving it. He tumbles down slides and has a go with the merry-go-round.

The perfect childhood continues...

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT

Two GUARDS -- GRIMY and CHUBBS -- drag an unconscious boy by the arms. It's CONNOR, now 20. Grimy moves ahead to a heavy steel door. Pulls out his keys and turns the lock. It slides open. Inside is nothing but a black void.

Grimy takes Connor's other arm and, with great effort, both men TOSS Connor into the void.

INT. ISOLATION CELL - CONTINUOUS

The door SLAMS SHUT. A small port-hole lets light from the hallway seep through. Connor comes to a little. Groggy. Pretty unsure of what's happening. Looks up to see

GRIMY

staring in through the port-hole with a creepy satisfaction.

CONNOR

What's going on? Who are you?

GRIMY

Doesn't matter who I am. Question is -- who did you piss off?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONNOR

What?

GRIMY

Someone ain't happy with you, kid,
that's for damn sure.

Connor looks around. A rat scurries for food. Trails around his leg. Connor doesn't move. He just closes his eyes, maybe ready to give up -- THUNK!

Grimy slumps. A shadow crosses the port-hole. Keys JINGLE in the lock. Connor waits, half terrified and half hopeful as the door opens...

It's ANGEL! He strides in, brandishing a broad sword. Spots Connor on the ground. He immediately swoops down and slings Connor over his shoulder. Bolts through the door and over Grimy -- and the downed Chubbs -- without a single word.

CONNOR

Wh... How... When...?

ANGEL

Save your strength. We need to
get out of here.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Moonlight spills in through windows as Angel leads Connor down the long corridor. Rusted steel and a sense of claustrophobia are all that waits ahead. The pace is frantic.

CONNOR

Where are we?

ANGEL

The thirteenth precinct in
downtown L.A. Wolfram & Hart
didn't go through much trouble to
keep you hidden.

CONNOR

That's kind of insulting.

They turn a corner --

CONNOR (cont'd)

Unless it's a...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angel freezes. Two HULKING DEMONS stand no more than twenty feet away, their teeth just as large as their considerable muscles.

ANGEL

Trap.

Angel clutches the sword... The demons attack! Claws tear flesh as Angel uses his own body to defend Connor. Blood flows. Angel brings the sword up and IMPALES it through the demon's face! It slumps.

The other beast bites down hard, taking a chunk out of Angel's leg... Metal flashes through the air and the demon's head rolls away, leaving a geyser of green gore.

Connor eyes the green-stained blade, a bit repulsed.

CONNOR

Always room for jell-o, I guess.

ANGEL

Not exactly a time for jokes,
Connor.

Angel helps Connor to his feet.

CONNOR

Never is.

ANGEL

Come on.

They round one last corner. A large wooden door is directly ahead, their way out... they get closer and closer and finally Angel pushes the heavy thing open --

HARD CUT TO:

INT. ISOLATION CELL

A small port-hole lets light from the hallway seep through. Connor comes to a little. Groggy. Pretty sure of what's happening. Looks up to see

GRIMY

staring in through the port-hole with a creepy satisfaction.

CONNOR

What's going on? Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRIMY

Welcome to the worst nightmare of
all, kid.

Grimy's lips form a toothless grin.

GRIMY (cont'd)

Reality.

The port-hole slides shut. DARKNESS.

BLACKOUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Closing time at the Hyperion. The lights are off and the whole lobby reeks of false comfort. NINA sits just outside of Angel's office.

EXT. HYPERION - GARDEN - NIGHT

An arm brushes a plant. A blue arm. ILLYRIA follows WESLEY as he makes for the door. But she pauses. Looks up.

ILLYRIA'S P.O.V.

A beautiful ocean of stars, not one missing amidst the masses.

BACK TO SCENE

as Illyria cocks her head with the most interesting of expressions.

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Wesley tosses his jacket away. Nina's SNIFFLES can be heard from a mile off. Wesley notices, walks to her.

WESLEY

Nina, what's wrong?

NINA

Angel.

WESLEY

Where is he? I'd like to have a word with him, if at all possible.

NINA

He's gone. I'm not even sure I want him to come back.

WESLEY

What is it? What happened?

NINA

Nothing. He went to check on Connor. He was worried something happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WESLEY

Connor's fine, we can be sure of that. Did something happen between you?

Nina continues talking, oblivious to Wesley's comment.

NINA

He didn't even take me with him. He'd rather have Spike and the Slayer along than me.

WESLEY

Buffy?

NINA

The other one. Skye. Though goldie-locks did drop by for a quickie before skipping town.

Wesley slides to the floor next to Nina.

WESLEY

With Spike and Skye, it shouldn't be taken personally. Those of us without... special abilities, we'll only slow him down.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Angel swoops in through the front door. SPIKE and SKYE follow suit into the decrepit building.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angel looks around -- surprised, but not yet panicked. Spike gives the place the general once-over.

ANGEL

Connor?
(no response)
Connor?!

SPIKE

The kid's not exactly a chip off the old block, skipping town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGEL
He didn't leave on his own. Check
the place out.

Skye stands around, a bit unsure of her place in things.

SKYE
This isn't exactly my area of
expertise.

ANGEL
I don't care. Sniff around, trip
over a shoe -- do anything that
gives us a clue.

SPIKE
Ah, forensics. Your general "CSI"
investigation, only without that
New York nonsense.

SKYE
Whose idea was it to do a spin-off
in New York? Dumb idea.

ANGEL
Get to work.

Angel moves to the disgusting-looking sofa. With little effort he lifts the couch and CHUCKS it over. Nothing under it.

Spike looks at Skye.

SPIKE
Come on, love. I think it's best
we leave Forehead here to his own
devices, if you catch my meaning.

SKYE
Agreed.

They move through a swinging door. Angel, done with the living room, hurries upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN

Spike and Skye enter. Compared to the ragged living room, this is actually in pretty good shape. An inviting fridge and a food closet. Skye moves to the pantry and rummages around. Spike's content with eyeing the stove.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE

So, what'd you think of him?

SKYE

Connor?

SPIKE

Yeah.

SKYE

I don't know. We weren't close or anything, but I guess I liked him enough.

SPIKE

So you weren't exactly like rabbits, then?

SKYE

Not exactly. I'm generally not the kind of person who wants to bounce around from one lay to the next.

She glances at Spike, then quickly avoids his gaze when he looks. Skye tosses a box of cereal away. Continues digging through items.

SKYE (cont'd)

This is so incredibly not my thing.

SPIKE

You'll be fine. You have to have some of those vampire senses.

SKYE

I'm just not the type of girl who goes all Scully in bed when the going gets rough.

A beat, then --

SPIKE

I'm not even going to pretend I know what that means.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Angel, determined as hell, striding into --

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angel inspects. The bedspread is disheveled. Cans of soda littered about. And something else on the endtable, gleaming in moonlight. Angel walks over and swipes the item away, looks at it.

A watch. Platinum Rolex, and expensive as hell. Angel smirks. Turns it around to look at the back of the face. There's an inscription: *Property of Wolfram & Hart. J.K.*

Angel smirks.

ANGEL
What a surprise.

INT. KITCHEN

Skye sits on the counter-top. Spike leans against the refrigerator, smoking like a madman.

SPIKE
To tell you the truth, you're handling this better than I thought you would.

SKYE
What's that supposed to mean?

SPIKE
Well, know the guy or not, I'm used to you girly-types going all AWOL the second something surprising comes along, is all.

SKYE
Guess I'm not most girls.

She casts Spike a mischievous grin --

The door swings open and Angel barrels through. Looks at both of them like a disapproving older brother.

ANGEL
Not working. What a shock.

SPIKE
What'd you find?

Angel tosses Spike the watch. He finds the inscription on the back side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE (cont'd)
'J.K.' You thinking Kitridge,
mate?

SKYE
Well, that's the least surprising
twist ever. Except "The Village."

SPIKE
What's the next move?

ANGEL
We pick up a few things and then
pay him a visit.

And with that, he turns and walks THROUGH CAMERA, encompassing
us until the screen goes BLACK and we --

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT

UNKNOWN P.O.V.

In one continuous move, as though the camera never stopped.
We stalk down the hallway, getting closer to Grimy and Chubbs,
parked on chairs in front of the isolation cell's foreboding
steel door.

Chubbs stands to face us.

CHUBBS
You cut the check yet, Jimmy-boy?

BACK TO SCENE

where KITRIDGE smiles.

KITRIDGE
Soon enough, I promise. You need
to wait for the banks to open
anyway.

CHUBBS
Screw the banks. Sumner's on my
ass that if we're not paid by
tomorrow afternoon, we're cuttin'
him loose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITRIDGE

Well, I appreciate you taking him
off my hands for a few hours.
You'll get your money, trust me.
Can I see him?

Grimy stands.

GRIMY

What for? He's pretty locked
down, chief.

KITRIDGE

Just a talk. Quick one.

GRIMY

I can't give you more than five
minutes.

KITRIDGE

That's enough.

GRIMY

Then feel free to knock yourself
out.

Grimy digs the keys out of his pocket. Inserts one into the
lock, TURNS. The door rumbles open...

INT. ISOLATION CELL - CONTINUOUS

Kitridge looks in. Bathed in blackness, Connor is still
visible sitting against the far wall, one leg extended. Grimy
looks at Kitridge and shrugs. Finally Kitridge swoops in as
Grimy SLAMS the door shut. He looks in through the port-hole.

Kitridge approaches Connor.

CONNOR

What do you want?

KITRIDGE

Happiness, world peace, and floppy
bunnies running free through wheat
fields. Think I've got a shot?

CONNOR

Leave me alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITRIDGE

I'm thinking not, kid. I figured all you wanted right now was a friend.

CONNOR

You're not my friend.

KITRIDGE

Ah, but one of your friends stabbed you in the back to get you here. I figured we could form a clique.

CONNOR

Get to the real reason. I was in the middle of a pretty great Natalie Portman fantasy.

KITRIDGE

(blunt)

They're going to kill you, Connor.

CONNOR

What?

KITRIDGE

This nice little cell, those guards -- it's just a facade. A few particularly senior members of Wolfram & Hart want to see you in the ground.

CONNOR

Good for them. It's nothing I haven't heard before.

Kitridge kneels and looks Connor in the eye. His voice is slow -- disarmingly calm.

KITRIDGE

But it's never been definite, has it? Well, it is now. You're going to die tomorrow, Connor. I'm just giving you some time to think of how.

Connor is silent. Kitridge seems satisfied. He stands and walks away from Connor. Nods to Grimy through the port-hole. The keys jingle as the door is pulled open.

Light spills onto Kitridge's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KITRIDGE (cont'd)
We'd give you one last meal, but
the kitchen's closed.

He exits.

CUT TO:

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Nina sits at the front desk. Illyria stands on the top stair before the second level, looking oddly like a perched bird.

Wesley enters FRAME with a mug filled with a viscous-looking fluid. He hands it to Nina...

WESLEY
Drink this. You'll feel better.

...who takes it. She sips some down and her face goes a little green. The expression in her face is -- odd -- as she drops the mug in an instinct-like reflex.

NINA
You said I'd feel better!

*

WESLEY
Well, more alive.

Wesley notices something as Nina pushes the revolting mug away.

WESLEY (cont'd)
What are those?

NINA
What are what?

Wesley grabs her arm -- rather sharply -- and twists it so he can see her wrist. A few dried cuts with bruising are visible.

WESLEY
These. What are they?

NINA
I... I don't know. I woke up with
them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WESLEY

It looks like a syringe was used.
Were you injected with something?

NINA

I --

WESLEY

Did you inject yourself with
something? Anything at all?

NINA

No. Absolutely not.

Wesley studies her face. Truthful, but she's definitely
hiding something...

The doors BURST OPEN. Wesley and Nina watch as Angel, Spike,
and Skye stride through the lobby. Angel heads to the armory
cabinet and yanks open a door. Wesley turns to Nina again.

WESLEY

Try to remember something --
anything. We'll talk more later.

He stands and walks towards Angel, who takes two long daggers
from the cabinet and tosses them to Skye.

ANGEL

Mind telling me where you've been,
Wes?

*

*

WESLEY

Later. Are we mounting some kind
of attack?

*

ANGEL

Maybe. You can never be certain
in this line of work, but better
safe than sorry.

WESLEY

Said the assassin before he was
slaughtered by the blind man.
What's happened?

Spike pulls free a sword. Studies it, pleased.

SPIKE

The fruit of Angel's loins is
missing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGEL

Kitridge left his watch. So we're going to drop by and -- ask -- what he knows about what's going on.

WESLEY

Is it tied to the Keeper?

Angel, armed to the teeth, starts back through the lobby. Wesley follows.

ANGEL

Won't know until we ask him, will we? Mount up. You're coming with us.

Nina wipes away a tear and, almost painfully, rushes to Angel.

NINA

What should I do, Angel?

ANGEL

Stay here. There's no reason for you to get involved in this.

He hasn't stopped moving. She struggles to keep up.

NINA

I can help!

Finally Angel stops. Flustered, maybe even a little angry.

ANGEL

How?

And Nina doesn't have an answer. Angel spares her one last look and then barrels through the front doors, followed by Spike, Skye, Wesley, and Illyria.

Nina stands in the hotel lobby. Alone.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOLFRAM & HART - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Ominous as always, backlight by the full moon. The sign in front reads: "WOLFRAM & HART - Attorneys at Law."

INT. WOLFRAM & HART - MANNERS' OFFICE - NIGHT

HOLLAND MANNERS sits at his desk, signing some kind of form. He drops the pen and neatly tucks the piece of paper into an envelope.

His phone BEEPS. He clicks on the speaker option.

MANNERS

Yes?

SECRETARY (V.O.)

(filtered)

Sir, your four o'clock is here. *

MANNERS

I don't have a four o'clock, Stephanie. If it's another vampire trying to trade an employee for access to a twenty four hour blood bank, let him keep the employee.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

(filtered)

No, sir. It's James Kitridge. He says you'll want to hear what he has to say.

Something's piqued Manners' interested. He looks intrigued.

MANNERS

Send him in. And Stephanie?

SECRETARY (V.O.)

(filtered)

Yes, Mr. Manners?

MANNERS

Some coffee too, if you don't mind. *

He clicks off the phone. Waits a beat -- there's a KNOCK at his door. Manners straightens his tie and folds his hands. At ease.

MANNERS (cont'd)

Come in.

Kitridge enters, dressed in his best suit -- more expensive than Manners'. He notices.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANNERS (cont'd)

What can I do for you, James?

KITRIDGE

I'd like my job back, sir.

MANNERS

I'm afraid that's out of the question. You've become a liability to this company, not unlike a certain lawyer I once knew. And you don't show a tenth of his promise.

KITRIDGE

Nevertheless, I have... information you need. And I'm willing to trade it for a position in this office.

MANNERS

Well, I guess that depends on the information you have.

KITRIDGE

I want your guarantee beforehand.

MANNERS

You won't get it. Show me what you have, and then I'll decide.

A tense moment as the two men study each other, not quite the master-apprentice relationship they shared in the past.

KITRIDGE

(finally)

Fine. I guess I haven't learned enough not to trust you, Holland.

MANNERS

I guess not.

Kitridge pulls up a chair and sits directly across from Manners. When he talks, his voice has the confidence of a champion racer.

KITRIDGE

I know, right now, where you can find Angel's son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Manners' smile would make the Devil shiver. And Kittridge does.

CUT TO:

INT. ISOLATION CELL

Connor, asleep on the floor, stirs. An AGELESS VOICE echoes through the chamber.

VOICE

Connor ... Connor ...

Connor's eyes flutter. He looks around the cell. Dark and empty. Even the port-hole is closed.

VOICE (cont'd)

Connor ... It's time to wake up,
Connor ...

His eyes flutter again.

CONNOR

The voice over routine is getting
old really quickly. Show yourself
or leave me alone.

VOICE

You don't know who I am?

CONNOR

Should I?

VOICE

I've been here since you were
born...

But the voice is changing. It's deeper, more raspy. And infinitely familiar.

HOLTZ (O.S)

... before that, even.

Connor can't believe his eyes. HOLTZ circles the chamber, bathed in the dark lights that reveal only glimpses of his aging face.

HOLTZ (cont'd)

So trust me when I say this, son,
that you need to leave as quickly
as possible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONNOR
You're not my father.

HOLTZ
Then who is? The vampire who
failed to raise you? Or the false
family a deceased sorcerer
implanted into your brain?

Holtz feels the door, as though he's never touched a texture
in his life. He's transfixed.

HOLTZ (cont'd)
Regardless, if this face doesn't
invoke emotion, perhaps another
one will.

Holtz disappears into shadow. He reappears, slightly closer
to Connor... but his face is no longer Holtz. It's Angel.

ANGEL
Get up, Connor. Now.

CONNOR
Who are you?

ANGEL
Let's just say that if you're the
first of the Omega, I'm but a face
of the Alpha.

CONNOR
Can we skip Cryptic 101?

ANGEL
Certainly.

The shadows overtake Angel. We can HEAR FOOTFALLS approaching
Connor. Still we can't see Angel. Connor grows apprehensive.
What the hell is going to happen? Still nothing... The sound
draws closer...

And a face appears mere inches from Connor's face. This one
we haven't seen before. Bald and pale with a hint of blue.

THE ORACLE
I'll make this as clear as
possible. Everything depends on
the choice you make right now. If
you don't leave this cell, I'll
kill you where you stand ... or
sit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CONNOR

I can't exactly turn the doorknob.

THE ORACLE

Foolish boy. Of course you can.

He draws closer to Connor and the two look at each other directly in the eye...

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

A car rolls into the parking lot and takes up an empty stall. Kitridge exits, a wide smile on his face.

INT. KIRSTEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Keys turn in the lock. Kitridge walks in and tosses the door shut behind him.

KIRSTEN is asleep on the bed. Kitridge sheds his jacket and approaches her slowly. He reaches out and rubs her face, lovingly. Finally he leans over and kisses her on the cheek. She doesn't move.

KITRIDGE

What?

He reaches and turns her over. Still nothing. Her eyes are closed. He looks closer... there are two bite marks on her neck!

Kitridge's eyes go wide in terror.

ANGEL (O.S)

Surprised, James?

Angel steps out from the shadows. Kitridge looks at him, eyes full of hatred.

ANGEL (cont'd)

I'm shocked you noticed so quickly. Does she usually react? Guess I lose the bet to Spike. You owe me ten bucks.

And it's only now that Kitridge realizes he's surrounded. Spike and Skye to one side of the room, Illyria to the other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE

No worries. I don't much care if
the money comes from you or him.

Spike holds a shot glass filled with a red fluid. He gulps it
down quickly.

SKYE

Spike gets thirsty like that.
Those shot glasses, though...
They never fill him up.

Kitridge looks at them, gears turning his mind... He turns,
bolts! Tries to get to the door before they can move --

Cold steel presses across his neck. Wesley is there, his *
pistol trained point blank. A shot now would go right through
Kitridge's neck.

WESLEY

Turn around.

He doesn't have a choice. Kitridge turns to look at Angel.
Angel draws very close to him. Deadly serious.

ANGEL

Now, you're going to tell us
everything you did -- everything
they know -- or Spike's going to
fill up a liquor bottle with her
blood. Understood?

Kitridge's eyes tell the whole terrifying story.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT

Grimy sips out of a Styrofoam cup. Chubbs SNORES loudly. A
boring night...

CLANK! Something from the end of the hall. CLANK! Chubbs
snaps awake. Grimy already has his pistol trained on the
isolation cell's steel door. Chubbs struggles to follow suit
as there's another CLANK...

Dents are visible in the steel. Protruding outward. The door
ROCKS on its hinge with another punch... The guards exchange
glances, terrified and a little confused...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door SNAPS. Tumbles off the hinge and away. Connor stares at both guards with grim determination.

GRIMY

You take one damn step kid and you
won't even know how fast a bullet
can kill you!

Connor tilts his head -- He grabs the door with inhuman speed and lifts it with ease! Grimy manages to press his finger to the trigger, so does Chubbs, and finally they manage to fire -- just as Connor HURLS the door!

Bullets impact steel as the door flies at the guards, at CAMERA, finally filling the screen as we --

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. KIRSTEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE - A HAND

It dabs a cloth into a cup filled with thick fluid. Sponges some out.

KITRIDGE

presses the cloth to Kirsten's neck. She winces.

KITRIDGE

This should close the wound.
You'll be okay.

KIRSTEN

Why didn't they kill me?

KITRIDGE

They got what they came for.

KIRSTEN

And what exactly was that?

Kitridge takes Kirsten's hand and presses it to the cloth. He stands and walks to the kitchen. Runs his filthy hands under the faucet.

KIRSTEN (cont'd)

(firm)

What did they want, James?

Kitridge hesitates. Then:

KITRIDGE

They wanted Connor -- No, he
wanted Connor. The others were
just around to enjoy the ride.

Kirsten gasps.

KIRSTEN

And you told them? You told them
the truth?

KITRIDGE

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KIRSTEN

But that was it! Your way back
in!

Kitridge returns to Kirsten's side. He sits down on the bed.

KITRIDGE

I'll find another way.

KIRSTEN

They're going to kill you...

KITRIDGE

No. Once I told him where Connor
was, Angel took off --

KIRSTEN

Not him. Them. Wolfram & Hart.
If Angel gets to Connor before
they do... they really will kill
you, James.

Kitridge thinks. It's hardly the first time he's ever thought
about it. But then he looks at her -- at her wound -- and
smiles.

KITRIDGE

It was worth it.

They kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT

The entire hall is in disarray. The steel door is shattered
in half, split across the corridor. Dozens of COPS litter the
scene, trying to figure out what happened. A MEDIC tries to
slap Grimy awake.

WARDEN SUMNER inspects the scene. He's a large man -- and
extremely pissed off. LT. FALLON stands at his side.

SUMNER

Jesus H -- I knew this job was
bad. Knew it in my blood.

LT. FALLON

There's no way the door split off
on its own. The kid had help. We
can be pretty damn sure of that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUMNER

Two men down. Good men -- well, decent ones.

LT. FALLON

We can get patrols looking for the guy as early as sun-up.

SUMNER

No. I took him off Kitridge's hands, and that's as far as I go with it. Kid's his damn problem now.

There's a RUMBLE and a portion of ceiling-brick collapses in front of the two men. Lt. Fallon raises his eyebrows.

LT. FALLON

How are you going to explain the damage to the city council?

SUMNER

What else? Vampire raid.

Sumner smiles wryly. We PAN UP, seeing all of the damage... more of it now as the CAMERA continues to rise... THROUGH the chunk of ceiling until we're no longer in the prison hallway at all --

EXT. JAIL ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Where Angel studies the comings-and-goings of everyone at the crime scene.

Wesley spares a glance down. Studies the confusion.

WESLEY

He made it then?

*

ANGEL

He's not here. And they were holding him under Kitridge's orders -- I doubt Wolfram & Hart would have to go through so much trouble to get him out.

Spike takes a drag off his cigarette.

SPIKE

Good for junior, then. What's the next move?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGEL

We get searching. Nobody in that firm can find him before we do. We can split up, take opposite corners of the city until we --

WESLEY

Angel...

ANGEL

-- until we learn anything. We'll find him and keep him safe. Find some kind of sanctuary for the time being --

WESLEY

Angel.

Angel's stride is completely broken.

ANGEL

What, Wesley?

WESLEY

It sounds like a well thought-out plan, but there's a problem. One that's about ten minutes from rising over that hill.

He's right. Angel and Spike look to see the first morning rays creeping over a large hill.

ANGEL

So we'll take the sewers. Spike and I can cover a lot of distance underground anyway.

WESLEY

Perhaps you should go back to the hotel.

ANGEL

Why?

The crimson sky gleams in Illyria's eyes. She just now seems to notice the conversation.

ILLYRIA

Your child follows you well after he has reached maturity. He's grown attached. It is likely he will seek you out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGEL

At the hotel? Connor's smarter
than that --

Angel thinks. Spike looks at him and smirks.

SPIKE

The hotel then?

ANGEL

Just until sunset.

CUT TO:

INT. WOLFRAM & HART - HALLWAY - DAY

Manners fills his cup at the water cooler. His eyes are fixed
on Kitridge as he pours, Viper deadly.

MANNERS

Well that's... unfortunate.

KITRIDGE

I did everything in my power to
make sure he was detained until
you could collect him.

MANNERS

I'm sure. After all, what would
the point be in just handing him
over?

Manners drinks.

MANNERS (cont'd)

So, you want a job? Fine.
Congratulations, James. You're
officially back on the Wolfram &
Hart payroll.

Kitridge raises his eyebrows. Something's wrong with this.

KITRIDGE

And?

MANNERS

And what? Your first task is
simple. Within the next hour
we'll begin our search for Angel's
son. And that search will be led
by...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANNERS (cont'd)
someone you're not particularly
find of. You're going to support
his task force as it advances on
Angel and whoever supports him.

KITRIDGE
You're sending me out on field
work?

MANNERS
It's always good to get your hands
dirty.

Manners gulps down the last of his water. He inches closer to
Kitridge.

MANNERS (cont'd)
(deadly serious)
And rest assured, things are going
to get out of hand. And if Angel
goes crazy and decides to "vent"
against certain individuals,
well... you'll be filling these
cups for me for a very long time.

Manners crushes the styrofoam cup. Trashes it in the bin at
Kitridge's foot.

CUT TO:

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - DAY

Angel spreads a map out over the counter. Los Angeles and all
of its districts. The rest of the gang (Wesley, Illyria,
Spike, Skye, and Nina) crowd around and watch as Angel
indicates.

ANGEL
If Connor doesn't turn up, we're
going to spread out across the
city. With six of us we'll make
decent ground. At the very least
we should get a sniff.

WESLEY
Any ideas where he'd be headed?
His foster family?

ANGEL
No. He'd never put someone he
loves in harm's way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE

Shows what he thinks of us, then.

Angel glares.

ANGEL

Anyone he loves who can't defend themselves.

Nina looks around anxiously. Obviously needing a word with Angel.

NINA

Angel.

But --

SKYE

What if he does show up and they come after him? We may kick a lot of ass, but we're not miracle workers.

WESLEY

Assuming Wolfram & Hart comes at us full force, we might be able to make an adequate defense with Taylor. His force was rather large. Perhaps he's manage to recoup some of his lost... assets.

*
*
*
*

Illyria and Wesley share a look. She looks intrigued. Nina continues, anxious, now frustrated...

ANGEL

The base is fortified to all hell. Even if Wolfram & Hart gets in, it'd be tough for them to move once they get into the underground levels --

*
*
*
*
*

NINA

Angel.

So stern there's a very noticeable pause. They all look at Nina.

ANGEL

Yes, Nina?

NINA

We need to talk. Now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

This isn't a woman you argue with it.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF L.A. - DAY

A man with sunglasses follows a CROWD OF TOURISTS down the sidewalk, briefcase in hand. Blending in completely.

It's Kitridge. His head looks here and there, searching for something... Any sign... He passes large building with a sign on the door. It reads: "HYPERION HOTEL - Est. 1951."

We PAN UP, further, until finally we're away from Kitridge and to the highest levels of the building --

EXT. HYPERION ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

-- where Connor looks at the clusters of people. Looks down to the front doors.

CONNOR

Damsel in distress time.

He steps onto the ledge. Prepares for the four-story drop -- a hand touches his shoulder -- he turns --

It's THE KEEPER!

Connor's eyes go wide as the Keeper yanks him away from the ledge. He SMASHES hard onto the concrete rooftop.

CUT TO:

INT. HYPERION - ANGEL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Angel closes the door as Nina crosses her arms.

ANGEL

What can I do for you right now, Nina? I'm kind of pressed for time.

NINA

I saw you. With her.

ANGEL

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NINA

The Slayer. Buffy. I saw both of you together.

ANGEL

I'm sorry, Nina, but that really isn't any of your business.

NINA

Yes it is. Don't you dare play the coward and run away from this. While we're still together I expect a certain amount of --

ANGEL

It happened. It's over. You'll never see her again.

NINA

Somehow I doubt that. You can't take your mind off her.

EXT. HYPERION ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

The Keeper BACKHANDS Connor to his knees. Another shot -- Connor tries to block. He fails. A perfectly executed roundhouse kick sends Connor flying a distance that would kill a normal human being.

But Connor's up almost immediately. Pained, but still strong. He looks at the Keeper. The two sizing each other up. The Keeper CRACKS his knuckles as they charge at each other --

INT. HYPERION - ANGEL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Angel sits down at his desk, clearly trying to come off as the aggressor.

ANGEL

There are things that are slightly more important to me now than a goodbye kiss from my ex.

NINA

I doubt it. Your list of priorities tends to change depending on who will put up with your constant brooding the longest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGEL

What do you want from me, Nina?
An apology?

NINA

How about a goodbye? Or a hello?
Anything!

ANGEL

(emotionless)
Goodbye. Hello. How are you
doing?

INT. HYPERION ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

The Keeper lifts Connor (one handed!) and SLAMS him to the concrete. It CRACKS!

INT. HYPERION - ANGEL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

She's furious, and he's not much better.

ANGEL

We can talk about this later.

Her mouth opens, but she can't find the words. She spares one last look at Angel and then rips open the door, ready to bolt -

SPIKE

is standing there, a look of menace on his face that we haven't seen for years.

SPIKE

You did what with who?

CRACK! There's a RUMBLE as pieces of concrete rain down into the hall. Angel stands and hurries out of his office. Spike angrily watches, seemingly oblivious to the deafening noise.

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

SKYE

What the hell is that?

Another RUMBLE... more concrete... something SHATTERS! Spike dives and knocks Skye out of the way as --

CONNOR

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

falls into the hall! Weak as hell, bloody and broken.

ANGEL

Connor!

Angel hurries to him. Connor looks at him.

CONNOR

(weak)

Hi, Dad...

ANGEL

(relieved)

Hi.

He takes Connor into his arms and stands. The boy is still very groggy.

WESLEY

Angel, is he alright? Can he walk?

ANGEL

What did this to you?

Connor struggles for words, looks up...

CONNOR

Him.

Everyone looks up where --

THROUGH A HOLE IN THE CEILING

The Keeper watches. Satisfaction evident even through his creepy mask. Finally he steps over the opening and SWOOPS into the lobby --

Where Skye has already POUNCED! She kicks hard against his shoulder-blades, but he doesn't budge! He SMASHES a fist against her face and sends her flying into Spike's arms.

Wesley raises a crossbow.

WESLEY

Angel, get Connor out of here!
We'll handle him!

Angel bolts as Wesley FIRES. The Keeper catches the wooden projectile! Without hesitation he turns and fast-balls the shard at Angel... it impales into his back! Angel falls! Drops Connor!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Wesley tries to reload... The Keeper's upon Connor... He grabs the boy and THROWS him hard -- outside of the Hyperion into broad daylight!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Connor skids across the pavement. A car narrowly DODGES him. CRASHES into a light fixture.

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - SAME TIME

The Keeper takes Wesley and HURLS him at Illyria! Both tumble. He looks at the downed Angel and -- even through the mask -- it's apparent he's gloating.

He glides out of the hotel and into the street.

Angel watches...

INT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Connor tries to get to his feet. His knees shake. The Keeper's marching toward him, menacingly enough to make the Terminator back down.

The Keeper takes Connor by the throat and SQUEEZES. Connor's eyes bulge. He can't fight it. Nothing to do now...

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - SAME TIME

Angel watches as his son is moments from death...

ANGEL

NO!

In an unbelievable showing of strength, Angel leaps out of the Hyperion -- SMASHING through what's left of the front doors --

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

And into and OVER the street! We're in SLOW-MOTION as sunlight BURNS Angel's flesh, charring it black. Still he's moving, fast, fast enough even as this speed to be difficult to see...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His legs catch fire. Angel takes Connor and KICKS off the Keeper, who falls backward -- Angel and Connor fly -- NORMAL SPEED suddenly as they roll through a food-cart outside a diner.

Angel swipes a pitcher of water and puts out the fire. They look on as --

The Keeper is DRILLED by a Ford Escort. He rolls up the windshield and smashes it.

ANGEL

takes Connor by the arm.

ANGEL

We have to go. Right now.

Connor's eyes still watch the Keeper's motionless form as Angel RIPS OPEN a manhole cover and disappears into the sewers, just as --

THE KEEPER

stands, completely unaffected by the totaled car.

The game is on.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SEWER TUNNEL - DAY

Connor is already inside, knee-deep in sewage water. He shifts aside as Angel drops down into the tunnel, closing the man-hole cover as he goes.

ANGEL
Are you hurt?

CONNOR
Besides the cracked bones and
cloak-boy's penchant for tossing
me around like a rag-doll?
(beat)
I'm fine.

Angel looks around.

ANGEL
Can you run?

CONNOR
I can try.

ANGEL
Good enough. We don't have much
time before he --

Angel doesn't finish. There's a SLIDING GRATE as the man-hole opens again. Light spills into the tunnel --

The Keeper looks in, then swoops down, cloak billowing in behind him!

Connor's ready to fight, but Angel stands between him and the Keeper. On the defensive.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Connor, run.

CONNOR
No. You need my help.

ANGEL
I don't. Follow the tunnel as far
as you can --

The Keeper BACKHANDS Angel. He tumbles against the tunnel wall, SHATTERING STONE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Keeper reaches into his cloak and retrieves a gleaming dagger. Brandishes it just long enough for Connor to get a look at it. The Keeper slowly stalks towards Connor, ignoring Angel.

ANGEL (cont'd)
(weak)
Connor, go...

Connor backs away, unsure of whether to listen. The Keeper is very close now.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Connor, RUN!

Angel DIVES at the Keeper, CRASHING into the opposite wall! The sewage corridor RUMBLES. The Keeper, off-balance, tumbles. He clutches the dagger tight and stabs it through Angel's stomach. Angel grimaces.

The Keeper stands. He chokes Angel and LIFTS him off the ground. His feet dangle. Angel struggles, looks at Connor.

And Connor finally gets it. Conflicted, he turns tail and takes off down the tunnel, disappearing from view. The SPLASHING FOOTFALLS are gone.

Angel tries to break the Keeper's grip. Too strong. Finally he DRIVES his leg into the Keeper's gut. The grip loosens and Angel is able to drag himself back, into a backward roll that sends the Keeper flying.

They're both up in an instant. Studying each other.

THE KEEPER
We've had this dance a few times
before, Angel.

ANGEL
I never was never very coordinated
on the dance floor.

Angel attacks! Punches and kicks that get through the Keeper's defenses. Driving him back to the tunnel's entrance.

Angel SWEEPS his leg through, putting the Keeper on his ass. Not wasting a moment, Angel jumps and kicks off a side-wall ladder. His hands find the man-hole cover. With a bit of effort he drags it through the opening and into the tunnel...

Just as the Keeper stands waiting! He punches hard, but Angel uses the cover to deflect the blow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Before another one can come, Angel SWINGS the cover in an arc that would make Barry Bonds jealous. It SMASHES hard into the Keeper's head and SHATTERS into pieces. The Keeper collapses, very much knocked out.

Angel's exhausted.

ANGEL (cont'd)
I'm completely out of puns.
Where's Buffy when you need her?
(turns)
Connor!

And with that, he takes off down the tunnel.

CLOSE - THE KEEPER

Unconscious, but still breathing.

CUT TO:

INT. HYPERION - LOBBY - DAY

WESLEY'S P.O.V.

Hazy. Indistinct. A figure is looking at us... it's getting clearer...

Illyria looks concerned.

ILLYRIA
Are you conscious?

WESLEY
(pained)
That would depend on your
definition of the word.

Wesley sits up. The lobby is empty, save for him and Illyria.

WESLEY (cont'd)
Where are the others?

ILLYRIA
Angel continued the battle in
broad daylight -- a stupid but
necessary move. The half-breeds
disappeared, mentioning a
rendezvous.

There's a SOUND. THUMP. Something in the distance. THUMP
THUMP. Getting closer... and LOUDER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wesley listens.

WESLEY

I'm going to wager a guess and say
that sound wasn't there ten
minutes ago.

ILLYRIA

You are correct.

Wesley moves to the window. THUMP THUMP THUMP. Very close
now. Wesley looks through the window --

WESLEY'S P.O.V. - EXT. STREET

The Keeper flies up through the open man-hole. Kitridge waits
for him. They share a word, then look to see something in
the distance...

An ARMY! Two hundred fully grown DEMONS with razor-claws,
fangs, etc. The works. Ready to kill anything in their path.

BACK TO SCENE

as Wesley looks on, mouth agape.

Illyria follows his gaze through the window.

ILLYRIA (cont'd)

Another battle looms and we
haven't yet completed a cycle of
sun. Your group begins to
interest me.

Wesley takes her hand and leads her to the back exit.

WESLEY

Come on. We'll live to fight
another day... or in a few hours.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The army stands in the empty street. Whatever cleared the
place out, it worked. The Keeper and Kitridge look at each
other.

THE KEEPER

You're sure they'll head there to
protect the boy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITRIDGE

Of course. In the last year, Angel has fallen back onto Taylor and his forces a ridiculous amount of times. It's gotten repetitive, really.

THE KEEPER

So it's the army of Wolfram & Hart against an entire task force of trained killers.

(beat)

Should be interesting.

CUT TO:

INT. U.T.F. - MAIN HALL - DUSK

A KNOCK at the door. A low-level RECRUIT drops his issue of *Entertainment Weekly*. He walks to the door and slides open the port-hole. Looks out and seems satisfied. He pulls the door open --

Angel and Connor walk in. Both disheveled. Looking at the recruit.

ANGEL

Where's Taylor? We have to talk to him.

RECRUIT

We've been expecting you for the last hour. You move pretty slow, vamp-man. The boss is waiting for you in his office.

*
*

Angel forces a smile. He and Connor start down the hall as the door slams shut.

CONNOR

"Vamp-man"? A new comic book hero is born.

INT. U.T.F. - TAYLOR'S OFFICE

Angel and Connor are let in by the recruit. Spike and Skye are sitting there, both with a few nasty bruises. Nina's next to them. Wesley and Illyria stand to the side. But the center of attention? TAYLOR, at his desk, and SONIA at his side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angel looks as the recruit exits.

ANGEL

You always take 'em straight from the cradle? Lots of new blood around here.

TAYLOR

You think I've been sitting on my ass moping since the old crew packed up and shipped out? Hell, no. I've been on a recruiting drive.

Sonia takes one look at the bruised Connor and throws her arms around him.

SONIA

Connor! Are you alright?

CONNOR

Yeah, thanks to him.

He smiles at Angel. Angel and Taylor continue to look at each other.

TAYLOR

That's not what I heard, kid. Current gossip is you broke out of the local jailhouse -- from the isolation hall at that. Pretty impressive.

(off Connor's look)

Don't worry. We're not going to send you back.

Taylor stands.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

What interests me is the fact that, even though you took out two of their guards and put 'em in the ICU, not a single uniformed cop is out looking for you.

He moves forward and looks both Angel and Connor in the eye.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Either of you feel like telling me why that is?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPIKE

That'd be because junior wasn't an official guest of the state.

SONIA

So what was he doing there? Who put him there?

ANGEL

Who else? Wolfram & Hart.

TAYLOR

That's the shock of the century.

ANGEL

Oh wait, 'cuz there's more -- The Keeper is personally after Connor. And he's stronger than he's ever been. The cuts and bruises sported by a few well-tested champions all come from one man.

WESLEY

And he's not alone. He's leading some kind of task force.

They all look at Wesley.

WESLEY (cont'd)

I saw them, as did Illyria. There's a force of demons under the Keeper's command. I would assume their purpose is to retake Connor.

*

Taylor approaches Angel. Only a foot apart.

TAYLOR

By coming here, did you just put me in the middle of your little blood-feud with Wolfram & Hart?

ANGEL

No. But I am asking you to help me fight it.

TAYLOR

With that? Look around, Angel. You're standing in a deserted bunker. Everyone in this building that's not standing in this room is a kid fresh off the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SONIA

Taylor --

TAYLOR

You fight a good fight, Angel, I know that. But I'm not sacrificing these kids. If there's a battle, it'll be a slaughter. And you know that.

*
*
*
*
*

ANGEL

You don't always fight to win.

*

TAYLOR

Not exactly helping your case, big guy.

*
*

ANGEL

Then how's this? Somehow, Connor is instrumental to whatever Wolfram & Hart wants to unleash on this world. Apocalypse, Hell on Earth... whatever you want to call it. And if you don't want it to come to pass, you'll help me.

TAYLOR

So what do I say to those kids when they look at what Wolfram & Hart's throwing at us and start pissing their pants at the thought of dying?

ANGEL

Everybody dies, Taylor. Men, women, and children. And if this thing comes to pass, it's gonna take 'em all out. Just like that. At least give your men the chance to die fighting it.

Taylor sighs. Giving Angel just enough time to look at the team. All thoroughly exhausted. He glances at Spike -- who still doesn't look pleased.

TAYLOR

So you're asking us to die so that the world stays *exactly the same*? No brand new flowers or happy puppies? Just keeps circling the drain until something worse comes along?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANGEL
(beat)
Yes.

Taylor thinks.

CUT TO:

INT. U.T.F. - WAITING ROOM - LATER

Spike takes a Budweiser from the fridge. Pops it open and guzzles down half the bottle. Angel sits at a table, tapping his fingers.

SPIKE
So, where's Connor?

ANGEL
With Sonia. I don't really want to think about what they're doing.

SPIKE
(smirks)
Yeah. Lots of that going around. Ex-flames getting back together and such. Not telling anyone about it.

ANGEL
Something on your mind, Spike?

SPIKE
Nothing much. Just got the Cliff notes of your pleasant chat with Nina.

ANGEL
And?

SPIKE
And you didn't have any bloody right to get with Buffy.

Spike paces the room, nursing his bottle.

ANGEL
I didn't "get" with Buffy. It happened and it's over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE

Oh, it happened. It happened and you're not even smart enough to take advantage of it. That's the difference between us, Liam. If it was me -- if Buffy had genuinely cared about me -- I would've been out that door in a heart beat following her back to Cleveland.

ANGEL

Really? In case you hadn't noticed, you've got a girl right here who actually cares about you.

Spike doesn't even seem to notice the comment.

SPIKE

How? How did you do it? Tell her to sod off and go back to the daily grind?

ANGEL

Connor.

SPIKE

So? The kid can take care of himself.

ANGEL

Maybe.

SPIKE

So why didn't you go?!? You were offered the one thing both of us damn well wanted and you turned it down.

Angel sighs. Thinks.

ANGEL

Because, Spike... I love Buffy. I love her more than you'll ever imagine and I'd give up my life for her without a second thought.

(beat)

But I love Connor a hell of a lot more.

Spike looks at him. Not sure if he should be furious or impressed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPIKE

Guess I just don't have that
luxury.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Just outside of the waiting room.

Skye stands there, out of sight, but hearing every word.
Tears streak down her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. U.T.F. - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

ILLYRIA'S P.O.V. - THE STARS

Looking up at the billions of shining pinpoints in the sky.
Each its own beacon.

ILLYRIA

watches with strange satisfaction, almost as though she's
counting them all.

There are FOOTSTEPS. Wesley pushes open the rooftop doorway.
A breeze catches his hair.

WESLEY

No decision has been made, but I
doubt Taylor will have any choice
but to help...

She doesn't respond. He catches her gaze. Wesley looks at
the stars.

WESLEY (cont'd)

I'd call them beautiful, but I
realize you probably consider them
terrible omens of a bloody death
in the near future.

ILLYRIA

Do not presume to know my
thoughts. I've always found them
to be magnificent.

WESLEY

Finally something Man and God-
alike can agree on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILLYRIA

Perhaps. Many of them have
vanished since the days in which I
controlled this world.

WESLEY

Stars die, as all things
eventually do.

She looks at him.

ILLYRIA

My favorite among them remains.

She indicates a burning red star on the horizon, shining in
the midnight sky.

ILLYRIA (cont'd)

I was separated once from my
kingdom. Lost to a war I had no
interest in fighting. But this
star -- which I called *Kazenban*,
The Way -- returned me to those
who needed my guidance.

WESLEY

It is indeed striking.

ILLYRIA

Now it burns to the point of
death, and will soon be unable to
offer solace.

WESLEY

It's the way of everything,
Illyria. Nothing survives for
eternity.

She doesn't seem to hear him.

ILLYRIA

I often wonder if the stars choose
to die -- if they choose to escape
the sky and move into the beyond.

WESLEY

The beyond, I'm at liberty to say,
is also quite striking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Illyria continues watching the burning red star -- and then closes her eyes, as though sleeping peacefully.

CUT TO:

Kazenban, bright as ever... PANNING DOWN to find --

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET, OUTSIDE U.T.F. BUILDING - NIGHT

The Keeper and his army. Marching. Three hundred feet from the entrance into the U.T.F. building.

The Keeper casually strides at the head of the battle-mass. Kitridge follows. The building looms ahead, looking like a fortified tower.

KITRIDGE

So what's the plan, "boss"?

The Keeper's stare would be deadly if we could see his eyes.

INT. U.T.F. - MAIN HALL - SAME TIME

The recruit looks through the port-hole. He looks back at Taylor, who's no more than a foot away.

RECRUIT

They're here.

Taylor nods with grim resolve. He turns to find Sonia. She's a little shaken -- clearly terrified. Clearly determined.

SONIA

What's the plan of action?

TAYLOR

Mount up and prepare for the long haul.

Sonia nods. Turns -- Taylor takes her by the arm and stops her.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Sonia, I know you have something to prove with Connor. But if that cloaked son of a bitch walks through the door, you wait for my help to take him out. Got it?

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA

Got it.

Sonia turns away. She looks -- and from a distance, sees Connor, mixed in with a couple of troops. They lock eyes. Both terrified for each other. *

Connor cracks half a smile, nods. Sonia forces herself to do the same and resumes position with Taylor, who stands before his "army" -- twenty GRUNTS scattered in the hall. Mixed with the ranks, the rest of our heroes: Angel, Spike, Illyria, Wesley, Nina, and Skye. All ready for action. The grunts hold rifles and wield blades. *

Taylor paces a bit.

TAYLOR

This is it, and I know most of you are green. You've only been here a few weeks and already you're being put up to fight the biggest fight most of us will ever see.

We can HEAR the SOUNDS outside -- MARCHING. Steadily forward. Intimidating as all hell. Knees and rifles shake.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

But you know what's standing outside that door? It ain't a group of demons, I'll tell you that. It's destiny. She looks at us and she spits in our faces and she expects us to back down.

Taylor approaches the door. He cocks his rifle.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

And you know what I say to destiny? What I've said the last thirty years of my life? No matter what happens -- no matter how bad the odds get -- it's always the same thing.

(beat)

Bring it on.

ANGLE - THE TROOPS

More confident, less terrified. Spike looks at Taylor admirably.

SPIKE

Good speech.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TAYLOR

releases the door lock!

EXT. U.T.F. BUILDING - SAME TIME

The Keeper stands in front of the door. HEAVY BREATHING echoes through the mask. He places a hand flat upon the steel door. He cocks his head, then looks behind him. Motions for a DEMONIC BEAST to step forward.

And the Beast happily complies.

INT. U.T.F. - MAIN HALL - SAME TIME

The grunts aim their weapons. Angel looks at Connor, clearly terrified for his child.

ANGEL

Connor, no matter what happens you stay next to me. Got it?

CONNOR

For once in my life I don't feel like arguing.

His throat catches. There's HOWLING and GRUNTING from just outside -- beasts ready to tear flesh.

EXT. U.T.F. BUILDING - SAME TIME

The Keeper resumes position with his troops. Holds up a hand and they HALT.

The Beast lurches near the door. Drool hangs down from its fangs. Almost like it's mimicking the Keeper's earlier move, it places both hands flat upon the door. But this time it SINKS razor sharp claws into the steel!

It heaves, pulls... and RIPS the door free! Sends it flying --

But not before a BARRAGE of gunfire tears the demon to shreds! The Keeper's army CHARGES through the remains, ignoring the green gore, assaulted on all fronts by deadly ammunition. They push and struggle through the door.

THE KEEPER

hangs back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KEEPER
This is where the fun begins.

INT. U.T.F. - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

The Demons PUSH INTO the hall. Taylor's grunts unleash impressive fire considering their positions. A few dive head-first into action -- CUTTING, SLICING, taking any chunks they can out of the demons. Macabre is an understatement here.

ANGEL

holds Connor back with one hand.

ANGEL
We hang back.

CONNOR
They're outnumbered five-to-one!
They need our help!

ANGEL
We're no good to them if we're
bloody chunks on the floor. We
only make our move when we have
to.

Connor watches the carnage, clearly torn.

ILLYRIA

is having no such crisis. She PUNCHES a fist through a demon's head. Chunks fly. When each demon falls another takes its place.

ILLYRIA
(to Demon)
I am enjoying this game, though
your plan of attack is clearly
weak.

THE DEMON LEAPS forward, clearly protesting -- Illyria takes its head and YANKS it free, decapitating the villain in mid-flight.

She smiles.

SONIA AND TAYLOR

are having a grand old time, fighting back-to-back. She sports wrist blades and slices anything that gets close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He uses a pump-action shotgun to EXPLODE a few heads. *Evil Dead*, eat your heart out.

THE OTHERS are holding their ground. Spike and Skye do well together, though their eyes don't meet. Nina gets off a lucky shot with a pistol and takes out an advancing demon. The forces are holding out.

Another BEAST BATTALION charges in. Now it's 10-to-1. These may be kids, but they're resilient. A DEMON TEARS a chunk out of a SOLDIER'S neck -- but the soldier pulls free a grenade pin on his belt. Two... One...

BOOM! The EXPLOSION takes out more than a few monsters.

THE KEEPER

strides in through the open (and now half-destroyed) doorway. It's almost like time stops. Everyone looks at him. In an impossibly quick move, he rips a rifle away from a GRUNT and FIRES into his chest.

TAYLOR

Tate!

Taylor charges the Keeper! He knocks the rifle away. Brings the butt of his weapon down hard on the Keeper's neck.

Sonia sees. She slices her way through another demon. Manages to get to Taylor's side. They double-team the Keeper! He does well to dodge their blows. Back-hands Sonia away. She hits the wall hard. Taylor doesn't slow his attack.

Sonia rises, a little groggy. The Keeper sees -- Taylor charges at him -- The Keeper reaches and swipes free one of Sonia's wrist blades --

Taylor's momentum seals the deal. The eight-inch blade impales him through the chest. He and the Keeper stare eye-to-eye, Taylor defiant to the last.

SONIA

NOOO!!!

Taylor slumps just as Sonia charges, more ferocious than ever. Blade against blade.

SONIA (cont'd)

You bastard!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGEL AND CONNOR

look on, Angel holding his son back while still amputating choice body parts from approaching demons.

CONNOR

Let go of me!

ANGEL

No.

Connor elbows Angel! Breaks his grip and runs to Sonia's aid!

ANGEL (cont'd)

Connor!

But he doesn't listen. Connor charges at the Keeper and nails him hard in the gut. The Keeper falls back.

Angel rushes to his son. He's held back by the swarm of demons, though Taylor's forces are clearly gaining the advantage...

Connor and the Keeper duel! It's one-on-one, fist to fist. They both show and impressive display of athleticism. When one gains the advantage, the other manages to break it. Sonia rushes behind the Keeper -- he SMASHES his boot across her face and sends her flying.

ANGEL

is still coming. He's only ten feet away now... but a demon CHARGES into his gut and sends Angel to the ground!

THE KEEPER

uppercuts Connor! Connor flails, like a sail without wind. He feebly attempts to punch... The Keeper catches his arm. Then his other hand. The pulls the boy close, almost close enough to kiss.

SOUND DROWNS AWAY. Angel gets to his feet and kicks a row of demons away --

The Keeper yanks Connor closer and spins the boy around --

Angel rushes forward, desperately trying to reach them in time, but there's a blockade in the form of two 600-lb. demons with massive claws on both arms. They lash out at Angel --

The Keeper takes Connor by the neck. Doesn't move. He pauses for a beat, and it's almost as though we've STOPPED.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Nothing moves. The Keeper looks at Angel, who charges through both demons without pause. Connor spots his father, dazed --

ANGEL (cont'd)
(echo)
Coonnnnnnoooooorrrrrr!!!!

CRACK. In a sickening motion, the Keeper BREAKS Connor's neck. The boy falls, still falling, almost as though an eternity of time passes. Finally he hits the ground, head first.

Completely motionless. Quite dead.

The Keeper just looks at Angel -- at the shell of a broken man.

*

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. U.T.F. - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

The aftermath.

Three hundred bodies lay dead or dying. Human and demon *
alike. Five grunts are left standing. Victorious. *

Spike kneels down and strikes a match on the helm of a
decapitated head. Lights a cigarette and enjoys the drag.

SPIKE

Well, that was certainly a night
on the town.

Wesley cleans a blood stain off his pistol. Illyria is next
to him.

WESLEY

(monotone)

Oh yes, it was loads of fun.
Makes me sad I missed out on it
the last time everyone played this
game. *

Sonia cradles Taylor's body. She looks lost, confused -- *
streaked tears that have solidified on her cheeks. Like a *
lost little girl who's lost both of her parents. *

SONIA *

C... Connor... Where's Connor? *

ILLYRIA

I've not seen them since the
outbreak of battle.

The cigarette drops from Spike's mouth.

SPIKE

You don't think they're -- ?

WESLEY

Check the bodies for Connor!

Panicked, they all get searching. Sonia can't even manage to *
stand. *

CUT TO:

EXT. U.T.F. BUILDING - PRE-DAWN

The first hints of dawn peak over the horizon. Nina is slumped against the wall at the base of a hill. Crying. Lost. Entirely unsure of her place in this entire mess.

VOICE

I'd comfort you, but I don't think you'd like it.

She looks up. Kitridge is there, the most wicked of smiles on his face.

NINA

(deadly)

What do you want?

KITRIDGE

Why the tears? Your side won, or did you miss the nightly news? Minus one or two black hawks down, of course.

NINA

Coward. You didn't even fight.

KITRIDGE

It's not my place in things. I hang back and let the others do the dirty work. Swing swords, move corpses... those kind of things. Speaking of which, where's your boyfriend?

(beat)

Well, boyfriend's son. These days, it's all the same.

NINA

What?

KITRIDGE

Think about it. It'll dawn on you soon enough.

He kneels down and looks her in the eye. Her face goes cold -- frozen. Stunned. He takes her arms.

KITRIDGE (cont'd)

I wanted to give you my thanks. Without you, this whole glorious operation wouldn't have been possible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He terms her arms and looks at the scars Wesley noted earlier.

KITRIDGE (cont'd)
Of course, it took a little
convincing. And some *Sodium*
Pentathol. But in the end, it all
worked out okay.

He lets go of her arms. They slump, almost lifelessly. Tears
streak down Nina's cheeks.

KITRIDGE (cont'd)
Thanks a million, babe. I'll call
you.

He stands, that grin still stretched across his face. But he
doesn't see

ANGEL

standing behind him. Motionless. Cold. Kitridge turns --

There's a FLASH OF SILVER. A blade streaks through the air.
It cuts through Kitridge's throat. At first he doesn't react,
almost as if he's just looking at Angel. But then his hands
feel his throat. Blood trickles through his fingers as he
gasps for air.

And Kitridge dies. He just falls backward and rolls down the
hill, a second thought to nobody.

Nina only now seems to see Angel, though he's had his eyes on
her the whole time.

NINA
Angel, he said I... he said I...

ANGEL
I know. I heard him.

He offers a hand and lifts her to her feet.

NINA
Sodium... Sodium... That means I
told him, when he had me I told
him --

She looks at him for comfort. Doesn't get it. There's a long
moment of silence... Angel's hand LASHES OUT and takes Nina
by the throat! Almost like a machine he forced her against
the remains of the wall, choking the life out of her.

Nina struggles for breath. Fights with all her strength.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NINA (cont'd)
What... what could I have done?
What could I have done?!

ANGEL
(calm)
You could've told us you had a
visit from Kitridge. Or you
could've just died!

And with that he chokes with both hands. Nina GASPS... then
nothing... her eyes start to roll...

WESLEY (O.S)
Angel, drop her.

Angel doesn't look as Wesley approached, wooden stake ready to
strike.

ANGEL
Stay out of this, Wesley. It's
not your concern.

WESLEY
But it is. The minute you harm an
innocent person, it's my concern.

ANGEL
She's not innocent!

WESLEY
Yes she is, and you know it. She
had no control over what happened.
No control over an event she
didn't know occurred.

ANGEL
I don't care.

Wesley draws closer. His voice is calm, like a father
speaking to his son.

WESLEY
Please, Angel. Would Connor have
wanted this?

And with this Wesley has unleashed the deadliest blow of all.
Angel's eyes open. Wide with realization. Slowly, painfully,
he releases Nina. She slumps, GASPING like a madman, neck
bruised to all hell, but she's alive.

ANGEL
Connor... Connor...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Angel looks at Wesley. And then he just cries. He slumps to his knees, and releases all of his anguish.

Wesley kneels and places an arm on Angel's shoulder. Finally he leans in close and hugs him.

SPIKE

walks out of the building. Followed by Illyria and Skye. They watch as Angel can't control his grief.

Angel collapses completely.

MANNERS (V.O.)

Ah, what a glorious day it was.
Don't you just love a story with a
happy ending?

CUT TO:

INT. WOLFRAM & HART - MANNERS' OFFICE - DAY

The Keeper stands in the center of the room. Manners circles around him, hands clasped together as though they've just finished clapping.

MANNERS

Of course, the story's not
finished yet, but I'd say we're
well on our way to writing "The End"
with a smile on our faces.

He moves closer.

MANNERS (cont'd)

It's a difficult thing, bringing
someone back. Especially with a
soul and, shall we say, extra
abilities. You've given us what
we need -- what you need -- and I
thank you for that. Just this
once, I think you might've lived
up to your potential.

Manners is even closer now. If he were to breathe right now, the breath would show on the Keeper's mask.

MANNERS (cont'd)

Of course, there's no rest for the
wicked.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANNERS (cont'd)

And we still have to put pen to paper on that final chapter. But for now, I can say I'm satisfied that we've finally found a decent storyteller to finish the tale.

Manners reaches out and takes the Keeper's mask. Slowly, almost cautiously, he pulls it free. Still pulling...

MANNERS (cont'd)

It's a new millennium, and everything that's old is new again. Every restoration has an improvement here and there. And who can expect a better touch-up than the Keeper of the Black Thorn?

He pulls the mask free. We can't quite see the face yet...

MANNERS (cont'd)

Wouldn't you agree, Mr. McDonald?

LINDSEY has no trouble smiling.

LINDSEY

Absolutely, sir.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SHOW