

THE BLEED

"PILOT"

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SUPERNATURAL defines events that are beyond human understanding.
Now and forever.

PARANORMAL describes events that are beyond human understanding.
Until science proves otherwise.

OVER BLACK: MOANS. Ethereal, like pained whale calls. They grow louder as we...

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST ROAD - THE BLEED - DAY

The MOANS echo from crimson clouds churning beneath a violet sky. It intensifies into a tortured WAIL, then fades into silence.

Below the haunting marriage between sky and sound emerge skeletal trees, bone-white and bone-like. They stand sentinel beside...

A STOP SIGN

... entangled in the forest's twisted limbs. Unnatural, unsettling.

The silence is cut by the GROWL of an approaching car engine. A suspicious van -- the kind preferred by people that are up to no good or flat broke -- darts passed the sign.

INT. VAN - THE BLEED - SAME TIME

The cabin RATTLES; it's a bumpy ride.

LILITH Iverson, 30's, soft features laced with small scars -- reminders of a hard life survived through relentless determination -- bounces in the rear seat. Her stare burns a hole into...

A .40 CALIBER HANDGUN

... Resting on the lap of STEVIE, 30's, handsome if he weren't such an asshole, riding in the front passenger seat. Stevie notices her.

STEVIE

We got a problem?

Lilith's eyes meet his, defiant. Stevie dismisses her with a snort.

EXT. ABANDONED BASEBALL FIELD - THE BLEED - DAY

Ashen fog steams from the tar-black earth. Two imposing MEN stand beside an SUV parked on the outfield.

The men watch as the van approaches from the opposite end of the field. Their weary hands rest on holstered pistols as the van parks some distance away.

INT. VAN - THE BLEED - SAME TIME

BEN, 20's, face tattoos, seen some shit, puts the van in park.

LILITH
Where are we?

STEVIE
Relax.

LILITH
Relax?

STEVIE
Yeah. Relax.

LILITH
I'll relax when I get what I was promised.

STEVIE
Jesus. Are you still upset about the kid? Forget about her already.

LILITH
I want my documents! A new passport, a new birth certificate, payment. Everything.

STEVIE
Daniel'll sort you out once the trade's done and we're outta this shit hole.

LILITH
Once the trade's done? You're closing the deal out here? Now?

STEVIE
You think we were going to do it over coffee or something? Thought you were some kinda genius, lady. Hand it over.

Lilith reaches beside her and carefully hands Stevie a POLISHED STEEL CASE, the size and weight of a shoebox. As Stevie exits the vehicle, Ben leans toward Lilith.

BEN
 (assuringly)
 This'll be fast. Don't worry.

Ben exits the vehicle. Lilith watches them cross the baseball field, toward the imposing men.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)
 Daddy?

Lilith startles. She tries to locate the source of the voice.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)
 Daddy, where are you?

Lilith peers through the passenger side window and spots...

LILITH'S POV: A LITTLE GIRL, 6-years-old in a tattered floral dress. Dirty and alone. Standing at the grotesque tree line.

LILITH

Recognizes the child. She cracks open the door, urgently waves the child over. Lilith mouths the words: "*Come! Here!*"

The little girl responds with a blank stare before retreating into the shadowed forest.

LILITH
 (to herself)
 Damn it!

Lilith checks through the windshield to see...

BEN AND STEVIE

... in deep negotiation with the imposing men. Lilith carefully pushes open the van door.

EXT. THE BASEBALL FIELD - THE BLEED - SAME TIME

Ben and Stevie are too busy to notice Lilith climb out of the van. She disappears into the woods in pursuit of the girl.

EXT. THE WOODS - THE BLEED - DAY

Lilith trudges over bramble and brush. Head low.

LILITH
 (strained whisper)
 Little girl! It's not safe here!

RUSTLING up ahead. Lilith stops.

LILITH
Little girl?

Lilith's eyes track something approaching from ahead. As it nears, Lilith's eyes widen. She trembles at the sight of...

SHADOW (O.S.)
HHHELP...YOUUU...

A SHADOW CREATURE

...A sentient silhouette, vaguely human, lurching toward her.

Lilith shuts her eyes, tears forming at the corners. It's all she can do.

INK BLACK TENDRILS, thick and barbed, reach for her face.

SHADOW (O.S.)
DDDISAPPEARRR

A caress before the appendages slowly envelope her.

FADE TO TITLE:

THE BLEED

CUT TO:

INT. CORPORATE RESTROOM - DAY

Gentle WEEPING from one of the few bathroom stalls. The weeping fades to a sniffle. Then silence.

The stall door opens and out walks Lilith in business casuals. She wipes away the tears.

SUPER: 24 Hours Earlier. Boston, Massachusetts

Lilith walks to the bathroom mirror, removes her wedding ring and places it beside the faucet. She rinses her face, wipes away her sorrows. She looks up, glares at her reflection.

ALISIA (V.O.)
It's been difficult but we feel
confident in our progress.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A darkened room save for the blue-white glow of a flat screen television.

ALISIA, 30's, born and bred for the board room, commands the room with a sanitized smile. A RESOURCE MAP beams from the screen behind her.

ALISIA

As you can see, we've found several deposits of whisper-root and gray-soil. Both deposits are within distance of Geitz Solution's transportation routes in and out of The Bleed.

Lilith sits at the conference table, quietly fidgeting between YES MEN. She glances at the woman Alisia is addressing: OLIVIA GEITZ, 50's, sage-like, emanating an aura of authority from the head of the table.

ALISIA

I'm going to hand things off to my colleague, Dr. Lilith Iverson, who can speak to you about her work with the etherstone trials.

Lilith flinches, swallows back her dread as she rises from her seat. Her left leg CREAKS beneath her khakis. -- A *prosthetic*.

LILITH

Hi, everyone. I'm Dr. Lilith Iverson, head of Geochemistry Research and Pharmacological Development. I don't have any slides to show you but I do have an update regarding our work with etherstone.

Olivia leans forward in her seat, her eagerness makes Lilith all the more uncomfortable.

LILITH

So, um, I only had nine grams of pure etherstone to work with, which isn't much but enough to synthesize several doses to conduct three trials. I did make progress with one of the trials.

OLIVIA

What sort of progress, doctor?

INT. TESTING ROOM - ONE WEEK AGO

A COLLEGE AGED WOMAN sits at a table at the center of the antiseptic room. Blindfolded.

LILITH (V.O.)

Well, Emma... I mean, the subject, was a 22 year old female. She struggled with homelessness, a poor family life. She was a good test case to gauge etherstone's effects on probability successfulness.

Lilith sits across from her, shuffling three identical cups. Upturned to cover what's beneath them. -- A game of "Find the Queen".

LILITH (V.O.)

I began the trial by establishing Emma's -- I mean the subject's baseline. Her results were below average, as expected.

Lilith removes the blindfold from the woman's eyes. The woman takes a moment to inspect the cups. She makes her choice, revealing nothing.

LILITH (V.O.)

I then administered a three milligram tablet of synthetic etherstone.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER: The woman drops a tablet, indistinguishable from a Tylenol, on her tongue. Lilith hands her a cup of water, watches as the woman swallows the dose.

LILITH (V.O.)

After an hour, we resumed testing.

CUT TO:

A NEW TEST: The woman is once again blindfolded. Lilith removes the blindfold, presents her with a sea of upturned cups -- dozens and dozens -- spanning the table.

LILITH (V.O.)

She showed a 78% increase in probability correctness.

The woman surveys the dozens of identical cups, confidently makes her selection. Lilith removes the cup, revealing a --

VIBRANT PURPLE BALL

The test subject turns to Lilith, elated.

COLLEGED AGE WOMAN
It's working, right? I'm luckier!

Lilith forces a smile.

LILITH (V.O.)
Then I put her into observation.
Taking the standard precautions.

CUT TO:

AN OBSERVING ROOM: Lilith stands in front of a one-way mirror, watching.

ON THE OTHER SIDE

Is the young woman, restrained in a polished steel chair.
Smiling to herself.

LILITH (V.O.)
After twenty minutes, she had a
reaction.

The woman's smile fades, her eyes lock onto something in the room with her. Something only she can see.

COLLEGE AGED WOMAN
Stay away! Stay away!
(to the mirror)
Help! Doctor Iverson, help!

The woman starts SLAMMING her head against the back of the chair. Over and over...

Lilith bursts in. It's too late. The woman is slumped in her seat, head soaked in blood. Lifeless.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - PRESENT

The memory has left Lilith drained, unable to look at the rest of the attendees.

LILITH
It was the worst reaction yet.

The attendees are unfazed.

YES MAN 1

But results did improve, correct?
The etherstone made her luckier?

LILITH

Yes. That's correct.

OLIVIA

By how much?

LILITH

Seven minutes, fourteen seconds.

Olivia is not impressed. Alisia notices, she sits taller in her seat, puts on her most optimistic smile.

ALISIA

But we did make progress, Olivia.
I'm sure Doctor Iverson can get
better results with time -- she is
our resident mad scientist after
all.

"Mad scientist", the moniker makes Lilith wince.

OLIVIA

Oh? Then what can I do to help you,
Doctor Iverson? Help you "work your
magic", so to speak.

LILITH

Find more etherstone.

The room grows uneasy. Olivia remains stoic.

OLIVIA

Thank you, ladies. I'm afraid I'm
going to have to cut this short.

Olivia rises from her seat, she's the tallest in the room.

ALISIA

Would you like me to email you the
rest of our report?

OLIVIA

That's alright, Alisia. Thanks.

Olivia brushes passed Alisia without a second look. Lilith steps aside, Olivia locks eyes.

OLIVIA

Doctor Iverson.

Olivia exits with her tail of yes-men.

ALISIA

"Find more etherstone." You actually said that. Why didn't you ask for a unicorn, too?

LILITH

It's the truth! How am I going to replicate etherstone's effects without the ability to analyze real material? It's just not working, Alisia. Scarcity issue aside, I'm close to saying its impossible for us to sustain etherstone's effect on probability without people dying.

Alisia jumps out of her seat, shuts the door.

ALISIA

Are you crazy? She's in the next room!

LILITH

I'm sorry. I'm just burnt out.

ALISIA

You couldn't just lie? You said yourself you're making progress. Massage the data.

Lilith responds with a pleading look.

ALISIA

It would get you out of here sooner. I know you want to move on. It's all over your face.

LILITH

The more I do this, the more I think --

ALISIA

Please don't bring up the shade theory again. There's zero proof the subjects are seeing ghosts or shadow-men or leprechauns or whatever.

LILITH

No. I think the more I do this, the more I need a raise.

ALISIA
Are you serious?

LILITH
The work you're having me do is
really affecting me, Alisia.

ALISIA
"Having" you do? This all started
with your research. Where's all
your money going anyway?

LILITH
Jonah's physical therapy, his meds.
We can barely make rent. And Ty got
into a really good school but the
tuition is just so high. We're
trying to save but... there's just
so much.

Lilith retreats into herself. Alisia takes note.

ALISIA
I'll see what I can do. But I need
your help, too. Okay? Take another
look at the trials. Be a little
more generous with the results.

Lilith swallows her pride, nods.

EXT. BARLOWE ESTATES - DAY

Lackluster garden apartments. Gray sky over rock-salt-stained
concrete.

A POLICE CAR

Parked by the parking lot entrance. The OFFICER inside
plays on his cellphone. A wheelchair accessible van rolls
passed, tucks itself into a handicapped spot.

EXT. HANDICAP VAN - SECONDS LATER

The engine cuts, Lilith climbs out of the driver's seat.
She rounds to the side of the van and slides open the door.

Inside is JONAH IVERSON, 30's, thin, confined to a
wheelchair, perpetually simmering with anger at the world.

The two are silent as Lilith presses a button on the van. A
wheelchair lift lowers, easing Jonah to the ground.