

...IMMORTALITY CRISIS...

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SUICIDE HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS STRUGGLING WITH THEIR OWN TRAUMAS
TAKE CALLS IN AN ALTERNATIVE 2018 WHERE PEOPLE CAN'T STAY DEAD.

THEY DISAPPEAR AND RETURN... IN ABOUT 2 TO 4 MINUTES.

JEN	Asian-American, level-headed, a little edgy, sometimes regressive.	Mid 20's	Female
RAJIV	South Asian-American, cocky, obnoxious, never apologizes.	20's/30's	Male
LAUREN	Open Ethnicity, overworked, irritable.	Mid 40's	Female
ERIC	African or Latino American, shy, sweet-natured.	18	Male
REPORTER (O.S.)	Prodding	Adult	M / F

CALLS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

RICHARD	Angry, manic	40's/50's	Male
ELI	Irate, sad	22	Male
B.J.	Bratty	Teen	Male
LEANNA	Traumatized	14	Female
SELENA	Hopeless, drunk	40's	Female
AUTOMATED RECORDING	Calm, robotic	Adult	M / F
911 OPERATOR/ #2/ #3	Patronizing	Adult	M / F
SAMUEL	Manic	30's/40's	Male
DYLAN	Fey, high, sweet, manic	20's	Male
TONI	Faint	20's	Male

AUTHOR'S NOTE: It is highly preferable that the callers are not entirely seen, but creative measures can be taken to have the caller's presence on stage (behind a scrim, etc).

Actors are expected to take on multiple roles as different callers and the Reporter.

PROLOGUE

LIGHTS UP ON:

AN UNRECOGNIZABLE ROOM.

A LARGE SPLATTER OF WET BLOOD AND BRAIN OOZES FROM THE MIDDLE OF A WALL DOWN TO THE FLOOR, TOUCHING SOME PIECES OF HUMAN SCALP. THE FLOOR IS SOAKED IN BLOOD IN A STRANGE PATTERN THAT SUGGESTS A BODY HAD BEEN LYING THERE BEFORE. A FULL SET OF MEN'S CLOTHING WITH BOOTS IS SCATTERED ON THE FLOOR IN AN ODD WAY ALONG THE PATTERN. IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE AN UNSTUFFED SCARECROW WAS TOSSED TO THE FLOOR. A BLOODIED GUN LIES ON THE GROUND. A SMART PHONE SITS NEARBY, IT'S ON.

A CLEAN, HEALTHY, NAKED MAN, RICHARD FACES THE BLOODIED AREA, FOOTSTEPS AWAY, SCREAMING:

RICHARD

STOP DOING THIS TO ME!!! STOP!!!
STOP!! PLEASE!! PLEASE!!! GOD!!!
STOP!!!

ERIC (O.S)

Richard - Richard - you called us - you
want to talk - Richard - I'm here - Richard -
please - listen - Richard - I'm here -

HE MARCHES TO THE AREA, STANDS IN THE STRANGE PATTERN ON THE FLOOR, HE PICKS UP THE GUN AND PUTS THE GUN IN HIS MOUTH. WE SEE THAT THE BACK OF HIS HEAD IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE SPLATTER ON THE WALL, AND HE PULLS THE TRIGGER.

AS WE HEAR THE SHOT - THE STAGE IS CONCEALED IN A DRAMATIC AND DELIBERATE FASHION

[It's important that any possible creative staging take place to ensure the actor is not seen walking up and leaving.]

IN THE DARKNESS WE HEAR A
MONTAGE OF DIFFERENT VOICES:

VOICES

Nobody cares that I'm killing myself.
Lots of people kill themselves now.
I wake up and I kill myself.
I just wanted to see.
I have control of it.
I do it cleanly, I don't make a mess.
I wouldn't do it while I'm driving.
I wake up and kill myself everyday.
I only kill myself on the weekends.
I just kill myself when I'm stressed.
I can still function afterward.
Its fine.
I hate it. I hate it.
I killed myself at work.
I wish I could stop.
I don't want this.
Nobody knows.
I don't know how to stop.

CROSS FADE TO:

THE HOTLINE CENTER BREAKROOM (THE PAST)

[The staging or lighting should be different than how the Breakroom will be seen for the rest of the show.]

In the corner is LAUREN, working at her cluttered Program Director Desk. The hotline doesn't have funding for her own office. We watch her work for a few moments until RAJIV quietly enters behind her.

He carefully puts his arms through a t-shirt. The shirt is soaked in blood from the neckline down.

RAJIV

Lauren?

LAUREN

Rajiv, I don't want to hear another dirty joke.

RAJIV

Lauren.

Lauren turns and immediately registers the blood. Rajiv breaks down.

RAJIV

I just killed myself. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I won't do it again. I'm sorry.

He pulls a small, bloody switch-knife out of his pants pocket and drops it as Lauren rushes to hold him.

LAUREN

Oh, Raj....

CROSS FADE TO:

Dim lighting shows A CHAIR WITH A LAVALIER WIRELESS MIC facing the audience. LAUREN clips on the mic and sits.

LIGHTS GO HOT ON LAUREN.

We are in the middle of her TV INTERVIEW. She is noticeably distraught and defensive, but trying to keep her public relations composure while answering a question.

LAUREN

...I can tell you our job has gotten harder since humanity suddenly became Immortal at the start of the Millennium. For years, you guys covered the wave of Death Experimentation, but I haven't seen nearly as much effort chronicling the endless number of Serial Suicide Addicts we have trying to live their lives in 2018 today.

REPORTER (O.S.)

(deflecting her attack)

And those are the calls you are receiving at your hotline now? Traumatized Suiciders?

LAUREN

Yes. They think they're solving their internal emotional and physical problems by killing themselves, but they just come back with a new shell of body, and everything is entirely the same inside. It's just a hard truth to accept. Alcoholics call their sponsors, and the Serial Suiciders call us.

REPORTER (O.S.)

And you run a volunteer staff?

LAUREN

Our overhead costs are funded by the state, and some federal dollars, but that doesn't cover the staff. So, yes. We have highly trained volunteers. But we are expected to maintain a certain number of calls in order to qualify for funding and we have been struggling to do that without *enough* volunteers. So, if any of your viewers understand the disastrous affects of suicide and care about people who live their lives killing themselves over and over again everyday, then please volunteer with us.

REPORTER (O.S.)

A local online paper reported that your staff has succumbed to Serial Suicide in the past. Is that why you have so many vacancies now?

Lauren takes a breath, there's no denying this, so stall.

LAUREN

Like I said, the job is different now. It's harder. I started here as a volunteer twenty-five years ago. We don't deal with life and death anymore. Now we're a suicide hotline that deals with the difference between a caller *LIVING THEIR LIFE* or *SUFFERING FOREVER*. It's clearly a much bigger job, and yes, we have lost volunteers over time in large part because the job has become so difficult.

REPORTER (O.S.)

And volunteers who ended up mimicking their callers?

LAUREN

Look, we were all affected by the explosion of Suicide Experimentation in our culture. This has been happening everywhere. But I can assure you that we don't let that happen at our office and this is a supported space.

CROSS FADE TO:

ACT I

SCENE ONE

A SOLITARY HOTLINE COUNSELOR BOOTH.

This is a simple desk facing the audience with an office phone, computer keyboard & mouse, posted flyers for referrals and a large L.E.D. TIMER that is visible to the audience and the counselors. A computer screen can be implied.

Sitting in the office chair behind the desk facing us is, RAJIV, on the phone. We watch as he waits for his caller to respond, WHILE PLAYING WITH HIS KNIFE.

Rajiv speaks the way you would expect an empathetic, kind counselor would, no matter what. But he plays with his knife throughout.

WE HEAR 22-YEAR OLD, ELI SOBBING.

RAJIV

(gently)

Oh, hi... Hi, my name is Rajiv. What's your name?

HE STILL SOBS.

RAJIV (CONT)

I'm really glad that you called. I need you to take a breath, okay?

STILL SOBBING.

RAJIV

Try to take a breath, okay? Can you try to do that?

WE HEAR HIM TRY. THE SOBBING SUBSIDES.

RAJIV

Okay, good. What's your name?

ELI (O.S.)

Eli.

RAJIV

Hi, Eli. You sound so sad. Did you do something to hurt yourself?

ELI (O.S.)

(sobbing)

I just killed myself!

RAJIV

(staying calm)

Okay. I'm so sorry. Where are you right now?

ELI (O.S.)

At home.

RAJIV

Is anybody there with you?

ELI (O.S.)

No.

RAJIV

How did you kill yourself, Eli?

ELI (O.S.)

I - I hung myself - listen, man - I just called cause my social worker - this is pointless.

RAJIV

What did you hang yourself with, Eli?

ELI (O.S.)

A belt. The same fucking belt I always use - it's right here - staring at me.

RAJIV

Have you gotten dressed yet, Eli?

ELI (O.S.)

No - why?! I'm gonna kill myself again, what does it matter?!

RAJIV

Can you just put something on while we're talking?

ELI (O.S.)

Jesus! What the fuck is this? What is your name?! Rajiv? You too sensitive?

RAJIV

No, Eli. I don't want you to be

RAJIV

Cold.

ELI (O.S.)

It's fine. Fine. Alright.

WE HEAR HIM SHUFFLING. THEN SOBBING.

ELI (O.S.)

What the hell is wrong with me?? I hate this so much. I'm gonna do this to myself again. The panic when the belt - my body - I struggle like an insect when you squeeze it.

(beat)

You don't have a fucking clue do you?

RAJIV

I can't imagine what *you're* going through, Eli.

ELI (O.S.)

Fucking privileged, aren't you, Rajiv?! You got to live your whole life *through*. You people think you just die and come back like, "its no big deal".

Rajiv stays intentionally silent to let him vent.

ELI (O.S.)

You think my life is just a fucking movie like - like, "Groundhog Day". You don't understand the pain I feel.

RAJIV

I wanna understand, Eli.

Silence. Then carefully -

RAJIV

The one with Bill Murray?

ELI (O.S.)

(condescending)

Yes, Rajiv, *that* old-ass movie! Kills himself *eight* times like it's nothing!!

(beat)

Is that how *rape* works? Huh?! “No big deal”?? No. You can “*come back*” - but you’re not the same - you’re whole life you carry that with you.

(beat, sobbing)

I’ve done this over 14 times now!! I can’t fucking stop! I can’t! I’m so weak - I keep doing this to myself over and over! I’m a pathetic insect.

RAJIV

Eli, you *died*. It’s unimaginable trauma. Humans were never suppose to experience this and *live*. It’s not your fault it keeps happening again.

ELI (O.S.)

Of course it is! And there’s nothing I can do about it.

RAJIV

You’ve been dealing with this on your own. You need more support - that’s why it’s good you reached out.

ELI (O.S.)

I’ve called before.

RAJIV

That’s okay. This doesn’t just go away with one phone call.

Rajiv spins his knife against his fingers.

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE TWO

ERIC and JEN sit in folding chairs back to back.

Eric has a SURGICAL MASK HANGING FROM A BELT LOOP. He wears it for the entirety of the show.

Next to Eric's feet is a large L.E.D. TIMER at 0:00.

A beat. Then Jen slumps in her chair.

JEN

Okay, I'm dead.

ERIC

So, I start the timer, Jen?

Eric hits a button on the timer and the seconds move quickly, clocking each minute that will pass.

JEN

Yup. We should expect to hear back from her in around 2 to 4 minutes. But we don't know exactly when her body dies and disappears. It's best to just turn the timer on. It's happened that a counselor forgets. And when the caller's body reappears, and is back on the phone sooner than expected, it can be a scare.

ERIC

Right.

JEN

This is just a single death, so 911 isn't called yet.

ERIC

(asking/stating)

But 911 will be called after the fifth death.

Jen sits back up.

JEN

Just help your caller talk about their trauma. That's all they need. And it'll be fine.

(beat)

Don't even worry about the police. They're useless bat-shit idiots that stopped giving a fuck a long time ago.

ERIC

Yeah.

JEN

After talking to a 911 operator I won't judge you if *you* end up killing yourself.

He nods, trying to understand.

JEN

Just, don't make a mess.

Eric can't tell if she's kidding or not.

He and the audience watch as the digital timer speeds through the seconds.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE THREE

ANOTHER SOLITARY HOTLINE COUNSELOR BOOTH. It has all of the same elements, but things are placed slightly differently.

At the desk is LAUREN. She has a memorable mug that she sips from through her calls. Lauren speaks the way you would expect an empathetic, kind counselor would, no matter what.

She is on the phone with B.J., a teenage voice.

LAUREN

Hi, B.J. Are you having thoughts of suicide?

B.J. (O.S.)

Yeah...

LAUREN

Mmhm, have you had these thoughts for the past two months?

B.J. (O.S.)

My whole life...

LAUREN

Oh, wow. I'm so sorry to hear that.

B.J. (O.S.)

Everything sucks. What's the point, ya know?

LAUREN

Have you ever done anything to hurt yourself?

B.J. (O.S.)

Umm, no...

LAUREN

Okay. I'm glad to hear that. B.J., do you have a plan on how you might kill yourself?

B.J. (O.S.)

I'm gonna O.D.

Lauren stays calm.

LAUREN

Ok, B.J. Do you know what you would use?

B.J. (O.S.)

I'm gonna O.D. on gummy bears.

LAUREN

B.J., I'm sorry - did you say gummy bears?

B.J. (O.S.)

Yeah. Which color do you think would work best???

We hear QUIET LAUGHTER on the phone from B.J. and his OTHER TEENAGE FRIEND, annoying Lauren.

LAUREN

(playing along)

You're going to eat gummy bears? Are you going to try to make yourself sick?

B.J. (O.S.)

Do you think gummy *worms* would be better? I would choke on those easier.

MORE LAUGHTER.

LAUREN

I could transfer you to Poison Control, B.J.

B.J. (O.S.)

But I want to talk to *you*!!! You're gonna save me from killing myself!!! EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T ACTUALLY FUCKING DIE!!! Do you people get paid for this???

Are you guys all out-of-work funeral-home employees???

Beat.

LAUREN

This is volunteer work, B.J.

B.J. (O.S.)

(laughs)

THAT'S EVEN WORSE!! I love it when you say "B.J." by the way. Maybe you could choke on my gummy -

Lauren immediately hangs up the phone in disgust.

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE FOUR

THE HOTLINE CENTER BREAKROOM.

There's carpeting, a L-shaped sectional sofa, or maybe two separate ones, a coffee-table full of newspapers and magazines. It feels somewhat "home-y". But the lighting is pretty fluorescent, and the window blinds are all closed.

There is a large circular table with a random assortment of office chairs, folding chairs, etc. On the walls are different congratulatory plaques for the suicide hotline clinic and posters from fund-raisers from years past.

In the corner is Lauren's cluttered Program Director Desk.

There is a small kitchen with a microwave, faucet, watercooler, fridge, cabinets, etc. Probably left-over grocery pastry boxes on the counter.

JEN is in her usual spot on the sofa with her feet up on the coffee-table, reading a magazine. Her eyes rarely leave the pages through the scene.

ERIC is at the table reading through A LARGE RED 3-RING BINDER that reads: "TRAINEE HANDBOOK". He still has the SURGICAL MASK hanging from his belt loop, and he will for the rest of the show.

RAJIV walks in, after taking the call we saw, and goes to the fridge. He gets out a 2-liter of Pepsi and pulls out a solo cup from a cabinet to pour himself a drink.

He stares at the silence in the room as he drinks, then lets out a very loud, obnoxious -

RAJIV

(re: the drink)

AHHHHHHH!

This gets Eric's attention.

RAJIV

So, you think you'll keep this shift?

ERIC

Oh. Um, yeah. Everybody seems pretty cool and it works for my schedule.

RAJIV

Everybody!? Are you *including*, Jen???

Rajiv motions to the sofa, in Jen's clear-view. Jen squints at him and ignores this game.

ERIC

What? Ha, yeah. She was my trainee-buddy.

RAJIV

Are they still letting her do that?

Jen smiles at Rajiv's expected sarcastic behavior while turning a magazine page.

RAJIV

Oh man. How many calls have you taken so far? If Jen trained you, most of your callers are gonna die - *horribly*. At the beginning of the call, just tell them Jen trained you and save yourself any effort. They'll understand.

ERIC

Oh, are you Rajiv?

Jen smiles again and turns another page.

RAJIV

Yesss. Don't you remember when I kindly introduced myself?

ERIC

Oh, um, I don't think we met yet.

JEN

That was the Tuesday guy, Raj. Today is Thursday.

ERIC

I'm Eric.

RAJIV

Hey, "Thursday guy, Eric".

JEN

Be nice.

RAJIV

I'm being very nice. I'm introducing myself.

ERIC

Actually, I already knew your name - already.

RAJIV

Yeah, how'd that happen??

JEN

(mocking)

Yeah, how'd that happen?

RAJIV

I take it your trainee-buddy had very nice things to say about me.

JEN

You don't have to answer that, Eric.

ERIC

Um -

RAJIV

(re: Eric's surgical mask)
You worried about Bird Flu??

ERIC

Am I what?

RAJIV

Isn't that a surgical mask? Should you be wearing it?

ERIC

Oh. Um. Yeah. I mean, no. That's - yeah, its a surgical mask, but no - I don't.

RAJIV

So just some weird fashion shit I don't know about. Did you know that was a thing, Jen?

JEN

(reading magazine)

What's a thing?

ERIC

It's not a thing.

RAJIV

People wear surgical accessories.

ERIC

It's not a fashion thing.

JEN

Like that cowboy fad?!

RAJIV

You remember the cowboy fad, Eric?

ERIC

I don't know.

RAJIV

Jen, did you notice he has a surgical mask?

JEN

Yeah.

RAJIV

And you never said anything?!!

JEN

(shrugs, still reading)

Yeah.

RAJIV

But.....!!!

(beside himself)

Eric, people probably ask you about the surgical mask, right?!

ERIC

Uh, yeah. I don't wanna talk about it.

Rajiv ignores Eric's response.

RAJIV

Okay - but people usually ask you about it, right?

Jen ends the interrogation.

JEN

He just said yes, Raj. And I didn't want to be another annoying person asking him.

This sentiment almost makes Eric blush.

Thanks, Jen. ERIC

You're welcome. JEN

Thanks. ERIC

Rajiv turns to each of them, utterly confounded. But just before he says another word, he quickly decides to just take his solo cup to the kitchen and pour himself another Pepsi. He sips - and realizes -

So, you wanna be a *nurse* or someth'n?? RAJIV

Eric tries to look harder into the Trainee Handbook.

I don't know. I don't want to talk about it. ERIC

So, *maybe* you do?? RAJIV

Uhhhh, yeah. Maybe. ERIC

(repeating suspiciously)
"Maybe..." RAJIV

(beat)
How often do you carry that with you?

Eric sighs from frustration.

Everyday. So - yeah - I - I carry it with me. ERIC

I can't tell if you want to. RAJIV

JEN

(disgusted by the magazine page)

Ahh! The Bachelor's spray tan! Is so fake! This season is lame.

LAUREN walks in, to her desk, after her call.

LAUREN

Wasted my time with some damn sex callers! Little brats.

ERIC

What happened?

JEN

Those guys suck.

LAUREN

He wanted to be called "B.J." and choke on gummy worms.

RAJIV

Gummy worms???

ERIC

(carefully)

Oh, is that a euphemism for something??

RAJIV

I don't know!

(to Lauren)

Is it???

LAUREN

Just two teenagers. No, it's not a "thing". They said they were gonna O.D. on gummies.

JEN

That's not even funny! Google a better prank!

RAJIV

Did you tell them to at least try it???

LAUREN

No, I tried to transfer them to Poison Control.

Jen, slightly energized, gets up to leave. (To take a call.)

JEN

Ha! *That's* funny, Lauren!

Jen exits as Lauren goes to her busy desk.

LAUREN

I'm tired of wasting my time with those calls. I've got plenty else I need to be doing. Right! Eric! So glad to have you on the team.

Lauren takes out a remote to turn on a L.E.D. SCREEN on the wall. It reads: 2,786.

LAUREN

This is the number of remaining calls we need to take this quarter in order for the hotline to stay afloat. I don't want to pressure you, I just want you to know each one of your calls makes a huge difference.

ERIC

Uh. Oh. Okay. Great.

Lauren focuses on her paperwork, emails, etc.

LAUREN

Once you start taking calls, I'm sure those numbers are going to just fly through.

ERIC

Uh, yeah!

Rajiv

My caller was a dick too. He said that Groundhog Day was an "*old*" movie.

ERIC

It's not *that* old.

RAJIV

Riiiiight?!!! Thank you. You're coming around Thursday Eric!

BLACKOUT.

SCENE FIVE

A HOTLINE BOOTH. Eric is immensely panicked. The L.E.D. TIMER IS PAST 1:00 and the seconds are ticking fast to 2:00 minutes.

We watch the clock tick with Eric in silence. He's practically sweating.

Around 20 seconds after 2 minutes WE HEAR THE CALLER IN THE DISTANCE, since the phone has fallen to the ground after just killing himself.

The caller slowly realizes he has reappeared, naked -

RICHARD (O.S.)

(in shock)
WHAT????? NO. NO! NOOOO!

ERIC

(loudly into the phone)
Can you hear me, Richard??? Richard??
You called a suicide hotline. Can you talk to me?!

We hear A GUN PICKED UP OFF THE FLOOR.

RICHARD (O.S.)

I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE!!

ERIC

Richard, can you pick up the phone??

We hear the GUN COCK.

RICHARD (O.S.)

I'M SUPPOSE TO DIE!!

ERIC

Richard - Lets talk - Lets talk about -

(sincerely)
I'm suppose to die.

GUN SHOT. THE SOUND OF THE GUN AND BODY HIT THE FLOOR.

Eric sighs and RESETS THE CLOCK BACK TO 0:00 MINUTES. He tries to breath slowly. He's flooded with emotion as we watch the clock tick.

ERIC

(quietly to self)

Dammit... Dammit... Dammit...

(beat)

Talk to me, man - come on.

(breath, slower)

Just pick up the phone. Please. Talk to me.

(breath)

As the clock ticks toward 2:00 minutes we wait with Eric. The actor ad-libs his character's frustrations while trying to prepare himself for the next reappearance.

ERIC

Come on, man.

(breath)

Just pick up the phone.

(breath)

Just pick up - just pick up.

(Note - Each reappearance timing should change every show to startle the actor, anytime after 2 min)

Richard reappears - WE HEAR HIM SCREAMING IN THE DISTANCE AGAIN.

RICHARD (O.S.)

NOOOO! NO! NO! LET ME DIE!
LET ME DIE! I don't want to be here - I
don't want to be here - I *CAN'T* BE
HERE! STOP DOING THIS TO ME!!!
STOP!!! STOP!! PLEASE!! PLEASE!!!
GOD!!! STOP!!!

ERIC

(loudly into phone)
Richard - Richard - you called us - you
want to talk - Richard - I'm here - Richard -
please - listen - Richard - I'm here -

GUN COCKS AND FIRES. GUN AND BODY ARE
HEARD HITTING THE FLOOR

ERIC

Shit! Dammit! Shit! Shit!

Eric RESETS THE CLOCK BACK TO 0:00 and the seconds tick up again.

ANOTHER BOOTH APPEARS WITH JEN SIMULTANEOUSLY ON THE PHONE.

JEN
He says his name is Richard, but the
caller ID reads David
(trying to pronounce)
Kostenko?

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
(annoyed)
Yeah, spell it.

JEN
K-O-S-T-E-N-K-O. He says Richard,
but that might be his middle name.
That's all we have. David Kostenko and
the zip.

911 OPERATOR
And you're sure he's a Serial Looper?
Cuz, I'm not sending any of our guys to
pick up some Casual Suicider. How
many times has he died today?

JEN
Since he's gotten on the phone it's been
four. We're not expecting him to stop.

911 OPERATOR
Four?! Okay, you guys are kinda push'n
it. I've got Suicide Addicts we don't
know about till their thirtieth death of
the day. And you want us to rush over
for some guy that's on his fourth?!

JEN
It's our policy to call you after five. You
can do whatever you want. We believe
it's the humane thing to do.

911 OPERATOR
Oh, Sure! Maybe I could have the
officer take him to a barbershop and
treat him to a cut. Seeing as how a
Serial Suicider wouldn't mind if we take
a little more off the top than usual.
(laughs)

ERIC

(panicked to himself)
Richard! Please! Jesus!

(breath)

Come on. You gotta get tired - you gotta
stop this.

(beat)

Shit, Richard. Please, man.

(begging)

Listen to me.

(begging)

Just pick the phone up.

(beat)

Dammit, Richard. Please.

(begging)

Just pick up the phone. Pick up the
phone.

JEN
Great.

911 OPERATOR
I'm kidding, we'll be real gentle,
wouldn't want to hurt him or anything.
(laughs)
And do we know what type of gun is it?

JEN
No, he didn't bother to stop shooting
himself to let us know the make and
model of his weapon.

911 OPERATOR
Not a Chatty Cathy, huh? He called just
to show off his aim I guess. What do
you guys do? Just cheer him on as he
keeps going??

JEN
We try to get him talking.

911 OPERATOR
Well, I'm sure he'll have *plenty* to say
once he runs out of ammo. Something
like, "hey, have you got any more
bullets?!"
(laughs)
Ya know, its been tak'n longer for
neighbors to get annoyed with all the
gunfire. Usually don't get a call till the
Serial Looper gets sloppy, starts skip'n
bullets off their heads into other people's
apartments.
(laughs)

JEN
Fantastic. The zip on the caller ID is
nine, zero, zero, four, six.

911 OPERATOR
Okay, well – enjoy the fireworks while
they're still pop'n.

ERIC (CONT.)

Stop this shit and pick up the phone.

Just slow down. Please slow down.
Pick up the phone.

(breath)

Jesus.

(beat)

Okay, come on man.

(planning)

You're gonna stop. You're gonna hear
me out.

(more confident)

You're gonna stop. You're gonna hear
me out.

(beat)

We're gonna sit-tight, get through this,
and get you to start talking.

(beat)

Come on man - come on man.

JEN'S BOOTH FADES OUT leaving Eric's booth alone again as we wait the remaining seconds for Richard to reappear sometime after 2:00 minutes.

RICHARD (O.S.)

(sobbing)
No - no - no! NO! GOD!! NOOO!!!
GOD, STOP!!!

(sobbing)
Stop, please. I don't want to be here. I
don't want to be here.

(gun in his mouth)
I can't. I can't. I can't. I can't. I can't. I
can't. I can't -

ERIC

(pleading)
RICHARD - RICHARD - LISTEN -
CAN YOU HEAR ME?!

(suddenly improvising)
I'M God! I'm God, Richard! *RICHARD*,
THIS IS GOD! Can you hear me,
Richard? I'm *here!* God *loves* you!
You're in so much pain -

GUN COCKS AND FIRES. BODY AND GUN ARE
HEARD HITING THE FLOOR.

Eric is left utterly distraught. LAUREN rushes in.

She RESETS THE TIMER.

ERIC

I don't know - I don't - maybe, I'm not - I
couldn't -

LAUREN

We're just going to have Jen finish up this
call. Why don't we go talk -

ERIC

I just - he kept -

ERIC

Jesus, the blood -

LAUREN

Eric, it's normal.

She carefully leads them back to the BREAK-ROOM.

LAUREN

Terrible. Yes.

ERIC

He kept going, Lauren.

ERIC

He kept -

LAUREN

Well, that's why we have the training.

THE BREAK-ROOM. RAJIV awaits their return. THE
TIMER IS STILL SEEN TICKING.

RAJIV

Still wanna get those community service hours??

ERIC

Yeah, I dunno -

LAUREN

Rajiv.

ERIC

Blood - piling on top of itself. His whole house!

RAJIV

That's what the cleaning crews are for. Maybe you should just volunteer at a pet store.

LAUREN

It was just your first Serial Looper, Eric.

ERIC

His place is a mess because of *me*.

RAJIV

Well, the moms and dads supporting their families by cleaning up the gory deaths others will thank *you* for being a helpful member of the suicide economy! Maybe a *soup kitchen*?

LAUREN

(gently)

Shut up, Raj.

(beat, to Eric)

If you *didn't* feel this way there'd be something wrong with you.

RAJIV

(re: him and Lauren)

Yeah! *We're* terrible people!

Without a beat -

LAUREN

Clearly, Rajiv is worse.

Rajiv smiles.

THE LIGHTS GO SLIGHTLY UP ON JEN'S BOOTH.
WE HEAR RICHARD RETURN WITH A SCREAM IN
THE BACKGROUND and see Jen trying to talk to him
on the phone.

ERIC

You've been doing this for years already!

RAJIV

Okay, well, I'm not crazy enough to be here as long as Lauren - she can win that round.

LAUREN

(defeated)

Yes I can.

(beat)

That's how a Serial Suicider call goes, Eric.

WE HEAR RICHARD SHOOT HIMSELF AGAIN.
Jen resets the timer. She's bored, types, checks phone.

RAJIV

And we'll give you MORE! We're gonna give you SOO many of these!!

Rajiv laughs hard.

ERIC

(mumbles to himself)

I can't do a pet store, I'm allergic to cats.

LAUREN

He's actually trying to help.

RAJIV

Am I????

(beat)

What was his name?

ERIC

Richard.

LAUREN

Be helpful, Rajiv...

RAJIV

(sighs)

By the time another Richard, or Rick, or Rich, or Dick, or Daniel, or Denise comes along - you won't remember one from the other. You'll just remember being annoyed at how many times you had to reset the timer.

ERIC

How many does it take to - you know -

RAJIV

Become a terrible person that

RAJIV

doesn't give a shit?

ERIC

Become more *desensitized* from it. How many have you had?

RAJIV

The Serial Suiciders? A lot. It just is what it is.

ERIC

(thinking to himself)

Useless. A hundred hours at a *soup kitchen*??

LAUREN

If you can accept that that man was just trying to cope with his pain, it will be easier. People can kill themselves right away, or they choose alcohol, they OD on something - *whatever* it is that eventually kills them - people are just trying to cope. And so they end up killing themselves all over again.

ERIC

But I couldn't help.

LAUREN

You can't do much when people have hope. Hope that it was going to help - and make him feel *good* - and *take away* his pain. Your job is to be on the phone in that *one moment* when someone like that can *lose* so much hope and believe *nothing* they can do will help - then your caller can *let go*, and start to hear another voice. *Your* voice.

RAJIV

Alcoholics keep drinking, Sex addicts keep fucking, and the Serial Suiciders keep killing themselves. Wash, rinse, repeat. Hope in the reps. Over and over and over and over.

Rajiv gives Lauren a small look of shame.

LAUREN

Why don't you take a break from calls for a little, Eric. Okay? A *little* break. It's normal at the beginning. Just come in, and you don't have to take calls. Then you'll get back in the swing of it. I'm sure you'll get back in the swing of it.

(trying to hide her desperation)

We need you, okay?

ERIC

Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

RAJIV

(mocking)

Yeah, Eric, *take a break*.

(beat)

I don't know why people even bother with guns anymore. That's just lazy.

Lauren gives Rajiv a knowing look.

WE FOCUS ON JEN'S BOOTH AS RICHARD RETURNS.

RICHARD (O.S.)

Why can't it stop?! Why can't I stop?!

JEN

Richard, can you hear me? Richard, I'm so sorry.

RICHARD (O.S.)

I wanna stop. I wanna stop. I wanna stop.

JEN

What's going on, Richard? You seem so overwhelmed.

RICHARD (O.S.)

I have -

QUICK BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP:

BREAK-ROOM. Minutes later. Eric is still upset. Lauren is at her desk working, Rajiv is on his phone. Jen walks in to sit at her sofa-with-magazine spot.

JEN

Okay, all set. He got a pay cut at work and he's worried about his girlfriend's job - it's the first of the month - he'll be fine.

RAJIV

Can we order now?

ERIC

So you talked to him?! He's okay?!

RAJIV

Dude, he's fine, I'm starving. We waited for Jen. Pick something!

ERIC

What?

No one seems upset about Richard, so -

ERIC

Oh. What's everyone getting?

RAJIV

We're doing the Vietnamese place - cuz they're fast.

JEN

They're really good.

RAJIV

Eh. What do you want???

ERIC

Um, is there a menu?

JEN

Top right drawer.

(reading to no one in particular)

Oh my God, they're gonna to do a Housewives of Seattle!

Lauren laughs.

RAJIV

What are they gonna do each episode? Just bitch about Starbucks?

LAUREN

They'll pull each other's hair out for a giftcard.

Eric goes to a KITCHEN DRAWER ON THE RIGHT, opens it and considers for a moment...

ERIC

(quietly)

Umm.... I just see plastic forks?

JEN

(still reading her magazine)

Left of the sink. Next to the plastic knives. Looks like most of them are married to the Seahawks.

Eric opens the CORRECT DRAWER AND PULLS OUT A HUGE STACK OF TO-GO MENUS. He gets easily overwhelmed and confused with the number of Asian-themed restaurants.

LAUREN

Don't they already have some NFL wives show?

ERIC

(quietly)

So...which....place - are we -

Rajiv gets up, grabs the stack of menus from Eric, looks through, and pulls out the VIETNAMESE MENU.

RAJIV

Here.

JEN

Army Wives, I think.

LAUREN

(confirming)

But that was a *drama*, wasn't it? That wasn't real.

Eric looks through the menu, unsure of himself. Rajiv is staring him down, losing patience.

ERIC

Um....

JEN

Yeah, not reality. Yeah. I think.

ERIC

Is a... is there anything that's popular?

EVERYONE

Clay Pot Curry Vegetables

RAJIV

With shrimp.

ERIC

Okay, I'll get that.

(reading)

With, um...chicken.

Rajiv dials the phone.

RAJIV

Ugh, you're so boring.

SCENE SIX

THE BREAKROOM. RAJIV is in the kitchen, finishing a snack. LAUREN is working. ERIC is looking through the bookcase.

ERIC

Third shelf?

Eric pulls out a 3 RING BINDER THAT READS:
COUNTY REFERRALS.

LAUREN

Yes, up there. But we're not expecting you to memorize them.

ERIC

Yeah, I know. I just wanted to look again. Before I start again.

As Rajiv pours himself another Pepsi, Eric's surgical mask accidentally falls off his belt loop on the walk back to the table. Lauren is clicking at her computer and doesn't notice.

Eric sits at the table. Rajiv notices the mask on the ground, picks it up, goes to Eric, and instead of handing it to him, he playfully cups the mask over Eric's face.

RAJIV

Doctor...

Eric almost bursts into tears.

ERIC

(crying)

Nooo.

Rajiv quickly pulls the mask away in confusion and Eric rushes out of the room, having a panic attack?

LAUREN

(to Rajiv)

What did you do?!

RAJIV

I was just - fuck -

Lauren and Rajiv freeze in shock.

LAUREN

Should we - has he gone to the restroom? Maybe you should -

Eric reappears, more composed.

LAUREN

Eric?

ERIC

I'm okay. I'm okay. I just, uh, went to -

RAJIV

I didn't -

RAJIV

Shit.

ERIC

It's okay.

Rajiv carefully hands Eric back his mask as Lauren goes to get Eric water.

RAJIV

So, the mask... is *bad*??

ERIC

Uhhhh, I'm fine.

LAUREN

We don't think you're fine.

She hands him the water.

ERIC

Oh, thanks! I am. Let's forget it. Thanks. Thanks for the water.

LAUREN

Eric, you can tell us. If you want.

Eric finishes a sip.

ERIC

Yeah - no - there's not - I'm good now. Thanks.

Lauren gives Eric another look over, then goes back to her desk and calmly says -

LAUREN

Okay.

RAJIV

Wait. What?! What just happened???

ERIC

Um - it's okay - not your fault.

RAJIV

Yeah, *I* know I didn't do anything! I mean - whatever *that* was - wasn't cuz of *me*.

LAUREN

He doesn't want to go into it right now, Raj.

JEN enters from her manic cutter call.

RAJIV

He doesn't want to talk about the ominous heirloom he carries with him at all times that just caused him to have a minor breakdown???

Jen has no idea what is going on. Lauren realizes Rajiv brings up a good point, but -

LAUREN

That's what I'm saying, yes.

SCENE SEVEN

A HOTLINE BOOTH. JEN speaks the way you would expect an empathetic, kind counselor would, no matter what. She is on the phone with 14 year-old -

LEANNA (O.S.)

Some people say that you become a walking angel.

JEN

That's not true, Leanna. You don't get any super powers. You can't fly.

LEANNA (O.S.)

But maybe you're holier - cleaner - when you come back. You lose your tattoos, your scars.

JEN

Do you have any tattoos, Leanna?

LEANNA (O.S.)

No, my parents would kill me.

(shamefully)

But I've got scars. On my legs. My thighs. Where I've cut. A lot. A lot. They're little ones and thick ones. A lot. I hate them. I can't -

(starting to cry)

I have to find a bathing suit - I don't want anyone to see. If I just - if I kill myself - I'll reset. I won't have to worry about them. I can be better.

JEN

How do you know you won't cut again, Leanna? After?

LEANNA (O.S.)

I just won't. Maybe I'll come back and won't want to anymore.

JEN

That isn't how it works, Leanna. You lose the scars -

(hard to say)

But you're still you.

(beat)

You want some help, right Leanna?

LEANNA (O.S.)

I just - I don't know what to do anymore.

JEN

You figured out how to do *this*, Leanna. You never called *before*, right? So, you're doing something new right now. There are *other* new options to get the support you need, Leanna. Options that you just don't know about yet.

LEANNA (O.S.)

Like killing myself.

JEN

(sincerely)

Yes, Leanna, that's an option. But you didn't choose that first. You called *us* first. And now *we're* talking -

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE EIGHT

BREAK-ROOM.

ERIC

Um - it's okay - not your fault.

RAJIV

Yeah, *I* know I didn't do anything! I mean - whatever *that* was - wasn't cuz of *me*.

LAUREN

He doesn't want to go into it right now, Raj.

JEN enters from her manic cutter call.

RAJIV

He doesn't want to talk about the ominous heirloom he carries with him at all times that just caused him to have a minor breakdown???

Jen has no idea what is going on. Lauren realizes Rajiv brings up a good point, but -

LAUREN

That's what I'm saying, yes.

Rajiv looks to Jen for support, but she clearly sides with Lauren, since she's the boss.

RAJIV

Forget it. I'm taking a call. I'll talk to somebody that wants to talk to me.

Rajiv leaves in a huff. Lauren is too busy at her desk to care. Eric tries to act casual. HE ABSENT-MINDLESSLY CLOSSES THE BINDER WITH HIS MASK INSIDE IT.

ERIC

(to Jen)

How'd it go?

JEN

(reading)

Nobody killed themselves.

Eric tries to continue a conversation.

ERIC

So, uh, what happened on your call?

JEN

Oh. Oh, she was considering to die to lose her scars.

ERIC

Eh. Burns? They have programs for that now. I saw it in the referrals. For serious victims willing to die.

JEN

Yeah, it's an intense screening process. No, she was a manic cutter. So, it was in question whether she could stop when she came back. I think she knew that.

ERIC

Manic cutter??

JEN

Bad. Yeah. Really bad. She wanted to die because she had to go shopping for a new bathing suit.

LAUREN

That's not fun for anybody.

ERIC

Yeah. Shit. I'm sure you were great.

JEN

We just tried to talk about how scars and tattoos are important now. They show someone's *true* history. No resets. No death. You can't get that back. Tattoos aren't just some trendy white privilege bullshit anymore. Now they *mean* something. And the people who are dying, reappearing and getting their tattoos re-done deserve to die again because they're fucking liars. You can't just re-make that shit and act like it's always been there. What's gone is gone.

Lauren takes a breath, and realizes she has to intervene.
Her job never stops.

LAUREN

(carefully)

Jen, you okay?

Eric realizes something is up.

JEN

Yeah. Yeah...

ERIC

What's...? What? Tough Call?

Jen doesn't respond.

LAUREN

Yeah. A tough call I think.

(quietly to Jen)

Should we go tal -

JEN

(defensive)

You can tell him Lauren, it's okay. You're making a big deal about it.

LAUREN

Jen has killed herself.

JEN

Well, it's kinda obvious now - with all the lead up.

Eric is shocked. A suicidal counselor??

JEN

It's okay, Eric.

ERIC

Wow. Shit. Oh. Um -

LAUREN

I'm sorry you're finding out this way, we just can't introduce people -

ERIC
Yeah.

LAUREN
Saying that they've killed themselves.

ERIC
Yeah. Shit. That. Makes sense. Yeah. Shit.

(then carefully to Jen)
Did you...get stuck in a loop???

JEN
I'm lucky. I didn't. I don't know about Rajiv. I mean, without any...weapon...it's harder.

(beat)
I've done it a few times. I've called here even. Long time ago before I started taking calls.

Eric doesn't know what to say.

JEN
Been going to therapy a long time. Being here makes a difference. I mean it's the main reason why I'm here. It's why me *and* Raj are here.

ERIC
(realizing jen's reason)
Oh.
(realizing Rajiv has killed himself too)
Oh!
(realizing this is a clear pattern)
Ohhh.

Long pause. Eric considers how everyone here is coping with something, including him.

LAUREN
Talk about "the red fish".

JEN
Dammit, Lauren!!

LAUREN
You know that talking about your death is important.

A beat. Then -

JEN

(quickly)

First-time-I-killed-myself-was-in-college-and-now-I-have-a-tattoo-of-a-red-fuck'n-fish.

Eric is left totally puzzled and unsure what to do.

ERIC

Okay.

Lauren stays silent for a moment knowing that -

JEN

I was overwhelmed by Freshman year. It's such a common story I hear now I feel like an idiot - college suicide has never been higher. They just have dorm rooms now for Suiciders - since they can't get rid of the kid or don't have enough resources to help. They just try to hide the suicide kids from everybody else.

(beat)

Anyway, I didn't know what I was doing. I was always panicked. The one thing that I *thought* I had to count on was my boyfriend that I *thought* wanted to be with me because I *thought* he followed me from our high school to DePaul because I *thought* he loved me - couldn't be away from me - and I *thought* he wasn't going to break-up with me four weeks into the semester and kill the only lasting connection I felt I had - while my parents were starting their divorce - since I was their last kid to move out of the house.

Eric takes a breath after witnessing Jen's sudden manic-self being revealed.

JEN (CONT)

So, I took my full three-month dose of Ambien and drank more than half a bottle of disgusting Fireball and I died.

(difficult)

I choked on my own vomit. Its - I don't wanna -

(deep breath)

I can't even *describe* to you - what I felt -

(breath)

I'm not going to.

(beat)

Nobody - nobody should go through that.

Long silence.

I traumatized my roommate.

(beat)

She happened to come home right after I did it. She didn't think I was even in the bedroom. She was just unzipping her jeans when I reappeared right in front of her, naked and sobbing to death.

(beat)

I remember feeling so pissed at her for screaming over and over again while I was in so much pain.

(beat)

When the R.A. knocked on the door, Martha just said we were watching shit on Netflix, or something. That's what she told me. I don't even remember the knocking on the door. I couldn't stop crying. I think we probably just went through our own thing - for a couple minutes - separately.

(beat)

She kept her distance from me, she was so scared. She knew what I did, but we didn't know what to do about it.

(beat)

We weren't - we never got along, really - we had always just been fake nice to each other up until that point. I didn't even like her.

(beat)

We both finally calmed down and she felt okay to sit next to me on my bed. I had just wrapped the bedsheet around myself - I hadn't even gotten dressed yet. Everything was quiet for a while. And then I crossed my legs. And I noticed my foot -

(tearing up)

And I saw my scar was gone. On the bottom of my foot. My long scar from broken glass I stepped on in Maui - when we went snorkling - together - as a family - and mom and dad were good - and they weren't mad at me for screwing up the trip - since we had to go to emergency and sit in the waiting room, and deal with my mom's insurance and get my stitches... They were really good then.

(beat)

Anyway, I realized what I'd done. That I killed myself.

And I killed a part of myself that I couldn't get back.

(beat)

I just broke down again. I was sobbing and managed to tell Martha about the trip to Hawaii.

(beat)

Out of the nowhere she just said "we'll get you a tattoo". And that simple idea gave me some hope.

(beat)

So I have the -

Jen takes off her sandal and reveals a large red fish tattoo that goes across the bottom of her foot.

JEN (CONT)

Hawaiian state fish. The Humuhumu-nukunuku-apua'a on my foot. The real fish is actually lots of colors, but - Well, there was so much blood in the water - so yeah - a red fish, *Lauren*.

LAUREN

Mmm-hmm!

Silence in the room. Eric doesn't know what to say. It's a sad situation.

ERIC

How long were you gone for?

JEN

I don't know.

(overcome with grief)

I was the only one there when I did it.

Jen starts to sob. Lauren goes to sit next to her, very calmly, consoling her with her presence.

ERIC

(panicked)

Oh! Jen!

JEN

It's okay.

ERIC

I'm sorry! I -

JEN

It's -

ERIC

That was a dumb thing - I shouldn't have -

LAUREN

It's okay, Eric.

ERIC

I'm sorry.

Jen takes a breath.

JEN

Yeah. I don't - know how long. I think the longest record I've heard is three and a half minutes.

LAUREN

I heard three forty.

Jen lies her head on Lauren's shoulder and puts her feet up on the couch.

JEN

Yeah, that might've been the same one, then.

LAUREN

In Kentucky?

JEN

Oregon.

LAUREN

Huh.

Beat.

JEN

You wanna know what I saw, Eric?

ERIC

Um. Well, yeah - but if - I mean - you don't - remember? Then -

JEN

What do *you* think happens, Eric? Where do *you* think people go?

ERIC

Oh. Oh, I don't know. I have no idea.

JEN

Alien Spaceship??

LAUREN

The past??

JEN

Tahiti??

LAUREN

I like the particle collider theory.

JEN

The what??

ERIC

It's called the Large Hadron Particle Collider. It's the world's largest tube that can recreate - well - on a particle level - similar properties that relate to the big bang.

LAUREN

It's underground in Switzerland. Every time they make a particle explode - a coo-coo bird pops out.

JEN

So, the bodies end up there?

ERIC

Well, the idea is that if this machine can manipulate energy on a particle level - it might also draw all the human energy in the world.

JEN

Huh.

(beat)

Well, I don't remember seeing it.

LAUREN

(sweetly)

Probably because it's pretty dark underground.

JEN

(smiling)

Yeah. That's it.

LAUREN

(hopeful to Jen)

Are you sure you didn't end up on a beach somewhere?

JEN

I'm sure.

ERIC

So -

JEN

So - I don't remember, Eric... Sorry, man.

ERIC

I kinda felt like you were setting me up.

JEN

Good instinct.

(beat)

You don't see anything. You just come back. You don't see a damn thing in between. There is nothing good about dying.

Long pause.

LAUREN

The best one was that you end up on Splash Mountain - right when they take your picture.

ERIC

I saw that! They said this pale old guy wasn't on the ride with them the whole time - only in the picture. And he's not awake.

JEN

That's creepy!

SCENE SEVEN

HOTLINE COUNSELOR BOOTH.

LAUREN is on a call. Her job never stops. She speaks the way you would expect an empathetic, kind counselor would, no matter what. But she has a binder of paperwork in front of her and is getting work done. Re-arranging pages, making notes, checking things off, etc. She is able to balance her attention to the phone when needed.

On the phone with SELENA, a 50-year-old voice, clearly inhibited by alcohol. Lauren is aware throughout that this could be her, but she hides it in her voice.

SELENA (O.S.)

...I have to put my elderly mother in a fuck'n water tank, *Lauren*.

LAUREN

I'm sorry.

SELENA (O.S.)

Do you have to put *your* mother in a God Damn Vegetable Garden???

LAUREN

(deflecting)

I can't imagine what that would be like, Selena. I'm very sorry this is happening.

SELENA (O.S.)

So, no, you don't. You don't have to watch as they shove tubes down her nose and throat and fasten her head to a gurney. At least not yet, anyway.

LAUREN

I'm sorry, Selena. This is something so many people have to go through.

SELENA (O.S.)

I tried for so long to keep this from happening. With zero help. Zero! My brother is a useless pussy piece of shit! He does nothing. Useless. She's got Alzheimer's, okay?! I wipe her own shit sometimes - because she'll forget - I have to wipe my mother's own shit. And where is Nathan??? Who's shit is *he* wiping???

LAUREN

How long have you been looking after your mom now?

SELENA (O.S.)

Just forever! I have nothing. No life. Nothing. I hate her. And it's fucking *mutual*. If she remembers *anything* - she remembers to blame me - for everything.

LAUREN

It sounds like you've been doing the best you can. I'm sorry you've had to do so much on your own.

SELENA (O.S.)

There's no point to... any of it. I know *exactly* where I'm gonna end up. Right next to my mother. RIGHT next to her! They're gonna shave my head and stick me in.

(beat)

There's no hope that we go to some "otherworldly" place when we die. That went to shit eighteen years ago. Now we know *EXACTLY* where we end up. Just an inevitable fucking *FACT*. We *CAN'T* die, we get *OLD*, and we live our pathetic dwindling-human-body-existence stuffed in a Cyro Stasis Tube underground with the rest of our bullshit humanity - as a comatose *HUMAN VEGETABLE!*

(beat)

What is the FUCKING POINT, LAUREN?!! Tell me. *TELL* me. We're both gonna be in one of those tubes! I just have to put my own mother inside one first!

Beat.

LAUREN

Selena, here's what I do know. You've done everything you can for your mom and there's not many good options. It sounds like you're doing the right thing by her.

(beat)

Selena, once she's Planted you will have a whole life ahead of you that *will* be different. And it could be *good*.

Silence. Does Lauren believe this for herself?

SELENA (O.S.)

I want to kill myself so badly!!!!

LAUREN

I know you do. *I know*.

SELENA (O.S.)

I havn't killed myself in months!

LAUREN

When you disappear, what will happen when your mother can't find you?

SELENA (O.S.)

I don't know - she'd freak out - but I'll just come back -

LAUREN

You said she's called 911 before -

LAUREN

Selena, if they find you naked and
incapable of looking after her,

SELENA (O.S.)

I'll come back quick - before they show up.

LAUREN

they'll alert protective services.

SELENA (O.S.)

I will! It'll be fast! It will! *I will!* Right??!!

(tearfully)

What the fuck am I going to do once she's gone?? What the fuck!!

LAUREN

That's really scary, Selena...

Lauren shakes her head as she looks back down at all the
paperwork that is still in front of her as Selena continues...

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE EIGHT

BREAKROOM - NIGHT. The lights are dim for after hours late night shifts.

Jen sits on the sofa looking very tense, staring into space. A SMALL TRASH can is by her feet. And A LARGE SNUGGIE is on the sofa beside her.

Rajiv walks in wearing a jacket - as if he's just come from outside. He carries a black liquor store bag.

RAJIV

Uh. Okay. Just us.

(beat)

Jen?

Jen isn't ready for this. How could she be?

JEN

Yeah. Let me see.

Rajiv hands her a medicine bottle from his coat pocket. She reads the label.

JEN

Yeah. Okay.

RAJIV

They just had Smirnoff.

He pulls out the bottle from the bag. Jen sighs.

JEN

Fine.

They each freeze, not knowing what to do next.

JEN

I asked *you* cuz -

RAJIV

I've done it, yeah.

JEN

You're the only other one I know.

RAJIV

Lucky you.

(apologizing)

Yeah - I did it here once - Lauren knows.

JEN

Don't tell her about this. She thinks I've stopped. I mean - I *have*. This is different.

RAJIV

Yeah. Yeah, I get it.

Jen opens the medicine bottle and starts to swallow one pill after another.

RAJIV

Do you want me to go take a call while you -

JEN

No. Don't. I don't want to be alone. Please. Okay?

RAJIV

Yeah.

Jen takes a long gulp of the alcohol.

JEN

But I swear to God, you better not be here when I come back until I put this snuggie on - or I will fucking kill you if you see me naked, Rajiv.

Rajiv sighs.

RAJIV

Fine.

(beat)

Is this gonna work?

Jen breaks into tears.

JEN

I'm not ready to be a mom, Raj.

CROSS FADE TO:

LAUREN'S TV INTERVIEW CONTINUED....

REPORTER (O.S.)

Why don't the Serial Suiciders just stop killing themselves if it's so traumatizing?

She answers defiantly with another question.

LAUREN

Why do people stay in abusive relationships?

And waits for an answer.

LAUREN

Because they're hoping for that one moment when there isn't abuse, and it only feels *good*. And they hope that, *maybe*, it will last.

She won that round, but now comes the real reason for this interview....

REPORTER (O.S.)

Was that the same "hope" you heard on your call?

Lauren is visibly shaken.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Let's talk about your last call.

(beat)

What happened???

CROSS FADE TO:

BREAKROOM. EMPTY.

JEN'S CLOTHES ARE SEEN LYING ON THE SOFA IN THE EXACT WAY SHE HAD BEEN SITTING. This is in the same manner as Richard from earlier.

The snuggie is in its same place. WE WAIT.

ERIC walks in, toward the shelf. RAJIV *runs* in.

RAJIV

What are you doing back here this late?!

ERIC

I just forgot my mask, I left it in the binder so I wouldn't drop it again.

RAJIV

What?! Why would - whatever - get it - and leave!

ERIC

Jeez, alright.

RAJIV

Hurry Up!

Eric goes, but tries to mumble out loud -

ERIC

Why are you so -

RAJIV

Shit.

Eric notices the clothes.

ERIC

Are those Jen's clothes?

RAJIV

Get out.

ERIC

Fuck, are

ERIC

You guys...?

RAJIV

No!

ERIC

I'll go -

(AS ERIC SAYS "GO") *JEN SCREAMS/
BLACKOUT/END OF ACT I*

ACT II

SCENE ONE

BREAKROOM - MOMENTS AFTER JEN'S REAPPEARANCE.

JEN quickly finishes putting on her snuggie. RAJIV and ERIC are turned away with their eyes tightly closed.

Jen sits on the sofa. Through her shock and sobbing she is finally able to say -

JEN

What the fuck is he doing here?!

RAJIV

He said he left his mask -

ERIC

I'm so sorry - I didn't know -

JEN

You invite him to the show?!

RAJIV

No! I didn't tell anybody!

ERIC

No! I'm so sorry - I'm gonna go -

She loses it -

JEN

WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?!!!!!!!

And SCREAMS.

The guys don't know how to respond as she sobs.

RAJIV

Um

JEN

Okay -

She tries to motivate herself, step by step -

JEN

I'm going to get my clothes on. And take the pregnancy test. That is in my pants-pocket.

And tries to compose herself -

JEN

Okay.

RAJIV

ERIC

Okay.

Okay.

Nobody moves.

RAJIV

Are you gonna change in the bathroom - did you want me to -

Rajiv goes to gather her clothes -

JEN

DON'T!

(beat)

Don't.

(beat)

No, I'll just sit here for another minute and... and make everybody feel uncomfortable.

Now she's getting back to normal.

JEN

Eric?

ERIC

Uh, yeah?

JEN

Not a word of this to Lauren.

ERIC

Oh! Oh God! No, no - no, course not! Uh, no. I mean - I don't even understand what's going on - so -

JEN

Good.

ERIC

(carefully)

Jen, did you take pills again?

She holds back tears.

JEN

Eric -

ERIC

I know how hard that is for you.

She breaks down again.

JEN

I don't want to have this baby!

ERIC

Oh no. Oh, I'm so sorry.

Eric goes to sit beside her.

JEN

I didn't think I'd ever do this again!

ERIC

Yeah, I know.

RAJIV

Jen, this was different. You had a good reason.

JEN

Everybody has a good reason.

RAJIV

But you really didn't have a choice.

Jen tries to accept this. Okay, he tries again -

RAJIV

Do you want to change in here or the bathroom?

JEN

Bathroom.

RAJIV

Okay. Okay, Eric, help her up.

Rajiv goes to get her clothes awkwardly in one pile.

They exit for the bathroom.

We wait a few moments.

Rajiv and Eric return.

RAJIV

Ehhhhhh.

Eric doesn't know what he's allowed to ask.

ERIC

Do you think it'll work?

RAJIV

No idea. Is it too far along? Is it not? Does it matter? Blah, blah, blah. No idea. In the good 'ole days dead was dead. But you probably don't know about that - what are you - just nineteen?

ERIC

Eighteen.

RAJIV

Yeah, so there ya go.

(beat)

I don't know why you'd want to bring a kid into this world.

Eric doesn't know how to respond to that.

RAJIV

Do you even know what Y2K was??

ERIC

Um, I've heard of it...?

RAJIV

We were busy freak'n out about that. Nobody predicted we'd all be Immortal instead.

(like a doctor reading a chart)

"A CT-Scan on December 18th and, oh! looks like you'll be *Immortal* on January 1st."

(beat)

My mother died two weeks before it started.

ERIC

I'm sorry.

RAJIV

If she had lasted two more weeks she'd still be here. Just held on fourteen more days.

(beat)

You know, the treatments they have for cancer work better now. She would've been in good shape. Could've been.

Rajiv takes out his pocket knife and spins it around.

RAJIV

Fucking Doctors.

(advice to Eric)

You gotta take things into your own hands whenever you can.

Eric nods and tries to understand.

ERIC

Is...is that a knife?

RAJIV

We kept saying that something was wrong with her - she's not getting the right treatment - something's wrong - she's not improving - something's wrong - there's still that cough - something's wrong - but they didn't listen - and the tests kept com'n up negative - until they *didn't* - and it was too late.

(beat)

Fourteen more days. Yeah, it's the one I use to kill myself. You glad you got your little mask back?

Eric looks ashamed.

Jen walks back in.

They look toward her for a response.

She tragically shakes her head "no".

SCENE TWO

A MONTAGE OF RAJIV, LAUREN, AND JEN
TAKING A CALL AT EACH BOOTH.

We see the L.E.D. SCREEN of REMAINING CALLS
SLOWLY TICK DOWN.

They all speak the way you would expect an empathetic,
kind counselor would, no matter what - even though we
know all the stress they're all under.

LAUREN

Good - another deep breath. It's gonna be okay.

RAJIV

Have you ever killed yourself before?

JEN

Well, I can't really be the one to answer that.

LAUREN

When was the last time you killed yourself?

RAJIV

Of course, that would be so hard to talk about.

JEN

Does anybody else know how you feel?

RAJIV

What do you think you'll do once we get off the phone tonight?

LAUREN

(hopeful)

Does that sound like a good plan for tomorrow?

JEN

Okay. And did you *stop* taking those meds?

LAUREN

It sounds like you feel really stuck.

RAJIV

(affirming the difficult process)

No, man - you're doing great work. Thanks for being so honest with me -

JEN

(hanging up)

I'm really glad you called, Tanisha. You have a good night.

RAJIV

Ma'am, NO. This isn't ticketmaster. I have no idea how you got our number.

LAUREN

What is making you ask me if I'm *married*??!?

JEN

(deeply concerned)

Oh, *honey*! I can't imagine what you're going through.

LAUREN

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 is you going through with your plan, and 1 is just that you're thinking about it - what number would you choose?

RAJIV

Yeah man, she sounds like a complete bitch.

LAUREN

You've lost so much, Vanessa. I'm so sorry.

JEN

Gerald, can you put the stapler down while we're talking?

RAJIV

It sounds like school has been a really shitty time this past semester.

LAUREN

(agreeing)

No, you *don't* need that. He's being a jerk.

JEN

And what has your family *said* about your addiction?

RAJIV

Do you think you need to go to the hospital to be safe tonight, Joselyn?

LAUREN

You're doing the best you can - that's all you can do.

SCENE THREE

HOTLINE COUNSELOR BOOTH. RAJIV starts his call. He speaks the way you would expect an empathetic, kind counselor would, no matter what. He takes a deep breath before he starts the call - "another damn call".

Over the phone we hear A CAR MOTOR RUNNING IN AN ECHO-Y-LIKE CHAMBER.

RAJIV

Hi, Samuel. My name is Rajiv. Are you thinking about killing yourself?

SAMUEL sounds high, drowsy and panicked.

SAMUEL (O.S.)

Five DUIs, Rajiv. Should've never - tonight woulda been - Crashed the car - I -

RAJIV

Where are you right now, Samuel?

SAMUEL (O.S.)

My car.

RAJIV

Are you still driving? I hear the motor.

SAMUEL (O.S.)

I hit a kid - I hit him - I'm - I didn't kill him - there was so much blood - just screaming - he was so scared -

RAJIV

Samuel -

SAMUEL (O.S.)

His arm was bent back.

SAMUEL (O.S.)

The bone - thought I did right - thought it was the only - wasn't sure -

RAJIV

Are you parked??

Samuel begins struggling to finish his remaining thoughts as he passes-out from the car fumes.

SAMUEL (O.S.)

He was SCREAMING! Didn't think - getting an ambulance - another DUI - I pulled - I dragged... his body a little... his head... in front of my tire... tried to be as fast as I could... I... I didn't hesitate... it was such a loud sound... whole side of the car lifted off the ground... then the back wheel -

RAJIV

Samuel, you wanted to talk about this - get out of the car -

RAJIV

Samuel - can you get out of the car?

SAMUEL (O.S.)

Think... he came back...I'm...I hate...

RAJIV

Samuel - what's your address??

SAMUEL (O.S.)

Wha... ?

RAJIV

Your address, Samuel - for the paramedics - your dying.

SAMUEL

Address...?? ...home.

SAMUEL (O.S.)

I left... didn't... people... nake... cry... kay?

RAJIV

Samuel, can you turn the engine off so we can talk?

SAMUEL (O.S.)

...kay.

We hear THE PHONE DROP ONTO SAMUEL'S LAP.

RAJIV

Samuel?? Samuel??

Long pause. RAJIV STARTS THE L.E.D. TIMER. He puts Samuel on hold, so the SOUND OF THE ENGINE CUTS OUT. He DIALS 911.

AUTOMATED RECORDING

If this is not an immediate emergency, please hang up and dial 211. Otherwise, stay on the line and hope for the best.

If you've been killed, please dial one and leave the name and description of your killer, contact information for your killer, and any other fun facts you remember about the incident and we will get back to you eventually. If this is not an immediate emergency, please hang up and -

911 OPERATOR 2

911 - What is your name and emergency?

RAJIV

My name is Rajiv Patel. I'm a suicide hotline crisis counselor on a call with a possible murder suspect.

911 OPERATOR 2

Is this man threatening your life now, sir? Can you get to safety?

RAJIV

No-no - we're on the phone. He just completed suicide with carbon monoxide poisoning from his parked car - probably in a garage.

911 OPERATOR 2

So, the suspect is currently dead, sir?

RAJIV

Yes.

911 OPERATOR 2

Okayyyy. You said you're calling from a *hotline*???

RAJIV

I'm a crisis counselor at a suicide hotline, yeah.

911 OPERATOR 2

Annnnd what's the name of the organization?

RAJIV

City Suicide Prevention Center.

911 OPERATOR 2

(mocking)

And the person you were speaking with has killed himself and you think he is also a murder suspect.

RAJIV

Yeah, he ran a kid over with his car.

911 OPERATOR 2

(patronizing a toddler)

Well, I'm going to advise you to call back, and push one, or go into your nearest station to file a report.

RAJIV

He just killed a child. Are you listening to me?!

911 OPERATOR 2

I understand, sir. We keep a long list of murder suspects in our handy dandy giant database. To add your suspect to this ever expanding database of possible killers you can push one, or go to

911 OPERATOR

your nearest station -

RAJIV

What does *my* station have to do with it?!

RAJIV

I have his phone number -

911 OPERATOR 2

Are you safe, sir?

RAJIV

I already told you that, yes - His first name is, Samuel. Now what are you going to do

RAJIV

about this??

911 OPERATOR2

Sir -

RAJIV

You are not answering my question. He put a kid's head underneath his tire.

911 OPERATOR 2

Sir -

RAJIV

Don't try to cut *me* off - I work at a fucking hotline.

911 OPERATOR 2

Sir -

RAJIV

He did it purposefully, what the fuck is the matter with you?!

911 OPERATOR 2

Sir, I'm hang'n up the phone now! Best of luck to you!

RAJIV

WHAT?!

911 OPERATOR 2

Bye bye!

DIAL TONE. Rajiv switches back to the call. We hear THE CAR RUNNING again. We wait and watch the clock tic past 2:00 minutes.

SAMUEL COUGHS MANICALLY.

SAMUEL (O.S.)

Oh God. (crying)

SAMUEL SCREAMS. Rajiv is infuriated.

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE FOUR

BREAKROOM - JEN, ERIC AND LAUREN are there, doing the usual. RAJIV walks in, infuriated.

RAJIV

Do you think the world wants us to be here, Eric?

ERIC

Do I think...what?

RAJIV

Plants, animals - the sun rises and falls - everything - is still on it's cycle. It's just us that's Immortal and I think the world wants us to leave.

ERIC

Huh.

(beat)

What would happen if we left?

RAJIV

I don't know, Eric. Maybe we could actually *stay* dead someplace else. Hey, Lauren! Wanna see Jen's foot?

LAUREN

Sorry, I'm busy - what?

JEN

What the fuck?

RAJIV

Nothing, I just thought you'd wanna see someth'n. Go ahead, Jen.

JEN

What are you doing?? What's wrong with you??

RAJIV

Show everybody your foot. What's the big deal? Go ahead!

LAUREN

What is going on, Rajiv?

ERIC

Uh, Joe - I - I already saw the tattoo.

RAJIV

Oh yeah? Yeah? You sure? Is it still there, Eric?

JEN

Shut up, Raj.

RAJIV

I don't know, let's find out.

RAJIV

Come on, let's find out!

LAUREN

What is going on, Rajiv?

RAJIV

Come on, Jen! You're drag'n this shit out! Take you're fuck'n shoe off and show her!

JEN

Fuck you.

ERIC

Rajiv, let it go -

ERIC

Don't -

RAJIV

Stay out of this - you're not even taking calls - mind your business.

LAUREN

Rajiv!

RAJIV

Oh, whatever! I just killed myself in the bathroom!

He puts his pocket knife on the table.

JEN

What?!

ERIC

But your clothes aren't - they're clean.

RAJIV

You think planning ahead is hard, Eric? I guess you've really never thought about it.

LAUREN

(staying calm)

Did you just kill yourself?

RAJIV

You just can't tell, can you????! You wanna go in the men's bathroom and find out??!

LAUREN

Okay, you're either going to be honest with me or you're going home. Because if you did kill yourself we're going have to get you more help - I'm not letting the staff kill themselves whenever they want.

RAJIV

Well, then you're gonna have to send her home too!

Jen takes off her shoe.

JEN

Fine! Fine! Here! Look!

The foot is clean - no tattoo.

LAUREN

Oh, my God! What happened!?? What happened??

JEN

I'm pregnant - I don't - A week ago Rajiv helped me - I thought - there's a fifty-fifty chance it's early enough that - I don't want this baby, Lauren.

Lauren is in shock.

LAUREN

Why didn't you tell me??

JEN

I didn't want you to - I'm sorry. You're a fucking asshole, Raj.

Silence

ERIC

So, are you guys...?

JEN

No!

RAJIV

No!

RAJIV

I've got noth'n to do with it.

RAJIV

And she planned ahead to go back to the tattoo parlour the next day.

JEN

Shut up! Shut up! SHUT UP!

JEN

I didn't go, so Fuck you, Rajiv! Fuck you!

RAJIV

Fuck everything! We're all just act'n like everything is fine, but the planet is trying to get rid of us.

JEN

I want to get rid of *you*! You can't stop mouthing off! What the hell is wrong with you?!

RAJIV

It's torturing us so that we'll have to figure out how to leave.

ERIC

Ease off, man.

RAJIV

Awe, I wouldn't want to upset you, Eric. You're so sensitive - with your mask and shit.

JEN

You can't do that! You can't be such a dick all the time!

LAUREN

Okay, that's it. Go home.

RAJIV

I'm not! You weren't here for your trainee's little pep talk after his serial call - probably because you didn't want to deal with it.

LAUREN

You need to leave.

RAJIV

Why?! So we don't have to talk about anything?! What's his deal?!!

LAUREN

You don't need to know anything, Rajiv! He's a volunteer here, he just needs time!

LAUREN

You need to -

ERIC

My deal is that I have no intent on killing myself because my father killed *me*!

ERIC

You've always had a choice - I never did - and I've had to live with it.

JEN

Oh God.

ERIC

No, you're doing the right thing, Jen. Do it now before whatever that is inside you has any memory.

If my father didn't want me, he shouldn't have played a part in making me in the first place.

(considers revealing more)

I was very little when my dad killed me.

Silence. Rajiv can't believe the coincidence.

RAJIV

That's the *last* thing I want to hear right now!

ERIC

I don't like talking about it!

Flooded with emotion, Rajiv does something violent to an object, hit a table, etc.

RAJIV

This piece of shit on the phone just killed a kid with his car. And the 911 asshole I was talk'n to - wouldn't listen

(starting to sob)

He wouldn't fuck'n listen to me! He didn't listen. They just don't listen. They never fuck'n listen. None of 'em!

ERIC

(carefully)

This about your mom?

STEVE

And the doctors -

RAJIV

ALL I EVER WANTED WAS TO TRY
TO SEE HER AGAIN!!

They witness Rajiv's pain.

RAJIV

Shit.

(beat)

Shit. Dammit man. I'm sorry.

(beat)

What happened? What happened to you?

Rajiv?
JEN

He go towards the fridge.

RAJIV
I just need to get something to drink. I wanna hear what Eric has to say.

They watch as he takes out a close to empty 2-liter of Pepsi, opens the cabinet, takes out a solo cup, pours himself a drink, and take a sip. Beat.

LAUREN
He doesn't want to talk about it.

RAJIV
Jen talks about her trauma! I talk about mine! He's gonna talk about *his*! That's what we do here, Lauren! Right, Eric?!

(gently)
Eric, I wanna know what happened. Because I give a shit about you.

Silence.

ERIC
Uh. Thanks. Did you just kill yourself?

RAJIV
I havn't killed myself in over two years.

JEN
You're such a dick!

LAUREN
Go home.

RAJIV
That doesn't mean I don't want to every time I hold that knife. But I'm controlling it!

He takes a deep long breath

RAJIV
I'm controlling it.

(beat)
I shouldn't have said that I - I'm just -

(“having a hard time”, but can’t say it, so-)
look, I just want to hear Eric’s story. Then, I’ll go.

They wait to see if Eric will play along.

ERIC

Oh - I dunno... I was *really* young... so - I don’t - well, I don’t remember it - exactly - so

Eric assess the room’s interest.

ERIC

Okay. He suffocated me to death when I was a baby.

Rajiv sighs in disbelief.

ERIC

Because I wouldn’t stop crying. He did it more than once -

RAJIV

Ughhh.

ERIC

My mom isn’t sure *how many* times.

LAUREN

Oh my god.

ERIC

We were living at a motel and - um - when my mom came back one night my dad - she said he was acting really strange - and he didn’t want her to check up on me.

(beat)

It was just a single-room motel set-up, so - it was pretty obvious that my mom could - you know - see if my body was there or not.

(beat)

Um, so he grabbed her and acted like he wanted to-

(beat)

Have sex, or something.

(beat)

My mom said she struggled with him and thought he was gonna seriously hurt her, or probably kill her - but then my little infant body reappeared on the Motel carpet, screaming.

(beat)

He panicked and ran out, basically.

(beat)

My mom says that I saved her - I guess.

(beat)

She dressed me and called 911. And she says that when the police interviewed the other guests in the rooms next to ours - they heard me screaming on and off for hours. I don't know if they coulda called 911 or not, but my mom and the police figure that he probably killed me -

(beat)

- at least a couple times, based on what the other guests said they heard- the times of silence that they gave. Um, so - yeah.

JEN

Oh, Eric...

ERIC

Yeah.

Silence.

ERIC (CONT)

They weren't able to arrest him because there wasn't enough evidence.

RAJIV

You reappeared on the fucking carpet!

ERIC

Yeah, but it was a "he said - she said" deal -

JEN

He was just a baby, Raj. He wasn't old enough to confirm his killer.

RAJIV

God dammit.

ERIC

All my mom could do was put a restraining order on him. And then he ended up getting arrested for some gambling thing, anyway.

RAJIV

Oh shit!

ERIC

He's been in jail since then - my mom thinks he's in a Vege-Patch for some reason.

(beat)

So -

Silence.

LAUREN

Have you talked to him? Would you want to?

JEN

(disapprovingly)

Lauren -

RAJIV

Of course he doesn't want to! His piece of shit father killed him!

ERIC

Yeah - I don't really care, I guess. I mean - I looked up a picture of him - but that was cuz a girlfriend at the time thought I should. Like, reconnect - with my dad. It's not really anything I've stressed about. I mean, I never knew him, or grew up with him, so it doesn't really matter. Wouldn't change anything.

Silence.

JEN

(carefully)

Eric... you said you *kind of* remember it happening.

ERIC

Oh. Yeah. Yeah, I don't. It's just certain types of carpet - if I touch a certain type of carpet, like the one from the hotel - I get nauseous and sad - it's weird. It's like a weird panic attack?

(beat)

And it's the same with anything covering my face. I can't wear masks for Halloween, or just put a bedsheet over my face when it's cold, or wear a motorcycle helmet -

(beat)

Or use a surgical mask. So I can't be a nurse - or anything medical, really - at least - not until - or if - I can - I dunno - get over it - or manage it - I don't know. Yeah, I don't know. It's really stupid.

(to Rajiv)

That's why I freaked out.

Silence. Rajiv is in shock. He earnestly realizes -

RAJIV

I am a dick.

ERIC

Oh.

(beat)

Well. *My dad's the one that killed me* - so. Yeah.

Silence.

The group tries to figure out what to say.

JEN

That's... I'm so sorry, Eric. We're glad you're here.

Beat.

RAJIV

So we weren't glad he was here before?!

JEN

I wanted to say something nice, you the lying idiot!

RAJIV

I hope that fuck rots in his Vege-Patch-Tube and doesn't see the light of day.

ERIC

Thanks, man.

RAJIV

That's so fucked.

LAUREN

Yeah.

Silence.

RAJIV

Put the mask on, man.

Rajiv gives Eric a sympathetic look. Eric looks at the sympathetic faces around him, considers and agrees.

He puts the mask on and starts to cry and panic. Everyone witnesses his pain.

Eric lets this go on for longer than he's used to then takes the mask off. Lauren guides him.

LAUREN

Breathe. Deep breath.

Eric follows through and tries to compose himself. Rajiv puts his hand warmly on Eric's back. Then Jen. Then Lauren. They all hold there as Eric grounds himself back from the trauma.

ERIC

(quietly)

Okay.

(nodding, emotional)

Yeah. Thanks for... thanks.

Silence.

RAJIV

I have to go. I have to file a report at the police station.

JEN

What?

RAJIV

(revealing)

That's what the 911 operator told me to do.

(beat)
I'm... I'll see you guys later.

Everyone is left frazzled. Silence.

LAUREN

Okay, guys. Take your time.

(sigh)
I'll go take another call.

Lauren grabs a magazine without anyone noticing and leaves.

More awkward silence with Jen and Eric.

JEN

Are you okay?

ERIC

(smiling)
No.

(beat)
Are you?

JEN

(smiling)
No.

They revel in their honesty.

ERIC

Okay.

JEN

Okay.

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE FIVE

A MONTAGE OF *ALL* THE COUNSELORS TAKING
A CALL AT EACH HOTLINE BOOTH.

It should feel as if they are practically speaking to each
other now.

Although, Lauren has become weary of the repetition.

The L.E.D. SCREEN of REMAINING CALLS
QUICKLY TICKS DOWN NOW.

LAUREN

Good - another deep breath. It's gonna be okay.

RAJIV

Have you ever killed yourself before?

JEN

Well, I can't really be the one to answer that.

ERIC

I'm so sorry he did that to you.

LAUREN

When was the last time you killed yourself?

RAJIV

Of course, that would be so hard to talk about.

ERIC

Have you told anybody else?

JEN

Does anybody else know how you feel?

ERIC

Have you thought about a plan on how you would hurt yourself?

RAJIV

What do you think you'll do once we get off the phone tonight?

LAUREN

Does that sound like a good plan for tomorrow?

ERIC

I'm glad you called.

JEN

Okay. And did you *stop* taking those meds?

LAUREN

It sounds like you feel really stuck.

ERIC

You shouldn't feel embarrassed.

RAJIV

(affirming the difficult process)

No, man - you're doing great work. Thanks for being so honest with me -

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE SIX

HOTLINE COUNSELOR BOOTH. LAUREN is in the middle of a panicked call with, DYLAN, a fey young man who is very high.

Lauren tries to speak the way you would expect her too. But now she's wearing a headset, and flipping through a magazine and has become pretty checked out.

DYLAN (O.S.)

He won't come out of the bathroom!

LAUREN

Is there anything in there he could use to hurt himself?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Yeah?! Of course! He won't come out!

LAUREN

Okay, Dylan. What did he say to you before he went in?

Lauren turns a magazine page.

DYLAN (O.S.)

He was talking about how he doesn't want to be here and all that!

She flips another page.

LAUREN

Dylan, what did he actually say?

DYLAN (O.S.)

I don't remember! I'm a little high, we were smoking. I don't know what to do! He's never died before! I've never been with anybody who has!

LAUREN

What were you smoking, Dylan?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Just some joints.

LAUREN

Marijuana?

DYLAN (O.S.)

He's been so sad. I don't make him happy anymore. So we smoke. It helps.

She flips a page.

LAUREN

Have you been smoking more than usual today?

And she mouths "oh wow" at what she's seeing.

DYLAN (O.S.)

No?

(beat)

No - drinking too. We had a couple bottles. I just wanted us to have a romantic night. He's so sad, Lauren!

LAUREN

Bottles of what, Dylan?

She flips a page.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Some merlot. I dunno, he's a snob about it - he won't get out of the room!

We hear Dylan slightly off the phone, yelling -

DYLAN (CONT)

TONI!

(beat)

TONI! TALK TO THIS COUNSELOR! SHE CAN HELP YOU! SHE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU! SHE'S SUPER NICE, TONI!

She looks up from the magazine and mouths, "thank you".

DYLAN (CONT)

DON'T BECOME ANOTHER STATISTIC!

LAUREN

Dylan, I have a few questions -

OVER THE PHONE, WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE DOOR OPENING.

Toni!

DYLAN (O.S.)

We can hear TONI in the background.

TONI (O.S.)

(faintly)

I have to lie down.

Lauren takes her attention away from the magazine now.

DYLAN (O.S.)

What did you do!!!!

LAUREN

Dylan, what happened??

Dylan continues to speak with Toni off the phone.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Here baby, here, it's okay, come here -

(On the phone to Lauren)

I think he took something.

We hear DYLAN HELP TONI LIE DOWN

DYLAN (CONT)

Lauren! He's sweating really bad! He's barely awake!

Lauren folds the magazine and puts it on the desk.

DYLAN (CONT)

(off the phone)

Toni, can you talk to the counselor? She wants to talk to you!

Lauren has gotten more emotionally involved now.

LAUREN

That's okay, Dylan. Hang on. Toni's sweating? Ask him what he did in the bathroom.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Toni, what did you do?! WHAT DID YOU DO?! Did you take something - what was it?! TONI! Tell me! The counselor wants to know! Toni? Toni !

(beat)

TONI - TONI - TONI -WAKE UP! Wake up! Wake up! Oh fuck! Toni! Fuck - fuck - fuck - fuck - Lauren - Lauren - he's not - he passed out!

Lauren stays calm under the stress of Dylan's frantic state.

LAUREN

Okay - Dylan - Dylan - try to take a slow, deep breath. Dylan, I'm getting paramedics - lets try to avoid an unnecessary death, okay? - what was in the bathroom - Can you check the bathroom? I'm gonna put you on hold for just a minute.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Yeah - yea -

Lauren hits a button on the phone to switch lines and dials 911.

AUTOMATED RECORDING

If this is not an immediate emergency, please hang up and dial 211. Otherwise, stay on the line and hope for the best. If you've been killed, please dial one and leave the name and description of your killer, contact information for your killer, and any other fun facts you remember about the incident and we will get back to you eventually. If this is not an immediate emer -

Lauren switches back to Dylan's call.

DYLAN (O.S.)

No - no - no - no - no - no - no!

(beat)

It was Percocet, Lauren.

LAUREN

(hiding worry)

Oh. Alright.

DYLAN (O.S.)

The bottle's empty.

LAUREN

(carefully)

Dylan, the paramedics might not get there in time.

WE HEAR TONI PUKING AND GASPING FOR AIR
WHILE PASSED OUT.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Toni! Toni! FUUUUUCK!!

LAUREN

(trying to stay calm)

Can you pull him up, Dylan?! Sit him up, Dylan! Put the phone down - sit him up.

We hear the PHONE BEING PUT DOWN AS THE
GASPING CONTINUES IN THE BACKGROUND.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Honey! Stop! Baby! Stop! Stop!

TONI SLOWS HIS GASPING AND STOPS.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Oh god - oh god - oh god. Oh. GOD! TONI! *HE'S TURNING BLUE!!* Oh god, he's
turning blue!

DLYAN PICKS THE PHONE BACK UP.

DYLAN (O.S.)

What do I do??! What do I do??!

(away from phone)

Toni - baby - Toni - honey - wake up! Stop it! Oh god - what do I do??!

LAUREN

Dylan, can you put your hand under his nose? Do you feel any air?

DYLAN (O.S.)

What?? No - I don't know! I don't feel anything!

(shaking Toni)

TONIIIIIII -

Lauren switches back to the 911 call.

AUTOMATED RECORDING

- contact information for your killer, and any other fun facts you remember -

She switched back to Dylan's call. He is frantic,
SCREAMING.

LAUREN

Dylan, Dylan, breathe -

As Lauren speaks SHE STARTS THE L.E.D. TIMER.

LAUREN

Dylan, I'm here, listen to me. Dylan - when Toni goes - he's going to be naked when he reappears.

DYLAN (O.S.)

No!!!!

LAUREN

Dylan - Dylan - here's something you can do - go get some clothes for him and a warm blanket, okay?

DYLAN (O.S.)

No - no - no - no - no -

LAUREN

He's going to be very cold and scared, Dylan. You want to help him back, right??

LAUREN

(tougher)

Dylan, you want to help him, *right*?!

DYLAN (O.S.)

Y - y - yeah. Yes. Oh, Jesus. Okay. Okay.

LAUREN

Okay, Dylan. Let's just get his pajamas - something comfortable, okay?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Yeah - maybe his flannels. Okay. Oh, Toni! Eh. Fuck. Okay.

WE HEAR DYLAN SHUFFLE THROUGH HIS APARTMENT. WE HEAR DRAWERS OPEN...

Lauren switches back to the 911 call.

AUTOMATED RECORDING

- on the line and hope for the best -

Lauren switches back to Dylan.

AND WE HEAR DRAWERS CLOSE.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Okay. Okay.

LAUREN

You're doing really great, Dylan.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Oh, Lauren - I'm so dizzy!

LAUREN

Can you sit down?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Yeah, yeah. Eh.

(beat)

Oh god - oh god. He's so blue! Toni - toni - toni - *oh god he's cold.* Oh god.

LAUREN

I started a timer Dylan. It will tell us when we should expect him back.

This really sets-in for Dylan and he screams -

DYLAN (O.S.)

OH GOD!!!

LAUREN

Can you check his breath again, Dylan?

DYLAN (O.S.)

He's dead! He's dead! He's fucking dead!

Lauren switches back to the 911 call.

AUTOMATED RECORDING

- please dial one -

She hangs up - we hear DIAL TONE.

Lauren switches back to Dylan. Staying calm.

LAUREN

I'm canceling the paramedics, Dylan. Now we just have to wait. It should just be a few more minutes.

DYLAN (O.S.)

It takes like 3 minutes, right?

LAUREN

2 to 4.

She picks opens up the magazine again, to kill time.

DYLAN (O.S.)

How much time is it now?

LAUREN

(attention back inside the magazine.)

We won't know for sure. We don't know exactly when Toni died. But we just have to wait a few more minutes.

She flips a page.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Oh fuck. Baby! Oh my baby. Oh, Toni, why?? Why did you do this?!! You selfish prick, Toni!! Now we have to go to stupid clinics and keep you from killing yourself again! He's such a pussy, Lauren, he's never gonna get past this. I know him, he's gonna get stuck in this shit. He's gonna be in loops! Dammit, Toni!

Lauren becomes invested on the magazine page.

DYLAN (O.S.)

(to Toni)

Why would you do this to me!! To us!! Oh - fuck Toni - come back, baby. Disappear already. Hurry, baby. I'm right here.

LAUREN

You're going to get through this Dylan. I can tell how much you love Toni, and that's the most important thing.

She flips a page.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Oh my God - I love him so much! I would do anything for him!

(crying)

My babyyyyyy!

LAUREN

He's going to come back and he's going to be very sad, and scared, and panicked. You're going to have to slow down as much as you can, to be there for him.

DYLAN (O.S.)

(composing self)

Yeah. Yes. Of course. How much more time? Is it going to happen soon? Should I look away??

She flips a page.

LAUREN

Soon, Dylan. It's best to stay near by. I'm going to ask you to wait against a wall of the room. I don't want his appearance to scare you from behind. Okay?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Jesus.

LAUREN

Is there a good place you can stand?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Yeah... Yeah - I'll just be here near the kitchen. It's a studio - it's a small place.

LAUREN

Okay, if you think that's the best spot.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Is he going to disappear yet???

Lauren looks at the L.E.D. TIMER. It should read somewhere PAST 3:00 MINUTES BY NOW. Lauren puts the magazine down, preparing for Toni's return.

LAUREN

Um, yeah. Just a little longer, Dylan.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Come on Toni. I'm here, sweetheart. I'll take care of you. Hurry, baby.

(to Lauren)

Is it time now??

LAUREN

Hang on, Dylan.

DYLAN (O.S.)

He got so blue. Eh.

LAUREN

Keep breathing, Dylan.

DYLAN (O.S.)

How much more time? It's been awhile now.

Lauren looks at the L.E.D. and starts to really worry now.

LAUREN

A little longer.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Stop saying that! How many minutes is it now?!

Lauren is getting panicked and trying to hide it in her voice. The L.E.D. TIMER KEEPS RACING.

LAUREN

Um, it's, it's just taking a little longer than usual.

DYLAN (O.S.)

What do you mean?

LAUREN

Well -

DYLAN (O.S.)

I mean he's *dead*, Lauren! He's *DEAD*! I'm looking right at him.

(yelling off the phone)

Disappear, Toni! Disappear! He's not going, Lauren! TONI! DISAPPEAR!

LAUREN

Let's just -

DYLAN (O.S.)

HE'S *DEAD*, LAUREN! HE'S *NOT* DISAPPEARING! HE'S *DEAD*! I know it!
Toni! What do I do?!

LAUREN

We just have to wait -

DYLAN (O.S.)

He's not disappearing, Lauren!

(beat)

What if I - Oh lord - Toni - don't make me do something stupid - Toni - *DISAPPEAR*! I
love you baby. You have to *GO*!!

WE HEAR DYLAN SHUFFLING THROUGH HIS
APARTMENT.

Lauren looks at the L.E.D. TIMER THAT IS NOW *PAST*
4:00 MINUTES.

WE HEAR A DRAWER OPEN AND UTENSILS
BEING PUSHED AROUND.

LAUREN

What are you doing, Dylan??!

WE HEAR A METAL OBJECT BEING SLID OUT.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Lauren, he's not going! Trust me - I have to help him -

LAUREN

Dylan - what -

DYLAN PUTS THE PHONE DOWN AND WE HEAR
HIM FROM A DISTANCE NOW.

DYLAN (O.S.)

(yelling)

I HAVE TO DO THIS! Oh god, Toni - I love you - YOU HAVE TO COME BACK TO
ME!

DYLAN SCREAMS AS WE HEAR TONI'S BODY BEING STABBED.

Dylan is wrecked with emotion, he pleads and sobs -

GO AWAY BABY!
DYLAN (O.S.)

STAB

COME ON, SWEETHEART!
DYLAN (O.S.)

STAB

DYLAN (O.S.)
PLEASE HONEY! YOU HAVE TO GO NOW!

STAB. STAB. STAB.

DYLAN (O.S.)
TONI!! MY LOVE! PLEASE! PLEASE! GO THE FUCK AWAY! BABY! DIE!
PLEEEEEASE!

STAB. STAB.

DYLAN (O.S.)
Oh God, honey. I love you. Please - please - please - baby - please.

(beat)

Lauren! Lauren! He's not! Nothing is happening! *LAUREN!*

DYLAN SOBS IN THE DISTANCE.

LAUREN
Dylan! Can you pick up the phone? Dylan! Dylan, let's talk - pick up the phone.
Alright?!

Lauren checks the L.E.D. TIMER. IT IS FAR BEYOND
4:00 MINUTES.

LAUREN
Shit. Shit. Um -

Lauren tries to breathe. We hear Dylan in the background

DYLAN (O.S.)
Oh, Toni! Toni! All the blood!

DYLAN SCREAMS.

DYLAN (O.S.)
Oh god!!!

DYLAN SOBS AND SCREAMS. Lauren is in shock.

LAUREN

(calmly)
Dylan - I'm - I'm gonna put you on hold - again - for a minute.

Lauren switches to another phone line and dials 911.

AUTOMATED RECORDING
If this is not an immediate emergency, please -

911 OPERATOR 3
911 - What is your name and emergency? LAUREN
Oh, you idiots!

911 OPERATOR 3
What did you just say?! What's your name and emergency?

LAUREN

(in shock)
Hi - I have to report a body.

911 OPERATOR 3

(calmly mocking)
Ma'am, I don't know if you've heard, but...

Lauren becomes enraged in a way we have yet to see.

LAUREN
You need to *LISTEN* to me. Are you listening?! Are you there, sweetheart?!

911 OPERATOR 3

(putting up with it)
Yeah, I'm listening...

LAUREN

There is a dead - *man*. He's dead!! It's been -

LAUREN READS THE TIME ON THE L.E.D. TIMER.

LAUREN

He's *NOT* coming back!

911 OPERATOR 3

Ma'am -

She reads the time LOUDLY AGAIN.

911 OPERATOR 3

In 2 to 4 -

LAUREN

Did you *NOT* just hear me?!

SHE SHOUTS THE TIME AGAIN.

911 OPERATOR 3

Ma'am -

LAUREN

Are you saying I don't know how to read a god damn timer!? Is that shit you're actually spewing at me right now?! You come over here and I will give you a good look at this number, you patronizing bitch!

911 OPERATOR 3

Ma'am I'm gonna

911 OPERATOR 3

have to -

LAUREN

You're gonna have to - find a fucking coroner!

LAUREN

You guys are gonna have to pick up this man's *DEAD BODY!* BECAUSE IT. IS NOT. GOING. *ANYWHERE.*

SHE SHOUTS THE TIME AGAIN.

And she keeps reading the clock out loud until it sinks in -

Oh my god.
LAUREN

Ma'am?
911 OPERATOR 3

Oh my god.
LAUREN

Lauren bursts into tears.

LAUREN
...his name was *Toni*... I just heard him die!

(trying to process)
I heard him die. I heard him die. I heard him die. I heard it. I heard him die. I heard it.

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE SEVEN

The transition should feel like time has past.

THE BREAKROOM. Eric has just walked in.

RAJIV is peeking through the window blinds.

ERIC

Is she coming in?

RAJIV

Not today. We checked in with her yesterday.

ERIC

Oh man.

JEN rushes in and throws herself onto the sofa after a call.

JEN

OH MY GOD! I'm taking a break from this madness! We're slammed, Eric. Take breaks.

ERIC

People are freaking out, right?!

Jen nods "yes" dramatically.

JEN

(grabbing her magazine)

I'm guessing they're still there, Raj.

RAJIV

(looking through the window)

I think that's Julia Rose from CNN!

JEN

Who's that??

RAJIV / ERIC

(excitedly)

She's new.

Jen tries to ignore the male energy in the room.

JEN

You got past all the cameras okay, Eric?

ERIC

Yup. I don't think anybody wants to interview *me*.

RAJIV

If you just go up to them and say you know Lauren, they will. Like sharks to blood.

ERIC

Did you do one? An interview?

RAJIV

I told them that Lauren is an amazing fucking counselor and she did everything she was suppose to fucking do and they should leave her the fuck alone - but those assholes didn't want to report that - because it's not what they want to hear.

JEN

Maybe if you hadn't cursed so much.

RAJIV

I don't think anybody should be worried about a couple F-bombs at this point, Jen!

JEN

I'm not.

ERIC

I heard Milwaukee had another body.

JEN

That was ruled out.

ERIC

Oh.

JEN

She was just in some induced-coma because of her insulin shots.

ERIC

Shouldn't we be in some kind of State of Emergency mode, or something?!

JEN

I don't know. People used to die, it's not like it never happened before. I mean, it seems like it was just a fluke? People are still dying and returning like normal, I mean people were dying and returning when Lauren's guy stayed dead.

RAJIV

The media is just freaking out.

ERIC

Well, yeah! But this is scary, guys! The first real dead guy since the millennium. I mean, I don't get it. Do you guys?

JOSEPH

Nope.

JEN

Uh-uh

Silence. It's hard to find a way to rationalize any of it.

ERIC

It's crazy Lauren talked to him. I really hope she's okay.

Silence.

RAJIV

That guy was psycho! He stabbed his boyfriend 8 or 9 times!

Beat.

ERIC

Do you think she'll be okay, Raj?

Beat.

RAJIV

Lauren? Yeah, yeah. Of course. Her whole thing is seeming soft on the outside and being tough as shit on the inside. I'm the opposite.

Beat.

ERIC

Yeah.

Beat.

JEN

(mocking)

Yeah, you're a real tough-guy, Raj.

RAJIV

Thank you.

JEN

You guys gonna watch the memorial service?

RAJIV

The (*Fun*)-eral??

ERIC

A bunch of celebrities are gonna show up for some guy nobody cared about a week ago.

(beat)

They already cut up his body for an autopsy, found nothing, and now they put him back together for show. It's all nuts.

Beat.

JEN

(reading her magazine)

Yeah, that's a funeral. I'm gonna watch.

Beat.

ERIC

I'm gonna take a call.

Eric leaves.

Silence. With Eric gone, Rajiv and Jen become very sincere.

JEN

I found a clinic. I'm gonna try it. There's a better chance it might work now.

(beat)

Would you go with me?

RAJIV

Yeah. Sure.

Jen nods "thank you".

Don't hurt yourself again, Raj.

JEN

Rajiv nods.

Raj. Don't.

JEN

I won't.

RAJIV

I won't. (thinking)

Pause.

I really hope this works. I think it might.

JEN

He agrees.

When do we go?

RAJIV

CROSS FADE TO:

SCENE EIGHT

HOTLINE COUNSELOR BOOTH

ERIC starts his call.

ERIC

Hi, my name is Eric. What's going on tonight?

LAUREN (O.S.)

It's Lauren.

ERIC

Lauren??? Did you want the staff-line?

LAUREN (O.S.)

No, that's okay.

ERIC

How - how are you? What's up?

LAUREN (O.S.)

I'm suppose to - do the - they want me to be at the Memorial Service tomorrow.

ERIC

Oh. Oh, shit. Shit. You okay? We're worried about you.

LAUREN (O.S.)

Yeah, I know. Jen called.

ERIC

Yeah. Yeah, she said.

Beat.

LAUREN (O.S.)

How are *you*?

ERIC

Me??? Fine! Fine. Just have to drive past all the news vans and - yeah - that's about it.
Um, I'm so sorry about your call.

LAUREN (O.S.)

Yeah.

(beat)

You should start the timer, Eric.

Eric freezes.

ERIC

Do you want me to get Jen?? Lemme get Jen -

LAUREN (O.S.)

No. No, it's okay. Did you start the timer?

ERIC

What do you mean?? You're not dead. Are you dying?! Did you do something???

LAUREN (O.S.)

I have depression, Eric. Nothing traumatic. No traumas. Loving parents. They're still alive. Just a *mental. Illness*. Can't usually do much about. Other than some pills. And a couple vodka tonics. I'm probably an alcoholic - I'm not always drinking coffee in that mug - did you start the clock?

ERIC HESITANTLY STARTS THE L.E.D. TIMER.

ERIC

Okay.

(beat)

Did you take something?

LAUREN (O.S.)

I've thought about my anti-depressant bottle, but no. Just the vodka tonics.

Eric sighs with relief.

ERIC

Oh, Lauren.

(beat)

Why do you want the timer?

LAUREN (O.S.)

Do you know how many calls I've taken, Eric? They keep calling. One after the other. From across the whole country! They're not - I mean - it's endless. You'll see. You will. Or maybe not. I don't know anymore. What's the time, Eric?

ERIC

Oh. Um -

He reads the time, hesitantly.

LAUREN (O.S.)

Yeah? Good. Great. And what will happen at four minutes??

ERIC

I - I don't know, Lauren.

LAUREN (O.S.)

It was a relief, Eric. I realized -

(choking up)

He just *died*. And it was a relief. It gave me that hope all those addicts and Serial Suiciders are looking for. That it'd be over. It *was* over! He *can't* call me back again. I won't have to walk him through any more steps. Or his *boyfriend* through any steps. Don't have to show concern. Talk about another optimistic future. And other possibilities. And hope. One less call I'll ever have to take.

(spiraling)

Again and again and again. And Again! How many more calls am I suppose to take, Eric? How many more lives are we suppose to try to help? How many?? How many more times do we keep telling them - keep telling myself - that it's gonna be okay - its gonna be okay - its gonna be okay - its gonna be okay!

(beat)

He just died. And I didn't have to say it anymore.

(beat)

What time is it now?

Eric reluctantly gives the time again.

LAUREN (O.S.)

And its just gonna keep on ticking. It just keeps going. No more calls. No waiting for anybody to come back. No crisis. Just the clock ticking.

I'm here, Lauren... I'm here.

ERIC

A SIMPLE LIVING ROOM SET IS REVEALED IN A
DRAMATIC AND DELIBERATE WAY.

LAUREN sits by a lit lamp while on the phone.

In a lazy boy or sofa near by is, RICHARD - wearing a
clean version of his clothes and boots from earlier, his feet
are up on an ottoman. He's viewing an iPad screen, using
large headphones.

LAUREN (O.S.)

(emotionally)

I don't know what I'm doing.

ERIC

Okay, Lauren... Yeah... I'm glad you called...

FADE TO BLACK, EXCEPT THE TIMER.

END OF PLAY