

The Report Committee for Christina Kay Burlison
Certifies that this the approved version
of the following report:

**Dreams & the Aftermath:
How Television Cured My Fear of Commitment.**

APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor: _____

Stuart Kelban

Richard Lewis

**Dreams & the Aftermath:
How Television Cured My Fear of Commitment.**

By

Christina Kay Burlison, B.A.

Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
Of the University of Texas
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Texas

December 2011

**Dreams & the Aftermath:
How Television Cured
My Fear of Commitment.**

By

Christina Kay Burlison, MFA
The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

SUPERVISOR: Stuart Kelban

"Dreams & the Aftermath: How Television Cured My Fear of Commitment" chronicles the creation and development of two one-hour drama pilots and their impact on its writer, Christina K. Burlison.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO: DREAM SCREEN - WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE.....	4
CHAPTER THREE: DREAM SCREEN - "CAN YOU SEE?"	7
CHAPTER FOUR: DREAM SCREEN - PEAKS & VALLEYS.....	10
CHAPTER FIVE: DREAM SCREEN - NON-REM.....	12
CHAPTER SIX: DREAM SCREEN - THE DREAM REALIZED.....	14
CHAPTER SEVEN: AFTERMATH, INC. - AT DEATH'S DOOR.....	16
CHAPTER EIGHT: AFTERMATH, INC. - DEAD LEVEL BEST.....	19
CHAPTER NINE: AFTERMATH, INC. - DEAD IN THE WATER.....	22
CHAPTER TEN: AFTERMATH, INC. - REINCARNATION.....	24
CHAPTER ELEVEN: AFTERMATH, INC. - LIVING END	27
CHAPTER TWELVE: AFTERMATH, INC. - TICKLED TO DEATH?	31
EPILOGUE	33
APPENDIX A: DREAM SCREEN - PITCH.....	35
APPENDIX B: DREAM SCREEN - 1ST DRAFT OUTLINE.....	38
APPENDIX C: DREAM SCREEN - 2ND DRAFT OUTLINE.....	42
APPENDIX D: AFTERMATH, INC. - PITCH.....	45
APPENDIX E: AFTERMATH, INC. - 1ST OUTLINE.....	47
APPENDIX F: AFTERMATH, INC. - 2ND DRAFT BEAT SHEET.....	51
APPENDIX G: AFTERMATH, INC. - 3RD DRAFT BEAT SHEET.....	58
APPENDIX H: AFTERMATH, INC. - 4TH DRAFT BEAT SHEET.....	66

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

When I entered the Screenwriting program at UT Austin, my dream was to be solely a feature writer. My short attention span and my inability to commit to much of anything in my life very much influenced this decision. I haven't had a serious relationship in almost ten years. The two years I've spent in Austin is the longest I've lived anywhere in that time. I usually only last nine months in any one place. I get bored. I want to throw everything out, move on, and start over again. And again. I associated feature writing with this aspect of my personality. In features, I could focus on one storyline, one group of characters for one span of time and when I finished, I could start something new again. And again.

A movie is like a one-night stand. Every movie invents its own world, characters, tone, style, and its own way of coming at a story. You finish a script, do as many drafts as you can, and then you move on. You start over again. And again. I thought I was fulfilled with these one-night stands and with throwing everything into one script and then beginning anew on something different. Yet, when I tried to write for television, I discovered I had been wrong.

A TV series is like a long-term relationship. Its world lasts. Each episode shares that world and fleshes it out. We get to know the same core characters better, coming to love or hate them. A series tells stories with a consistent tone,

reusing the same narrative structure, allowing it to focus on the richness of those stories. Could I commit myself to writing something that could potentially lead to season after season of the same franchise? Would these characters keep me interested enough to stick around? Would I get bored and just move on?

My first attempt at writing for television came in a little comedy spec I wrote for *Bored to Death* entitled, "The Case of the Human Bed Warmer." I didn't think much of it. I didn't think it was funny or entertaining. It was a simple story that was way too easy to write. But my classmates loved it. It was the only script that placed in festivals, while my features didn't even make it past the first round. I got it in my head that maybe I was better at writing for television, or at least, it seemed to come easier to me.

As I continued writing spec scripts I found that I actually enjoyed writing for television, particularly pilots. Creating a world and characters that will hopefully live on season after season is nothing short of magical. Planting a seed within the teaser that will grow to become the season arc for my characters, and braiding the storylines like challah is infuriatingly difficult and maddening, but it's breathtaking when I get it right.

The aftermath left once I shattered my dream of being solely a feature writer wasn't as hard to clean up as I thought it would be. Maybe I grew up, maybe I just understand television better than I do feature films. Maybe

I'm ready for a long-term relationship. Whatever the reason,
I know for certain that I'm now committed to writing for
television.

CHAPTER TWO: DREAM SCREEN – WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE

I have been an insomniac for most of my life. Because of this, I maintain a very strict bedtime ritual. I eat dinner no later than 8:00pm, take a shower by 9:00pm and put myself in bed at 10:00pm. I have trained my body to know that these three things, in this specific order mean it's bedtime.

Another part of this bedtime ritual, which happens just moments before I fall asleep is to ask for something specific to reveal itself in my dreams. Anything from childhood memories I've lost, to advice on a problem I'm sorting through in my daily life will come to me in my dreams. All I have to do is ask. Sometimes these dreams are completely lucid, and I'm in control of my surroundings and myself. Others are so confusing and disjointed that I cannot make sense of any one thing. Sometimes, it doesn't work at all and I don't even remember the dream. I know this sounds hokey and further confirms that I'm a true Northern Californian, but there it is.

It was two weeks before the spring semester and I didn't have any ideas for a pilot. So, like so many nights before, I asked for inspiration in my dream. For a few days there was nothing and I was beginning to become angry. Finally, this night it worked and this is what I received:

I woke up in hotel suite. It was midnight. It didn't take me long to realize that I was a man, and I was dreaming. I went to the front door but it was locked. Three

dead bolts, and a chain kept me inside. I pulled books down from the shelf looking for keys. Not finding them, I moved toward French doors that led to a balcony. They too were locked and confined me inside the room.

I became panicked. I needed to get out, but I didn't know why. I broke a window with my fist, opened the French doors and climbed onto the ledge. It was purely an instinctual response.

My suite was the top floor of a fifty-story building. I looked down: four lanes in either direction. "Can I make it to the building?" My hands began to sweat as the wind pushed me off balance and I stood there contemplating the jump. "No. I have to get down."

Then I woke up. I wasn't in bed; I was standing outside of my apartment here in Austin. My toes gripped the stone stairs leading from my front door. I wobbled to maintain balance and laughed: I hadn't been a sleepwalker since I was nine years old. I ran back inside my apartment and scribbled that dream down on a piece of paper before I had time to forget.

That dream was the foundation of my *Dream Screen* pilot, but how was I going to turn that dream into a television series? My research led me to a study about a woman who lost the ability to dream:

Swiss doctors, writing in the *Annals of Neurology*, describe the case of a 73-year-old woman who suffered a stroke to the occipital lobe of her brain. This region is responsible for the processing of visual information and,

unsurprisingly, the stroke impaired the patient's sight. A few days later she regained her sight, but a new problem emerged which astonished the doctors: the patient stopped dreaming.¹

Neurologist Dr. Claudio L Bassetti said they had stumbled on an important clue to the origins of dreams. The patient's experiences pointed to that part of the brain that acted as a sort of dream factory, as well as the extent of lesions needed to stop it from working. "As such, they offer a target for further study of the localization of dreaming," he concluded.²

Using this information I came up with the idea that a group of neurologists had found a way to remove nightmares by localizing a stroke in their patients' brains. The fantasy element was introduced when I decided that the doctors would be able to go inside the dream with the patient in order to help map where the dream is occurring in the brain and neutralize it. Thus, *Dream Screen* was born.

¹ Jha, Alok. "Sweet dreams are made of this ... have we solved the Freudian riddle?" September 9, 2004. The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2004/sep/10/highereducation.science>

² Jha, Alok. "Sweet dreams are made of this ... have we solved the Freudian riddle?" September 9, 2004. The Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2004/sep/10/highereducation.science>

CHAPTER THREE: DREAM SCREEN - "CAN YOU SEE?"

The first pitch of my new pilot was not well received. The prime note I received is the same note I receive on most of my initial ideas: the stakes are too low. Ultimately, what we would be watching in this pilot week by week is a person dreaming and the end result is that they don't have to dream that dream anymore. A boring concept with non-existent stakes.

What initially drew me to this pilot was the fact that I could do whatever I want in the dreams. Rules of logic and physics would not apply. Each dream could be visually stunning and emotionally sensational, but what was lacking were stakes that were high enough to compel viewers to come back and watch subsequent episodes.

My second attempt at a pitch was based off notes I received in that first workshop: What if they dream of murders before they happen? What if you model it after MINORITY REPORT? Why hasn't anyone turned that film into a TV series yet?

So that's what I did. I came back to the class with a new pitch where I created a futuristic world in which there were dream screens: a monitoring system that records a person's dream as it occurs and projects it onto a monitor just like a movie. This allowed the doctors and lab technicians to track progress and changes in those with sleep disturbances and effectively study dreams like never

before. My protagonist was now a neurologist and dream expert named Dr. Grant Hayes who dreams of murder forty-eight hours before it happens. He created the dream screen and eventually, with the help of his lab technicians and a detective, he is able to decipher symbols from his dreams in order to save the victim before they are murdered.

This pitch went over much better. The franchise of the show was much more compelling and the stakes were high. The most generous note I received was to make my protagonist a civilian instead of the doctor so we could follow him on his journey of discovery. The exposition scenes were now more organic, and the reader was now able to easily connect with the protagonist's struggle. Whereas the doctor had both the wisdom and the means, and ultimately embraced the fact that his dreams were precognitive, the new protagonist resisted this truth, which added much more conflict within the scenes.

In the first draft Fletcher Ward, an ex Army Ranger fresh from Afghanistan, agrees to participate in a sleep study in hopes of helping him work through his night terrors that his doctors believe is part of his post-traumatic stress disorder. On a particular night in the sleep clinic, Fletcher has a dream of Dr. Hayes's daughter. Honora, one of the lab technicians, notices this but does not inform Dr. Hayes until Fletcher returns to the lab explaining that he saw the girl from his dream dead at the marina. Dr. Hayes refuses to believe Fletcher until Detective Isabelle

Stevenson arrives and confirms Fletcher's story. When the three are finally convinced that Fletcher's dream was a precognition, they work together to find the next girl Fletcher dreams of before she is murdered too.

Dream Screen now had a strong concept, unique characters, conflict and stakes. The story of an ex-sniper and a dream expert, and a detective who fight against the clock to save the victims from the protagonist's dreams was now so gripping to drive people back week after week.

CHAPTER FOUR: DREAM SCREEN – PEAKS & VALLEYS

This was an unusual first draft experience in that I didn't receive feedback while drafting. I completed the first draft over the summer and didn't let anyone see it until a year later when I handed it over to Stuart.

The feedback I received on this draft was surprising. The concept was strong, the characters were interesting, and the storyline was compelling. Overall, I was very pleased that it was as cohesive and as entertaining as it was without having other people's eyes on the draft.

The biggest issue was the procedural aspect. Detective Stevenson's investigation was muddled. Her leads came haphazardly, and cause and effect didn't seem to exist. Suspects came in without a clear connection to the case, and then went without an explanation as to why they were no longer a suspect. This coupled with the fact that I would bring back suspects in the third act that were only mentioned in passing in the first made for a very confusing read.

In addition, the script was cluttered with an additional storyline of Fletcher searching out someone from his past that has also appeared in his dreams: a former Army Ranger who went rogue, whom Fletcher was supposed to assassinate but, when it came time to pull the trigger, he couldn't. We receive this information when he hunts down a former contact, and in discussions with Suzy, his brother's

wife with whom Fletcher was having an affair. This was just too much for the reader to comprehend and enjoy when combined with the details of the dream world and the investigation. It had to go.

Overall, the changes suggested by Stuart seemed easy to address and I hoped the next draft would be an easy one.

CHAPTER FIVE: DREAM SCREEN - NON-REM

With the feedback I received, *Dream Screen* was definitely going in a better direction but when it came to rewrite the script I had lost heart. I was no longer in love with the premise and the characters after having taken so much time away. This is a good thing. I could now make sound decisions on how to address these problems without losing the concept I fell in love with in the first place.

In the second draft I primarily focused on the procedural aspect, and cutting extraneous characters and storylines. Removing Detective Stevenson's investigation completely from the script, I was able to give it a clear beginning, middle, and end, which allowed for a stronger storyline that was much easier to follow once I put it back on the page. Each lead rolled into a suspect and a discernible explanation was given if the suspect was released.

Fletcher's affair with his brother's wife Suzy was cut and given to Honora, the lab technician. She is closer to the central storyline and their relationship adds more conflict considering he's a patient. The backstory of Fletcher in the military felt too cluttered to be an additional storyline in the pilot so I toned it down to be minor beats during the study of Fletcher's dreams.

The smallest change was to make Dr. Hayes's daughter his granddaughter in hopes of making it easier to believe

that Hayes is able to continue working after the death of a family member. In the first draft, Hayes came off a bit heartless and it appeared that Hayes believed science is more important than grieving. While he grieves his granddaughter, he is not so broken to continue with the investigation without coming off as callous.

This was also the first time I tried writing a six-act structure as opposed to four-act. I was terrified at first, but it did make the rewrite easier. Each act was more condensed and it was easier to encapsulate a clear beginning, middle and end to each act than it was with the four-act structure. The six-act structure further helped me clearly define proper cliffhangers and build to that climax in each act.

The third draft of *Dream Screen* was mainly a polish. I cut out extraneous scenes, delved deeper into Fletcher and Honora's relationship, and trimmed unnecessary lines of dialogue and scene descriptions. *Dream Screen* was, and probably always will be, the script that came the easiest and was the most effortless to rewrite.

CHAPTER SIX: DREAM SCREEN – THE DREAM REALIZED

I once heard that there are scripts you have to write, scripts you're compelled to write and there are scripts you simply want to write. *Dream Screen* was definitely the script that I had to write. The initial idea came from my subconscious and I truly believe this is one of the reasons why the first draft was so strong. The idea was stuck in my head and I had to get it out, one way or another.

Moreover, I was able to write without reservation. It was the first script I've written in this program that I didn't write to the reader. Whether I want to admit it or not, I did care what my classmates thought of my writing and struggled to write the most perfect scenes I could instead of just letting myself write whatever came up. I did not have this constraint with *Dream Screen*. I wrote the first draft purely for me. When finally going back to rewrite the script I learned how to create a strong procedural, while still entertaining my dream fantasies. This script allowed me to have the best of both worlds.

The first draft of *Dream Screen* was a Second Rounder at the Austin Film Festival, which came as a surprise. I was delighted it made it that far, what with all the problems I still needed to address. Yet, even with all the issues the initial draft had, the process of re-writing *Dream Screen* was one of the best experiences I've had in this program. The fact that I lost some interest and wasn't blinded by my

love for every moment in the script helped my rewrite immensely. I was able to detach myself and look at it constructively, and eventually fall back in love with it when I was done.

CHAPTER SEVEN: AFTERMATH, INC. - AT DEATH'S DOOR

I've always been fascinated with death and the people who deal with death: coroners, homicide detectives, morticians, and particularly, crime scene cleaners. No one has done a show about crime scene cleaners and I thought it would be interesting to see the world from their perspective. Unlike *Dream Screen*, this script was not one I had to write, but one I wanted to write.

A friend told me a story of his experience of his first day at the job for a crime scene cleanup organization:

The smell was awful. The guy had slit his wrists and blood was everywhere. You could tell where he did it; the living room carpet was soaked. But then it got weird. There were drops everywhere, and swipes on drawers, and walls and... god it was everywhere. You could tell he'd changed his mind. It was like the instinct to live kicked in. But it didn't happen soon enough. He died in the kitchen.

A sad story indeed, but I was smitten. That day I found an article in the LA Weekly about crime scene cleaners. The author called them "The Death Squad." She recounts a job they did where a lawyer killed himself with a shotgun in his storage unit:

The unit is hot and filled with the heady smell of disinfectant and blood. The manager promises to turn the air conditioning on, but the crew is still waiting. "I am sweating in places I didn't know I could," jokes Salcido, who looks like he just jumped into a swimming pool. Redlus and Salcido begin to fan each other with ripped cardboard between lifting heavy boxes and moving bedroom furniture. Even the cockroaches look bothered by the heat and scurry away. "The cockroaches get into your clothes, and you take them home with you," says Salcido as he watches them flee. The bookcase, which is lined up against

the sidewall, has taken the biggest hit. Each of the four shelves is inches thick in brain, blood and skull debris. Four days after the fact, the blood has turned into what looks like thick globs of strawberry Jell-O. Walking around the bookcase is like walking through a miniature trough full of sticky candy-apple coating.³

Who are these people that we hire to face death for us? Who are these people clean up the remains of a person who often took their own lives? What does that do to them? For Redlus, it is better not to think about the deceased at all. "I try not to think too much about every cleanup," says Redlus. "I will go crazy."⁴ Yet, when reading the autobiographies of several other cleaners, they avoid the pain associated with many of these deaths through comedy. They do what I do in any tough situation, they make jokes, and they make light of the situation. Yet, they are not disrespectful or crude. In fact, they all had a deep reverence for the dead and the grieving. They are skilled in comforting those left behind, and take pride in the job that no one else wants to do. Yet, their lighthearted nature when tossing a piece of skull into a garbage bag like a basketball free throw, or commenting on the "stew" that is month-old decomposing flesh in a bathtub, is commonplace and somewhat encouraged. You cannot deal with such horrendous sights on a daily basis without going crazy unless you find

³ Pelisek, Christine. "The Death Squads. May 5, 2005. LA Weekly. <http://www.laweekly.com/2005-05-05/news/the-death-squads/>

⁴ Pelisek, Christine. "The Death Squads. May 5, 2005. LA Weekly. <http://www.laweekly.com/2005-05-05/news/the-death-squads/>

a way to cope and their way was to make light of a grave situation. I was hooked.

CHAPTER EIGHT: AFTERMATH, INC. - DEAD LEVEL BEST

My first instinct when attempting to create a pilot about crime scene clean up was to go against my instinct to make this a procedural. I didn't want my characters solving crimes, I wanted to see how a group of people thrown together in a job that most happen upon rather than search out as a career colors their perspectives and how the stories of the dead they clean up affect their daily lives.

I wanted to do something new, something more like *Six Feet Under*: a show that focuses on human mortality and the lives of those who are surrounded by death. In the same way that each of the characters in that series found their own ways to escape through sex or drugs, so too did I want my characters to have their own unique ways of maintaining normalcy in an abnormal environment.

With the pitch, I went with a structure closer to *Six Feet Under*. Each episode starts with a death, and that death represents a running theme in the lives of each of the characters. The team would come upon the corpse in varying degrees of decay. The way they died, who they left behind, and what led them to their final act in death would color how each one of the characters would deal. Each would try to push through all of that suffering, grief and depression through humor, avoidance, or simply keeping their head down and clean as easily as one would clean spilled coffee off a kitchen floor.

My protagonist, Miles, is the wiry, stoic, cigarette-huffing leader. Often, Miles imagines he is cleaning up his own remains, or he imagines what it would be like to live the victim's life. Miles' crew chief is 58-year-old Reed, a soft-spoken, cherubic man with a devilish sense of humor. As an obsessive cleaner, Andy is invaluable to the team. With a steel stomach and her immunity to smells, she often eats during cleanups. At 26, Tucker is the youngest and newest member of the team. He is apple-pie cute and looks as out of place in the industry as would Richie Cunningham.

We open the episode with LA County in a bit of a dry spell. No one is killing themselves, no one is killing each other, and the elderly who expire are being cleaned up by Miles's rival clean up crew. The main storyline of the pilot surrounds Andy's stepfather's murder by her mother. The procedural aspect was there, as Miles uncovers the truth of this particular job and is blackmailed by Andy to keep it quiet. However, I kept the script tightly coiled around the character dynamics and drama that ensued in their daily lives rather than giving the script a solid through line that we could track.

I further tried to incorporate the humor from the autobiographies I read into this first draft. When we meet Miles, we soon learn that his company is in trouble. His rival is taking all of his business, and jobs are scarce as it is. Miles tries to revamp his company and he starts with a new slogan: *"The housekeepers of violent deaths. When*

you're in pain, we clean the stain. Undoing the damage since 1998." None of these were right. It's not until the end of the episode when Andy says about her newly cleaned home: "It's like it never even happened," does Miles realize he's found his new slogan. Another humorous moment in the first draft is when one of the client's refuses to pay after Miles has already finished the job. After multiple attempts to contact the client and receive payment, Miles finally returns the waste, blood and all, to the house from whence it came. These moments, together with their individual attitudes toward death and cleaning up remains made for some great, darkly comic moments. At least, that's what I thought at first.

After reading through what I had written, I knew there was a major problem. The only moment that I still loved in the entire episode was the moment Reed finds a family of dead possums in his attic. I tried my best to create a unique pilot but obviously, something was wrong.

CHAPTER NINE: AFTERMATH, INC. - DEAD IN THE WATER

On the whole, I tried to make a show that was crying out for a procedural aspect into a family drama, and this was the problem. After that first draft and the notes I got from Stuart, I had to go in another direction. I had to make this show into a procedural. I was disappointed that my idea hadn't worked, but the feedback Stuart gave me made sense.

There were several major issues with this first draft. First, Miles had no backstory. At least, his backstory was not coming through on the page, and it certainly wasn't driving his decisions. Also, Miles came across a bit maniacal, which made it hard for readers to connect with him. They understood his reasoning (his wife had been murdered), but on the page, it just wasn't working.

Second, the main storyline was weak. The events that took place could happen anywhere, at anytime. There was no reason they *had* to clean up crime scenes. The crime scenes themselves were there simply for the gore factor and because of my profound interest in crime scene clean up. Third, the franchise was mostly non-existent. After finishing that first draft I still couldn't say exactly what an audience would be watching week by week.

The script ultimately evolved to be more of a portrait, a day in the life that just happened to be set in the world of crime scene clean up. The script was quite literally dead in the water, and has no chance of succeeding or of making

any progress. Now, I had to start over. The next draft would be a page one rewrite.

CHAPTER TEN: AFTERMATH, INC. - REINCARNATION

I made some major changes in the second draft. First, the structure had to change. I still started the episode with a murder as I did in the first draft, but this time all the major act breaks revolved around solving the case and catching a killer. This raised the stakes significantly, and made the A story much more focused and consistent.

Miles was basically the same character, but now he had motivation. As a former crime scene investigator, Miles was convicted of three serial murders. He was sentenced to death, spent three years on death row until the real serial killer struck again, and killed Miles's pregnant wife. When Miles was released, and no longer able to work in crime scene investigation, he started a crime scene clean up company in the hopes of finding the serial killer's next victim so he could exact revenge. This gives Miles a compelling reason to work in this profession, and gives the audience a reason to empathize with him.

The principal storyline centered on Andy's pregnant mother's murder, which Miles is called in to clean up. When Miles arrives, he discovers that the scene looks almost exactly like the scene from Miles's wife's murder. This raises the stakes for Miles personally and also causes major problems within his central relationships. Adding Nicole Fuller, a female detective, gave Miles the means to push evidence through the police department. Yet, as they have a

shaky romantic relationship, often Fuller and Miles were at cross-purposes: Miles simply wants to solve the case and Fuller wants to have a much more serious relationship with Miles than he is capable of having. Fuller's attempts to ground Miles often fail, and the two are constantly in conflict: she believes Miles is blinded by revenge, while Miles is convinced he's following the evidence that will lead him to the man who killed his wife.

In the first draft, Andy was merely a girl who wanted to clean up her stepfather's remains so she can be sure he's gone forever, and make Miles an accessory to murder. In the second draft Andy is not so cunning, but she definitely further complicates things for Miles. Andy's stepfather is arrested for the murder of her mother, and Andy doesn't want him to go free even if he's innocent because of the years of abuse he inflicted on her and her mother. This adds much more to their relationship than the blackmail angle from the first draft. Andy is in pain and Miles has to balance his empathy and need to comfort her with his need to find the real killer. Ultimately, Miles's need to find the real killer overshadows his sympathy for Andy. But the ending is bittersweet: in finding the real killer, he uncovers the fact that this is not the same man who killed his wife.

Another major change involved the supporting characters. First, I changed Reed to Lou, an ex-con who was convicted of murder, who was later exonerated and is expecting a large settlement for the twenty years of his

life that he lost. Like Lou, Tucker is now also an ex-con, convicted of raping a patient when he was a nurse. Miles hired both of these men because he empathized with their tragic pasts, and because they were, like him, wrongly accused by the DA, Everett Hudson. Hudson had faked evidence in the past to ensure convictions and Miles's secondary goal in this series is to expose Hudson's misconduct. Unlike the three crime scene cleaners, Andy was guilty and convicted of attempting to kill her older brother and spent four years in a juvenile facility. Each of their unique experiences played into how they helped investigate the murder, and how they interacted with each other.

The unique backstories for each of these characters coupled with the procedural aspect made the episode rich and much more compelling than the first draft. Interweaving the story with their individual grievances and motivations made for a much more enjoyable drafting process, and a much better read, but there were still some major problems.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: AFTERMATH, INC. - LIVING END

In the third draft I primarily focused on the individual storylines. I was not pleased with the steps Miles was taking in order to solve the crime. One in particular came at the beginning of the third act. Lucy, Andy's mother's neighbor had a copy of the house key, so Miles questions her and received information on a potential lead. I absolutely loved the exchange that happened in this scene between Lucy and Miles but logically, it didn't work. Miles had a copy of the police report, which contained Lucy's information. The fact that this wasn't his first stop in the investigation didn't ring true to me, as speaking with the neighbor would be the first thing I would do. I kept it in this draft only because I couldn't find a valid replacement at the time.

In the previous draft, Tucker dealt more with his relationship with Samantha than he did with the investigation and clean up. He was in no way essential to solving the case. I attempted to give him more to do in the investigation, but this felt inconsistent and forced. I couldn't find a way to work him into the story organically, so this too I left alone for the time being.

Lou's storyline needed the most work in this draft. One of the problems I had with *Dream Screen* was prevalent here. I was not leading the reader so they could make sense of the plot. All the essential elements were there, I just needed to move them around and add dialogue to help the reader

recognize Lou's motivations and decisions regarding the case.

Andy was in a juvenile facility for four years because she attempted to kill her brother and this was a miniscule beat in the first draft, which I wanted to expand on. So I inserted Eric, her brother, in an attempt add drama and tension not just around their mother's murder, but between them and the backstory they share.

The murder in this case was more causal than the last, which worked quite well. Ryan, Andy's mother's lover was the real father of her unborn child. Ryan wanted her to leave her husband for him. They argued, she came at him with a knife and he accidentally killed her. While the murder was still a mishap, his reasons for being in the house were based upon their backstory, and were tied into the central storyline.

Many of these aspects changed in the fourth draft. First, I made Miles much more active. He now was aggressively searching out leads on the killer through manipulation of the love interest, Detective Fuller, and with his knowledge of crime scene investigation. What worked much better in this draft was the struggle between Miles really wanting to believe this is the man who killed his wife, and the facts of the case that sometimes prove otherwise. This made Miles a much more flawed character and my empathy for him and his struggle grew.

I also needed to focus Miles's desire to catch the serial killer who killed his wife and show how that affects his everyday life. The problem was, he didn't really have anyone to talk to about what was going on inside his head, and we didn't get a full understanding of how his wife's murder, the murder of his unborn child, and the time he spent in prison affects him now. Knowing that the Tucker and Samantha storyline was just not working, I cut them out and gave Miles a daughter, Jordan. Jordan's problems at school, grief over her dead mother, having to be in foster care while her father was in prison, and how what he does for a living affects her really added a richness to Miles's life I didn't think possible. I'm not very good at writing children and generally don't care for them in television shows. But I did fall in love with Arya Stark from *Game of Thrones*, so I tried to create Jordan in her image: a child who is smart, strong-willed, but also vulnerable and broken. Jordan is now my favorite character in the series because she is a little reckless, but loving when she needs to be, and she's just a joy to watch.

In addition to the changes with Miles's character, I completely cut Andy's brother Eric out of the pilot, and changed Andy's backstory. In this draft Andy actually killed her brother. This adds a nice dynamic between her and Miles. Miles is all about second chances, and though the people he surrounds himself with were wrongly accused, he helps Andy

because he believes she needs a second chance more than the others.

In the previous three drafts, I maintained that I needed a tag. Each one centered on the serial murderer and Miles and Andy's new working relationship. In each one Andy finds a new clue that Miles was missing before that will ultimately lead them closer to finding his wife's killer. While I loved each one, I had to cut them. They simply weren't adding a suspenseful twist that would compel a viewer to watch the next episode.

Instead of a tag, a particularly interesting thing happened in the fourth draft: my favorite aspect of the first draft came back in the most creative and useful of ways. Miles and Jordan moved into a rundown Victorian that Miles intends to fix up. One night, Miles chooses to follow a lead instead of spending the night with his daughter like he had promised. Jordan runs away, and Miles searches for her to no avail only after he catches the killer. When he returns home he finds her in the attic sitting next to the family of dead possums.

This moment is the most important between these two characters because it shows where their loyalties lie, the grief they're struggling through and the strain this has put on their lives. Bringing back that moment from the first draft and giving it to these two characters worked much better than any of the tags that came before it, and was a good ending to a decent script.

CHAPTER TWELVE: AFTERMATH, INC. - TICKLED TO DEATH?

What was most interesting about the process of rewriting *Aftermath, Inc* was the fact that I started out trying to write a pilot that was heavily centered on the characters and their dynamics, and ended up with a script that had a strong procedural aspect *and* strong character moments. The most valuable lesson I learned during this process was creating interesting characters and using their backstories to provoke their decisions and create conflict within their relationships.

What's more, I learned the ability to see the note behind the note. During a feature screenwriting class, I tried to write for the instructor and match exactly the notes that he and my classmates were giving me. Making the exact changes they were telling me to make didn't work on the page, I lost my excitement for the script and everything fell flat. With *Aftermath, Inc*, I read the notes and tried to find my own way of solving those problems instead of taking each fix at face value. Each time I came back with better pages and I think Stuart was enjoying the read a bit more that way.

Ultimately, I'm not done with this script yet. I would like to go back and make at least two more passes as I feel the tone not quite where I want it to be. I'd like to bring in the humor from the books I've read by crime scene cleaners, but given Miles's backstory of his dead wife and

unborn child, this is proving difficult. I may not ever be able to completely reconcile the darkness of the subject matter with how darkly comic actual crime scene cleaners are, but I hope some of that will eventually come through.

EPILOGUE

Before I started the rewrite process on both of these scripts I questioned whether I could commit myself to a series that tells stories with a consistent tone, reuses the same narrative structure, allowing it to focus on the richness of the storylines with the same characters week after week. The answer is a decisive yes.

The most useful thing I learned in this process, which helped with every single aspect of my writing was this: parsing down the story to only its essentials. This happens, then this happens and then THIS happens. It's such a simple concept, and one that I didn't really understand until I rewrote these pilots. Leading the reader and breaking the story down to a simple cause and effect made for a much easier read. Breaking the script down to a six-act structure instead of a four-act structure also gave me a better understanding of each of the acts and how to drive the story to that climax at the end of each act. Breaking each act down into a clear beginning, middle and end further gave me a better understand of the structure as a whole.

What I've learned about character has been invaluable on the two new TV pilots I'm working on currently. Forcing a character to respond based on who they are and their backstory gave me a much better understanding of character goals and the obstacles I need to create that work within the story to keep them from achieving these goals.

Now, with a stronger grasp on television writing I feel like I have the tools to continue writing TV pilots that are structurally sound, contain fascinating characters that are in conflict with themselves and each other, while maintaining the concept that drew me to them in the first place.

After the experience of working on these two scripts for my thesis, I learned more than I ever thought possible about character, structure, and what it takes to create a great series. Whether the two pilots I've created are great still remains to be seen, but one thing is certain: I no longer fear commitment and maintain a deeper need and obligation to television than I've ever had for writing features. The aftermath left once I shattered my dream of being solely a feature writer was actually the best thing that happened to me in this program.

DREAM SCREEN

Pitch

Dreams are a world of imagery in which our darkest fears, deepest secrets, and most passionate fantasies break out from our subconscious and come alive while we sleep. They can vary from normal and monotonous, to surreal and terrifying. Everybody dreams. But, not everybody dreams of murder... 48 hours before it happens.

The year is 2045 and Doctor Grant Hayes has invented the Dream Screen: a machine that records dreams in real time, exactly as they occur in the subconscious, which can then be played back, much like a short film. With this new technology, Doctor Hayes is able to analyze and decode his dreams of murder, and with the help of Detective Isabelle Ross, capture perpetrators before they commit the crime.

Dream Screen is a new take on the detective drama: a mix of cop-show conventions, clairvoyant phenomena, action, terror and a little humor.

In each episode, Doctor Hayes will analyze a new dream in an attempt to decipher the random clues and symbols within that dream. Some of these dreams will be terrifying and close to reality, while others will be absurd, even comical, but all of them will contain three specific details: either the murderer or victim, the location and the weapon used. As they investigate, they will uncover new insights into the dream's symbolism, and ultimately find physical evidence that will lead them to the perpetrator – often, just in time and sometimes, a moment too late.

Characters:

DOCTOR GRANT HAYES, (40) is the Director of the Sleep Research Center at Stanford University. He is laid-back and unemotional most of the time, but easily takes offense at interruptions into his daily routine. While within the confines of his lab, he is king; his social interactions outside the lab are often strained. He's somewhat erratic and often lost in the world of his dreams. This is where DETECTIVE ISABELLE ROSS comes in. She's street-wise, objective and socially at ease with people – the exact opposite of Doctor Hayes. Secretly she is infatuated with him and he with her, but for their own reasons, they never make this known to the other party.

Episodes:

NAPPING

Doctor Hayes has a dream of a woman and her four-year-old son in Golden Gate Park. They lie on a blanket and as the woman quickly nods off, the boy sneaks away. He follows a butterfly through the woods and into a house where a man feeds him and puts him down for a nap. Suddenly, it's night and the little boy's body is cocooned in plastic and tied to a freeway onramp sign. Their investigation leads them to the grieving mother and potential kidnappers until the mother reveals that they weren't actually in the park when it happened, but were walking just on the outskirts. This leads them to investigate employees at the Conservatory of Flowers and to the kidnapper - an employee of the Butterfly Exhibit. In the end, they find the boy just as the man is about to smother him with plastic.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Dream: Fifteen handi-capable kids ranging in age from 4 to 16 - some on a slow moving train, some on swings, others on a merry-go-round. A ten year old boy cries (we cannot see his face) while Mr. Billings comforts him. Then - a home invasion - armed, masked men rob the Billings residence. A gun in Mr. Billings's mouth as his wife screams - then the sound of a gunshot. As they investigate, the evidence leads them to a group who has been robbing people for the last three months all over the city, but Dr. Hayes isn't convinced that they've caught the right perps. He reviews the footage again and this leads them back to the Billings residence where the fifteen children are playing in their backyard mini-circus. All but one - the ten-year-old boy. They find him with a gun in his adoptive father's mouth about to kill him - revenge for years of sexual abuse.

FATE

Dream: Inside a home, an abstract painting catches fire and soon the entire home is engulfed in flames. On a trail along a remote beach, a woman fights with an unseen person. Suddenly, a knife plunges into her throat and she stumbles backward off the cliff and into the ocean. The investigation leads them to an art curator and eventually the victim - a happily married woman named Rebecca Coffey. Unbeknownst to her husband, she is not happily married, but is having an affair with an artist who is the primary suspect until - Mr. Coffey discovers the affair while purchasing an abstract painting. He attacks her lover and later returns home with the painting. He calls his wife and asks her to meet him at the beach. Luckily for her, Detective Ross is tracking him and they catch him right before he stabs his wife.

TEXT SPEAK

Dream: A random text message - the MUNI tunnel in the Ocean District - pine needle covered ground - a fifteen year old girl screams as her clothes are ripped off - repeated blows to her face with a rock until she's dead. When Detective Ross sees the footage, she knows the girl immediately - it is Josie Ratley, the Police Chief's daughter. They inform the Chief and though he's skeptical, he decides to make her stay home until they can find out more. While at home, Josie overhears a phone conversation - her father lied about a police shooting years earlier that resulted in three dead civilians (he shot and killed three unarmed black youths and claimed it was self-defense). After she fights with her father and threatens to reveal his secret to the press, she sneaks out and texts the only person she can trust - her boyfriend. He agrees to meet her at their private location - a small wooded area

in the Ocean District. Though she's under surveillance, she's afraid that she can no longer trust the police so she takes extra steps to evade them as she heads to meet her boyfriend. She waits and when she sees a figure approaching she thinks it's her boyfriend - but it's a man she's never seen before. She struggles, just as Detective Ross and her teams show up. Later it's learned that the Chief called her boyfriend to find out where she was and sent someone there to murder her and make it look like a sexual attack in order to keep his secret safe.

Season Arcs:

Doctor Hayes' search for his daughter's killer. The trouble Doctor Hayes has attempting to incite the dream again will run throughout the episodes. Once he does this, he will work with Detective Ross to find the killer (possibly in the season finale).

DREAM SCREEN

Pilot Outline - 4 ACT

Teaser

DREAM SEQUENCE I: “*When a Man Loves a Woman*” by Percy Sledge plays. FLETCHER WARD, (27) walks along the docks. Instead of boats – zebras, elephants, and giraffes walk on the water. A BLONDE SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL, dress covered in blood, joins a pack of hyenas as they rip apart a carcass. It rains. As raindrops hit the ground, they bounce and turn into marbles. Fletcher slips and slides on the marbles until he falls. Suddenly, he’s tangled in honeysuckle vines that grow through the window of a yellow bedroom. The honeysuckle wraps around a bunk bed. Fletcher climbs through the vines and out the window. He turns back to the house – now it’s a six-story brick building. He enters – the music grows louder. What looks like miles of open space – hardwood floors, aqua glass walls, white fabric draped across the ceiling, bamboo. This is only one side of the building. The other side is gutted – a six-story spiral staircase, steel beams and electrical wires poke out from the exposed brick walls. Fletcher climbs the staircase – jumps the gap between the two sides. The aqua glass walls shatter as he walks through them. He follows a trail of half-eaten strawberries, moldy bread, and dry kidney beans to – a wood paneled room where the song blasts out of a stereo. On the floor – two baseballs. Fletcher picks them up – from their stitches, they bleed. END DREAM SEQUENCE.

Fletcher wakes. SUZY MILLER-WARD (26) sleeps next to him. He traces her lower back with his finger until she wakes. Later, Fletcher gives Suzy cab fare. She says she’s not a whore and they shouldn’t keep doing this. After she leaves, he writes in his dream journal.

A marble rolls toward the gutter. A hand grabs it before it’s lost. The hand is Fletcher’s. A blonde six-year-old girl runs up to him, in her hand – a net full of marbles. She tells him to give her back her marble. When Fletcher looks – he immediately recognizes her from his dream. Her mother runs over, tells her not to talk to strangers. Fletcher says something that is taken the wrong way by the mother. She grabs her daughter and runs off, frightened.

DETECTIVE ISABELLE ROSS, (30) at a crime scene. The blonde six-year-old girl’s body is found in a dumpster. There are stitches that run from her sternum to her pelvis. Detective Ross interviews the grieving mother. The mother tells her there was a man who said something to her on the street that worried her. Detective Ross asks the mother to meet with a sketch artist.

Act I

Fletcher goes to Suzy's. "Thought you said we couldn't keep doing this." They have sex. The next morning, Fletcher sees the newspaper article about the girl's death.

Fletcher goes home only to be met by Det. Ross. She Arrests him.

Det Ross goes through his dream journal. Interrogation - he can't tell Det Ross where he was because he doesn't want his brother to find out he's been fucking his wife. He swears that they were just dreams. She decides to find info on dream research.

In SleepQuest -DOCTOR GRANT HAYES, (50) and NORA CALVIN, (40) move into the central monitoring area where they find - HONORA DUNCAN, (27) a post-doctoral fellow watching a porn dream on the Dream Screen. The room is filled with these screens - all displaying different dreams. MILO BECKETT, (23) a research assistant, fights with Honora about what she is watching. Doctor Hayes breaks up the fight. Det Ross enters and tells him what's going on. She shows him the entry dates TWO DAYS before the girl's murder. Dr. Hayes reads. Dr. Hayes asks Det. Ross two specific questions: 1. Was the blonde girl kidnapped from the Zoo? And 2. Were there particulates from a honeysuckle vine found on her body? Detective Ross is stunned - this information was not released to the press. He tells her that it's not possible but to bring him in and we'll see.

Act II

The autopsy reveals that the girl was gutted - internal organs were removed and she was stitched back up - it's the work of a surgeon. They're concerned it's a serial murder. Det Ross lies and says he has to go to the lab. They talk on the drive over. Where were you if you weren't out killing a young girl? It'll sound really bad. Worse than murder? Kinda. I've got ten texts and ten missed calls from 'worse than murder.'

Det Ross brings Fletcher to the sleep lab. Doctor Hayes explains the procedure as he hooks up Fletcher to the machine.

DREAM SEQUENCE II:

A storybook full of vivid drawings. As the pages turn, we see moving images: Tiny white flowers with legs climb a wooden ladder and dive into a pond - Large gears and a greasy chain move rigidly, pump fluid into a tube - A tea party with goats, pigs and sheep - A blue and white striped mailbox that reads: Samantha. The mailbox overflows with blood - A six-year-old girl with naked twin dolls in her hands. She makes the dolls kiss each other. On the bottom of each page reads: *Down deep in his soul - She can bring him such misery - If she plays him for a fool - He's the last one to know - Loving eyes can never see.* END DREAM SEQUENCE.

Dr Hayes will review the journal from the first dream and say that the song is the connecting factor. You may have a serial case on your hands. And if so- then that's your next victim. He points to the screen.

Act III

Detective Ross matches the drawing Dr. Hayes gave her with a missing persons report made earlier that day. She decides to look at Fletcher's dream in the lab again. All Det. Ross sees is a jumble of images that prove nothing. Dr. Hayes sees clues that can lead them to the killer. He points out several of these clues and from them, he knows where the second girl was kidnapped - from the state fair. Also, that they're looking for a surgeon. Det. Hayes agrees to let them accompany her during the investigation.

When they meet with the grieving parents of the second kidnapped girl, Dr. Hayes interrupts Det. Ross' questioning with random questions of his own - details from the dream that mean nothing to the parents. Det. Ross' frustrations shows. Fletcher notices a series of children's books - the drawings inside look exactly like his last dream. The family pediatrician gave those to them. Det Ross decides to question him, but Doctor Hayes thinks this is a waste of time. (ARMI'S NOTES) Explain that this is a red herring for dreams.

In the lab, Honora and Milo help Dr. Hayes and Fletcher review the notes from his first dream and analyze the footage from the last. They come to the conclusion that it is a surgeon who has twins.

Fletcher opens his door to find his brother, MICHAEL WARD (30). Michael punches Fletcher in the face - tells him that his wife Suzy is pregnant and it could be his.

The PEDIATRICIAN has no alibi at the time of the kidnapping, he's her primary suspect. One problem, where's the girl?

Act IV

Their analysis leads Det Ross, Fletcher and Dr. Hayes to a hospital that is partly closed due to renovations. They question a nurse about any doctor who has twins, or is a twin. She lets them know that Doctor Rogers' twin girls have primary hyperoxaluria.

Doctor Rogers' house has a few things that are reminiscent of the first dream - aqua glass walls, bamboo - and most importantly - a honeysuckle vine that overhands one bedroom, but the doctor is not home. Dr. Hayes is sure this man has the girl on a boat. He asks Det Ross and she said the background check showed a boat named - they say it together "Samantha."

Dr. Hayes, Fletcher and Det. Ross sneak up to a white boat with a blue stripe named Samantha. They hear faint music playing. Inside, they find DR ROGERS with the kidnapped girl tied to a table inside the wood paneled boat ready to operate while “*When a Man Loves a Woman*” by Percy Sledge plays. They arrest him and find the organs from his previous victim on the boat as well.

After Dr. Rogers is taken away, Dr. Hayes convinces Det. Ross to let them help on future cases. Fletcher refuses. Then...

DREAM SEQUENCE III:

Fletcher runs through the jungle. Bloody military fatigues, a rifle in his hands. Heavy artillery fire rips through the trees. Viet Cong, bloody holes where their faces should be, chase after him - firing. A man screams: “I’ve been hit!” Fletcher runs toward the voice and out of the jungle to find - a giant hill of black obsidian stones in a wide-open field. The stones shift into colored, moving geometrical forms then melt into a lake - Fletcher is now underwater. The water froths as Fletcher swims to the surface and climbs onto a beach. On top of the cliff is a house that’s on fire. Fletcher charges toward the house where Michael Ward sits on the porch in a rocking chair - his limbs dangle from nerves and tendons at each joint - as if they were almost ripped off. Michael smiles at Fletcher and says, “Supper’s on,” then enters the burning house.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

Fletcher enters SleepQuest.

APPENDIX C: DREAM SCREEN – 2ND DRAFT OUTLINE

DREAM SCREEN

Pilot – Short Outline – Draft Two

TEASER

FLETCHER WARD has a dream of Rebecca's murder. On the computer he sees an image of a star with wings. He sees this same symbol at the marina. It is so contorted that we can't make out that it is the Air Force Insignia. It's like a the back cover of a mad magazine. The page is folded and we're missing pieces.

Fletcher breaks out of the lab.

ACT ONE

Fletcher wakes. Steals clothes and breaks into his house. Honora comes over to see if he's okay. They have sex. Fletcher wakes – tries to strangle her.

Honora recognizes Rebecca in Fletcher's dream.

Jacqueline, Grant's daughter tells him that her daughter is missing.

Fletcher goes to look for the symbol at the marina. He doesn't find it, but he sees Rebecca's body.

Fletcher goes to tell Grant what he saw. He's freaking. Fletcher learns that the girl is Grant's granddaughter.

ACT TWO

Stevenson interviews Grant. Asks Fletcher questions about dream. Why would he dream of Rebecca?

Stevenson and Lee look over UNOS list – uncover Becker. Introduce the medical aspect.

They interview Becker. Then find that he's not our guy.

Fletcher at library trying to figure out what the symbol is.

Stevenson suspicious of Fletcher, examines his file with Lee.

Stevenson sees medical examiner. Honeysuckle and Kidneys removed before they died – he needs them viable.

At the lab, they realize that Fletcher is dreaming of murders before they happen. We can stop the murders before they happen.

ACT THREE

In the lab, we learn of the one thing that doesn't fit – they symbol in all of his dreams. Asks Fletcher what it is – he says he doesn't know. They plan to record his dream tomorrow (he's too drunk to do it tonight).

Paul was found on the zoo surveillance. Lee gives her shit for following the dream lead. Stevenson interviews another suspect. Turns out he used to be a OBGYN but lost his license for inappropriate behavior. What kind of guy goes to a zoo alone?

Fletcher sneaks out of the lab, and goes to find out what the symbol means.

Fletcher returns. Grant calls Fuller in.

Fletcher's dream.

Grant tells Fuller this is her next victim.

ACT FOUR

In the lab, they talk of how Fletcher's dreams predict the future. How they can stop these murders before they happen.

Stevenson learns that the girl's name is not Samantha. Lee gives her the info on the missing person's report.

Stevenson goes to interview parents of missing child. The parents say the police wouldn't do anything until she'd been missing for twenty-four hours. But now she's here. She see's Chapman's name. Then Lee confirms the connection – that's Rebecca's pediatrician too.

Fletcher and Honora. Breaks down. They were wrong, it's not PTSD. Honora hints that it is like a mad magazine back page.

The cops search Chapman's house. They find evidence but most of it is circumstantial.

Chapman is in the interrogation room and Fletcher and Grant are there too. None of them think he's the one who did it. But why? Because the evidence looks planted and whoever did this needed those kidneys.

ACT FIVE

Grant and Fletcher go over the files again. The twins are too much of a stretch. The girl didn't say, "he's on the list, or she's on the list. She said *they're* on the list." Then they say twins but admit it's a stretch but it's all we have to go on for now. They make the connection between the twins and the doctor – their father. It is the same hospital that Chapman works at.

They go to the hospital where Stevenson has also made the connection – but the doctor isn't there.

The three go to Montgomery's house.

ACT SIX

They make it to the marina and catch him on his boat. He confesses here.

Stevenson offers Grant and Fletcher an opportunity to work with the police. Grant's excited, Fletcher refuses. He's not interested. I want to go back to how it was before.

Fletcher goes home and figures out the symbol – 82 Airborne. He knows what this means. (maybe this symbol is a way for him to stop having these dreams)

Fletcher has another dream of murder. Two lovers. Delicate moments. A fight. Broken glass. A romantic fire but what is burning is a body. A gun shot to the throat. The girl chokes on blood as she dies.

Fletcher goes back to Stevenson and Grant to take the job.

The Death Squad

Pitch

No one heard the rifle shot that ended the former attorney's life inside his storage unit four days earlier. The body is gone, and so are the police, but the mess remains. Blood and skull fragments the size of coins and golf balls don't just coat the walls and ceiling of the 12-by-15-foot unit, but can be found inside boxes of legal papers, on plates and bowls, in the jackets of books and VHS tapes, saturated through the king-size bed, wedged in every orifice of the black leather sofa and ancient VCR. The air is thick with the sickly, sweet smell of blood. That's a lot of mess, and somebody has to clean it up.

The police, fire department and investigators who arrive at a crime scene perform crucial tasks in the aftermath of a violent death. But they don't, as a rule, clean up. Historically, mopping up after someone who dies has been left to friends and family, but over the years, companies that specialize in trauma-scene cleanup have emerged to fill the often-gory niche.

Who are these people we hire to face death at its dirtiest? What does it do to their own lives – to spend their days cleaning up trails of blood, bone fragments, and decaying flesh?

'The Death Squad' will focus on human mortality and tragedy, and the lives of those who deal with it on a daily basis. It is a conventional drama, dealing with issues such as interpersonal relationships, infidelity and religion, but it is distinguished by its focus on the topic of the aftermath of violent deaths. Each episode will begin with a death, and

that death (and its subsequent cleanup) will set the tone allowing the characters to reflect on their current state of affairs in ways that are often darkly comic and surreal.

CHARACTERS:

Miles (40) is the wiry, stoic, cigarette-huffing leader. Often, Miles imagines he is cleaning up his own remains, or he imagines what it would be like to live the victim's life. Miles' crew chief is 58-year-old Reed, a soft-spoken, cherubic man with a devilish sense of humor. As an obsessive cleaner, Andrea/Andy (30) is invaluable to the team. With a steel stomach and her immunity to smells, she often eats during cleanups. At 26, Tucker is the youngest and newest member of the team. He is apple-pie cute and looks as out of place in the industry as would Richie Cunningham.

TAGLINE:

When dying is downright dirty, these guys clean up the mess.

APPENDIX E: AFTERMATH, INC. – 1ST OUTLINE

The Death Squad

Outline

Like it never even happened.

TEASER

MILES (40), wiry and stoic, pushes a large, intricate armoire into the center of an otherwise empty kitchen. Moments later, he places a pig on the floor and ties it to one of the legs of the armoire.

Dressed in a white protective suit, Miles lies on the floor, readies his shotgun, and fires. Pig splatters the armoire, the white walls, and floor. Miles takes off the protective suit, sets a timer and exits. A phone rings. Miles tells the caller he fired his gun and everything is fine.

ACT ONE

Miles speaks with OFFICER CARR in the parking lot at the precinct. It's a vague conversation, but it's obvious that Miles is disappointed when they part. Miles speaks with his friend JOE, who is a paramedic, and it's the same – Joe doesn't have what Miles is seeking.

A timer dings. Miles opens a brand new bottle of cleanser and commences cleaning the armoire. He's impressed by the cleanser's ability. He's interrupted by a call. Trying to stifle his excitement, he thanks the caller and says he'll be right there.

TUCKER, twenty-six and apple-pie handsome surfaces, pulls his diver's mask off and climbs onto the pristine golf course with a bag full of balls. He smiles at a Soccer mom. Follows her to the club house – they fuck in the bathroom. Tucker's phone rings, he has to go.

REED (50s) fiddles with his model trains in the basement of his house. Has a screaming match with his wife JANEL (50s), upstairs. Reed is partially deaf and it takes him a while to realize she's telling him his work just called and he has to go in.

As Miles is heading out, he's met by ANDY (27). He tells Andy he can't hire her, but Andy won't give up. She begs, and finally Miles agrees to let her come along but she will only observe.

All four arrive at the scene. The SON who hired them is a complete asshole and is more concerned with selling the house than the fact that his father just committed suicide.

Miles tells Andy the story of what he sees: this man left a suicide note, prepared himself to die, but once he slit his wrists and started to bleed out, the instinct to live kicked in. There is blood everywhere. Miles explains every move this man made before he finally dropped on the kitchen floor and bleed out. He called 911 but they didn't get there in time. Miles' knowledge and passion for his work is intoxicating. But, overwhelmed by the smell and the outline of blood on the floor where the body once was, Andy throws up.

The men clean up while Andy watches from the outside, while Miles explains the steps they take. Reed takes a small stone off a shelf, puts it in his pocket. Once they're done, they realize the son who hired them is gone, and he didn't leave a check.

ACT TWO

In a grocery store, Andy talks on the phone with her mom. Her mom complains about her husband and how she'd be better off without him. Andy is distracted. She's not even shopping, but seems to be following someone around in the store.

Tucker has sex with the soccer mom again, but this time they're at her house. Tucker discovers she has a kid. He talks to her son about crime scene clean-up. Soccer mom overhears and pretends that it doesn't bother her but makes up an excuse to get Tucker out of the house.

Miles huffs cigarettes while he doodles and writes slogans: "*The housekeepers of violent deaths. When you're in pain, we clean the stain. Undoing the damage since 1998.*" Miles hears on a police scanner of a gang shooting. He rushes to the scene, but he's too late. He sees CONNOR (40s), his former partner and biggest rival consoling the family. Connor smirks when he sees Miles.

Driving home, Miles spots Andy. She looks suspicious – sitting in her car, peering across the street. Intrigued, Miles parks and sneaks up to her car, gets inside. When he asks her what she's doing, she comes clean – she's staking a man who works across the street. Not in a creepy way, she's desperately in love with him – quirks and all. Before Miles leaves, Andy tries to convince Miles to hire her again by offering to bring in work. In this scene Andy will tell him why she wants this job so badly (I'm not sure why that is yet, though).

Reed tries to confide in his wife – he says he doesn't want to do what he does for a living anymore, but there is a hint he may not be talking about his job. Half asleep, she doesn't understand.

It's late. A MAN is passed out in his recliner. A gun is being positioned under his chin... by his WIFE. She pulls the trigger; we hear the shot but don't see the murder.

ACT THREE

Andy leads Miles, Reed and Tucker into the same home from the night before. The body is gone, but the man's blood, brain matter, and skull particles are splattered throughout. Something about the scene makes Miles uncomfortable but he isn't sure why. Reed agrees with him. Miles asks Andy how she heard about this job, but she won't give him a straight answer.

Miles talks to the wife RACHEL (45) and proves his expertise by correctly assessing the weapon used and the type of shotgun shell. Rachel and Andy exchange an awkward glance before Miles walks Rachel out. After a short flirtation, Miles follows her to her hotel room.

Andy, Reed and Tucker clean up. It's disgusting the amount of brain matter and skull particles, which are found in the most unusual places. Reed keeps his head down; Rachel is offended by the way Tucker seems to be so playful and indifferent.

Rachel and Miles finish fucking. It's easy for Miles to talk to (and fuck) complete strangers. Post coital, Miles tells Rachel that whenever cleaning after a violent crime scene, like a homicide, he wonders how life got so bent out of shape. Rachel shares some personal info too about her recently deceased husband, and the fact that Andy is her daughter.

ACT FOUR

Miles returns and sends everyone home except Andy. Miles confronts Andy about this suicide. Andy explains that the man was her stepfather and after continued pressing, she says her mother has been telling her for years that she was going to kill him and called Andy when she finally did. Then she tells him of an old Texas saying about why some horse thieves get hung and some killers get off: "No horse ever needed stealing -- but there are people who need killing." At this, Miles backs off but we're still not sure if he's going to give the police this info or not. Before Andy leaves, she looks over the clean house and says, "It's like it never even happened."

The son from the first clean-up finally answers Miles' call (Miles mentions that he's left him multiple messages about payment). The son tells Miles he's not going to pay – "What are you going to do? Unclean the house."

Tucker meets with the soccer mom again at the golf course. It appears he really likes her. She is much more blunt this time around – tells him she doesn't want a sicko like him around her son.

Connor visits Miles and offers to buy his company out. Miles declines and puts Connor in his place – a playful warning that could be construed as a threat on Connor's life. Maybe Miles intends it that way, or maybe he's just saying he's not giving up on his business – not yet. Either way, Miles leaves Connor dumbfounded.

Reed puts the finishing touches on one of the houses on his model train set. The house looks markedly like the house from the first clean-up. He places the stone he took from the first clean-up in front of this tiny replica. Looking over the entire world he has created, we wonder how many other mementos are there.

TAG

Miles finishes cleaning the armoire and mock kitchen. He then returns to the first clean-up house because the son refused to pay. The son isn't there so Miles breaks in and dumps the waste on the kitchen floor where he found it. As he drives away, we see the side of the van with the new company slogan – *Like it never even happened.*

AFTERMATH, INC.

Like it never even happened.

TEASER

1. EXT. CHEAP MOTEL – DAY

ANDY (27), pushes a house cleaning cart along the balcony. She stops at a room, enters. She pulls back the sheets – blood. Not a lot, but the sight makes Andy quit her job.

2. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Andy walks MILES (40) through her house. She asks him questions – how much will it cost, how long will it take, etc. She's planning to sell the house, and she has already started packing. Miles says he needs to assess the damage first. A news story about DA Everett Hudson's upcoming re-election plays on the TV.

Miles spots a trail of blood that leads from the bedroom into the kitchen. On the coffee table – a sterling silver rattle. We FLASHBACK TO: another silver rattle on a coffee table in a different house.

3. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – NEXT

Miles stares at the floor. We FLASHBACK TO: a dead pregnant woman surrounded by blood in a different kitchen. When we return to the scene, we see on the floor – a bloody outline where a body used to be.

ACT ONE

1. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Miles tells Andy what they'll do to clean up. Miles asks her whether she has family she can be with – she says no. Family photos prove that she has an older brother, but Andy says he is dead.

The cops wouldn't tell her exactly what happened to her mother Rachel and she needs to know. Miles hesitates, but then he walks her through what happened. Miles follows the trail of blood into...

2. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

This is where it started. There was a struggle. A large bloodstain and blood spatter shows this is where she was stabbed – near the coffee table. Drops of

blood around the living room, hallway, and bathroom show she then searched for something – probably a phone to call for help. Not finding it, she rushed into...

3. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Where she fell and bled out on the floor. Miles then asks Andy things about the murder the cops didn't ask – specifically about the rattle and if there was any kind of note left behind. Andy says she doesn't know where the rattle came from and there was no note. She is convinced that they got the right guy – her step-father Michael.

4. INT. TUCKER'S APARTMENT – DAY

TUCKER (26), in bed with his girlfriend SAMANTHA. Samantha initiates sex, Tucker refuses. Samantha complains – they've been dating almost six months and he still won't put out. Tucker gets a call and has to leave; tells her they'll finish this conversation later.

5. EXT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

LOU (32) meets Tucker outside, he's late. The two suit up and carry gear inside. As they approach the house, they bet on who done it. Tucker thinks it's the husband. Lou bets against him since he thinks Tucker is always wrong.

6. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Miles tells Tucker to take photos of everything, not just the blood. Miles is convinced that it wasn't the husband, but a serial killer who hasn't been caught. The serial killer targets pregnant women between the ages of 30-45, forces them to write a suicide note, then stabs them in the stomach and watches them try to save themselves as they bleed out, and he always leaves a sterling silver rattle at the scene. Rachel's murder fits all of this except one – the faked suicide note.

Lou suspects robbery gone wrong because there is no faked suicide note. Miles isn't convinced, he believes the note is simply missing (Andy could've packed it up or thrown it away) but he agrees to let Lou follow his instincts.

7. EXT. PARKING GARAGE – DAY

Miles meets up with OFFICER NICOLE FULLER (35). There is attraction and slight bitterness between them, as if they've had a previous romantic relationship.

Fuller says the DA likes the stepfather Michael for the murder – he has a history of violence toward Rachel, there was no forced entry, he says he didn't touch her but neighbor saw a violent argument hours before she was killed. For every one of her points, Miles has a counterpoint which is equally

likely. With reservation, Fuller finally hands over the police report. Here we learn that Miles used to be a CSI but was fired and put in prison for allegedly faking evidence to hide the fact that he murdered three pregnant women. These women were actually victims of the serial killer Miles is looking for.

8. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Andy returns with boxes for packing. She is intrigued by the process and questions Lou and Tucker about the steps they're taking to clean the house. Tucker is the muscle – he generally rips out flooring and carries the heavier items out of the house. Lou explains how they get the blood out of things.

9. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – MASTER BEDROOM – DAY

While Tucker and Lou clean up, Miles investigates. He finds a drop of blood on a jewelry box, takes a sample. Andy catches him. She is furious. Miles talks her down and asks her to come somewhere with him.

10. INT. AFTERMATH, INC. OFFICE – DAY

It is clear that Miles lives in his office – a little bed on the floor behind the desk. Miles shows Andy seven case files of women killed in the same way Andy's mother was murdered. Her mother makes eight. Miles explains that Lou was on death row for eleven years for a murder he didn't commit and Tucker was in prison for three for a rape he didn't commit. The DA had a hand in faking evidence and forcing false confessions in their cases as well as others. Although Miles confides that one of these victims was his wife, Andy doesn't want them to continue their investigation – she wants her step-father to rot in prison.

ACT TWO

1. EXT. COFFEE SHOP – DAY

Miles brings the blood sample to Detective Fuller. Fuller confirms the string of robberies in the neighborhood. She asks if this blood sample isn't a match will Miles give up. Miles agrees, though they both know he's lying.

2. INT. CHOP SHOP – DAY

Lou questions his old contact JEFFREY about who is robbing the houses in Andy's neighborhood. Jeffrey says it wasn't him – those houses aren't worth it to him. Although Lou is trying to go straight (he was a thief before he was arrested for murder), in exchange for a lead, Lou agrees to case a house.

3. INT. AFTERMATH, INC. OFFICE – DAY

Miles enters to find DA EVERETT HUDSON. Hudson informs Miles that the blood sample he gave Fuller doesn't match the victim or the suspect, and it's not in the database. Miles' investigation nearly cost Fuller her job. Of course,

Miles doesn't believe him, so Hudson says to ask Fuller herself.

Here we learn that the way Miles was released from prison because the real serial killer killed Miles' wife in order to free him – the serial killer didn't like the fact that Miles got the credit. Hudson threatens to put Miles back in prison if he doesn't step off. The threat is palpable but Miles isn't afraid.

4. INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

Andy talks with a realtor but changes her mind about selling her mom's house. She thought she could just sell the house and be done with this tragedy, but it's not that easy. Just then, Andy's supposedly dead older brother DAVID enters. The realtor exits and an argument ensues. David wants to make amends with Andy, but she refuses.

5. EXT. AFTERMATH, INC. OFFICE – DAY

Lou gives Miles information on the suspected robber.

6. INT. MILES' TRUCK – NIGHT

Miles scopes out the suspected robber's house. It doesn't appear that anyone is home.

7. INT. ROBBER'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles breaks in to investigate. While he's searching the house, Miles uncovers evidence that not only clears this man of Rachel's murder, but also the serial killings. As Miles is about to leave, the robber comes home and shoots Miles.

ACT THREE

1. INT. ROBBER'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Though he's injured; Miles is able to flee the house.

2. INT. TUCKER'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Tucker confesses to his girlfriend that he was in prison but he's innocent. He explains that he used to be a nurse and was falsely convicted of raping an underage patient (and we all know what they do to child rapists in prison). She freaks, storms out, and runs into a bleeding Miles as he approaches the house. Seeing Miles only confirms to Samantha that Tucker isn't a guy she wants to associate with.

3. INT. TUCKER'S APARTMENT – LATER

Tucker cleans and stitches up Miles' wound. He's lost a lot of blood but he's going to be okay. Miles is unsure of himself – maybe Michael really did kill Rachel like Tucker believes, maybe he's too close to see the reality. Even if

Miles is right, without Fuller's help, and access to Andy's house he's afraid he won't be able to catch the real killer. Tucker reassures him and says that obstacles like these never stopped Miles before.

4. INT. SUV – NIGHT

Lou cases the place that they're going to rob though he is apprehensive. Jeffrey notes how funny it is that Lou never got caught for all the robberies he committed but was put in prison for something he didn't do. Lou isn't amused but his fear of Jeffrey keeps him quiet.

5. INT. JAIL – DAY

Andy visits her stepfather MICHAEL, looking for closure. Something he says convinces her that he didn't kill her mother. Andy tells him she's keeping the house and if he's ever freed, he needs to just disappear – she never wants to see him again.

6. INT. AFTERMATH, INC. OFFICE – NIGHT

Miles reviews the police report again. He reviews witness statements and sees that their neighbor Lucy has a copy of the house key. He then researches Andy and her family looking for anything that can give him a lead. He discovers that Andy was in a juvenile facility for attempted murder.

ACT FOUR

1. INT. LUCY'S HOUSE – DAY

Miles questions Lucy, but she says she already told the police everything she knows. Lucy tells him she saw the husband beat the victim through the window. Miles notices a brand new gutter on the side of the victim's house. Lucy says they fixed that about six months ago. In this economy, the husband should've done it but he's lazy. This info was not in the police report.

2. EXT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

Andy arrives home to find Miles waiting for her. Before Miles can question her, she tells him she believes he is right, her step-father isn't the real killer. She wants to help. She gives him info on the construction worker.

3. INT. CMR CONSTRUCTION & ROOFING – DAY

Miles receives info on the man who did the job – his name is Daniel and he was let go several months back – layoffs. Daniel's boss gives Miles his contact info.

4. INT. TUCKER'S APARTMENT – DAY

Samantha returns to pick up her things but they end up reconciling.

5. EXT. LOU'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Lou gets the jump on one of Jeffery's thugs who was sent there to punish Lou for backing out on the robbery. Lou lets him go, but the thug threatens that Jeffery will kill him when he finds him.

6. INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles forces Daniel to confess to the murder of Andy's mom. He says he was trying to make it look like the other robberies in the neighborhood – he didn't mean to kill her, he just needed the money. Andy's mom caught him and came at him with a knife. He defended himself and accidentally cut her open. Miles then shows him a photo of his wife and tries to get him to confess to killing her too, but he won't.

Miles uncovers proof that Daniel didn't live in the area at the time of his wife's murder – his alibi is airtight. He is not the serial killer as Miles suspected.

7. INT. FULLER'S HOUSE – DAY

Miles apologizes to Fuller, but thankfully, she was reinstated since Miles gave her all the evidence she needed to convict Daniel of the murder and to free the step-father. They share a kiss, but Miles holds back and says he doesn't think they should go there again, no matter how much he may want to.

8. EXT. FULLER'S HOUSE – NEXT

Fuller watches Miles drive away in his work van. On the side it reads:

AFTERMATH, INC.
Like it never even happened.

TAG

1. INT. AFTERMATH, INC. OFFICE – NIGHT

Andy confesses to Miles about her crime in an attempt to clear the air because she wants to work for him. She was in a juvenile facility for four years (14-18 years old) for stabbing her brother David when he raped one of her friends. Andy comments on the fact that out of the four, she's the only one who is guilty. Miles tells her he already knew.

Then, he gives her a stack of files to review – the serial killings – he needs fresh eyes on the cases and as a test to see if she'd be good for the team. Andy notices something in one of the photos – a droplet of something on the floor next to the body. Miles doesn't know what it is, but he checks the other

photos and notices that there is a drop of something in each one. It's barely visible but it's there – a new piece of evidence. But what is it?

APPENDIX G: AFTERMATH, INC. – 3RD DRAFT BEAT SHEET

AFTERMATH, INC. – BEAT SHEET – 3RD DRAFT

TEASER

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

ANDY coming home like it's nothing. Checking the mail, etc. She goes into the bathroom to pee. Notices a blood swipe on the doorframe. She cleans it off. She steps out of the bathroom and we see a big bloodstain on the floor in the threshold of the master bedroom. She scrubs. It won't come out.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Andy walks MILES (40) through her house. She asks him questions – how much will it cost, how long will it take, etc. She's planning to sell the house, and she has already started packing. Miles says he needs to assess the damage first. A news story about DA Everett Hudson's upcoming re-election plays on the TV.

Miles spots a trail of blood that leads from the bedroom into the kitchen. On the coffee table – a sterling silver rattle. We FLASHBACK TO: another silver rattle on a coffee table in a different house.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – NEXT

Miles stares at the floor. We FLASHBACK TO: a dead pregnant woman surrounded by blood in a different kitchen. When we return to the scene, we see on the floor – a bloody outline where a body used to be.

ACT ONE

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Miles tells Andy what they'll do to clean up. The cops wouldn't tell her exactly what happened to her mother Rachel and she needs to know. Miles hesitates, but then he walks her through what happened. Miles follows the trail of blood into...

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

While Miles does this, he's reinventing the crime as the way he sees the serial killings – show his slip ups and confusion as he's describing the scene. Show him looking for the suicide note too though he doesn't tell her this directly.

This is where it started. There was a struggle. A large bloodstain and blood spatter shows this is where she was stabbed – near the coffee table. Drops of blood around the living room, hallway, and bathroom (even though Andy cleaned the doorframe, Miles

can still see traces of blood – Andy confirms she cleaned) show she then searched for something – probably a phone to call for help. Not finding it, she rushed into...

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Where she fell and bled out on the floor. Miles asks Andy who the lead investigator was – it was Fuller. He asks her if there is anywhere she can stay – she says both her mother and brother are dead and her step-day is in prison. He also asks something about her mother that doesn't make sense – this has to do with the faked suicide note but we don't learn until the next scene with Lou and Tucker why he's asking. He leaves the suicide note in the victim's most prized possession – whatever that may be to the victim.

INT. TUCKER'S APARTMENT – DAY

TUCKER (26), in bed with his girlfriend SAMANTHA. Samantha initiates sex, Tucker refuses. Samantha complains – they've been dating almost six months and he still won't put out. Tucker gets a call and has to leave; tells her they'll finish this conversation later.

INT. LOU'S TRUCK – DAY

LOU (32) picks up Tucker. The GPS stuff.

EXT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

The two suit up and carry gear inside. As they approach the house, they bet on who done it. Tucker thinks it's the husband. Lou bets against him since he thinks Tucker is always wrong.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Make this more direct, so we know that they're talking about the serial killer – give all the direct evidence.

Miles tells Tucker to take photos of everything, not just the blood. Miles is convinced that it wasn't the husband, but a serial killer who hasn't been caught. The serial killer targets pregnant women between the ages of 30-45, forces them to write a suicide note, then stabs them in the stomach and watches them try to save themselves as they bleed out, and he always leaves a sterling silver rattle at the scene. Rachel's murder fits all of this except one – the faked suicide note. There is also no tape on the coffee table.

Lou suspects robbery gone wrong because there is no faked suicide note and no tape on the table. Miles isn't convinced, he believes the note is simply missing (Andy could've packed it up or thrown it away – same with the tape) but he agrees to let Lou follow his instincts.

Make sure to note that the suicide note is always found in the victim's favorite place – each place is specific to the victim.

EXT. SOMEWHERE - DAY

Miles meets up with OFFICER NICOLE FULLER (35). This scene needs to introduce Fuller in a unique way to show that she doesn't just occasionally hand Miles a file. No discussion of his dead wife. Remember the game – what does Miles have to do to get Fuller to give him the police report?

There is attraction and slight bitterness between them, as if they've had a previous romantic relationship. She is in opposition to Miles as far as the case is concerned.

Fuller says the DA likes the stepfather Michael for the murder – he has a history of violence toward Rachel, there was no forced entry, he says he didn't touch her but neighbor saw a violent argument hours before she was killed. For every one of her points, Miles has a counterpoint which is equally likely. With reservation, Fuller finally hands over the police report. There is a third print – the son, Eric. Andy told Miles he was dead. That's probably because she wishes he were – she tried to kill him. Miles agrees to a date – says he'll call her later.

SOMEWHERE – DAY

Miles meets up with ERIC. He's not the killer.

EXT. CEMETERY – DAY

Eric tells Andy about Miles' investigation.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Andy returns. Maybe she doesn't say anything but is suspicious. Then she catches Miles in the closet. Her brother was right.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM – DAY

Andy catches him in her mother's closet – he's putting the letters back but she doesn't see this, only that he is rifling through her dead mother's things. She is furious. Miles talks her down and asks her to come somewhere with him.

INT. AFTERMATH, INC. OFFICE – DAY

Thoroughly describe the location.

It is clear that Miles lives in his office – a little bed on the floor behind the desk. Miles shows Andy seven case files of women killed in the same way Andy's mother was murdered. Her mother makes eight. In all of the photos are the things he leaves behind – where they find the suicide note – always in different places. The rattle, the body, etc. There is a photo of tape, always on the coffee table. He used it to tape the suicide note closed with the victim's prints on it. Although Miles confides that one of these victims was his wife, Andy doesn't want them to continue their investigation – she wants her step-father to rot in prison. She tells them they're not allowed back in her house (maybe they're done already).

Not directly, but he uses what he knows of her past to try and get her to work with him, but she won't.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles waits outside for Andy to leave. He then breaks in to find that suicide note. He notices that the jewelry box is the only thing that is a little – off. He finds blood; takes a sample. Miles calls Fuller (though we don't know it) and says, I need to see you.

ACT TWO

INT. SOMEWHERE – NIGHT

Miles convinces Fuller to run the blood. They're on a date, but Miles has an ulterior motive – the blood.

INT. CHOP SHOP – DAY

Jeffery trades info on the suspected robber to get Lou to case a house.

INT. COURHOUSE – DAY

Scene between Miles and the DA. Miles goes to see the outcome of a trial – again, the DA wins. This is where all the information of Fuller getting suspended and the false convictions comes out. Hudson tells him a lie about the blood.

INT. JAIL – DAY

Andy goes to see her father. He tells her about the receipt. Maybe change this because I hate it!

INT. SOMEWHERE – DAY

Miles goes to Fuller to apologize and she throws him out – she isn't going to help him ever again. He says he'll make it up to her. Fuller tells him the truth – they found the murder weapon. It was in a dumpster wiped clean in a group of office suites. There are about 50 different offices in that area. They did find traces of blood – the victims and another person yet identified. They also found animal hair and garbage – who knows how much of that is from the scene and how much is from the dumpster. Miles is excited but Fuller won't help him anymore – she can't get in to see if the blood matches the sample Miles gave her and even if she could – she's done helping him.

Miles goes to the street where the knife was found – there are loads of business suites and only one that has animals – a dog groomers. Miles questions the female owner, she's a little standoffish, but says that the only guy that works here is her son – he's twelve. No leads. Miles looks around the area again and thinks that this is just where he dropped the knife.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Jeffery shows Lou photos of the house he's going to rob. Lou agrees to do it, but he's going to do it his way. If you fuck this up, I'll kill you. Jeffrey gives him the name though we don't hear it until Jeffrey says it over the phone with Miles. Miles asks if he had to do anything illegal to get it he says not yet. Pretends he's joking.

INT. AFTERMATH – NIGHT

Miles reviews the police report again. Discovers Ida had a key. Then, Miles gets a call from Lou about the guy who has been breaking into people's houses. Lou is convinced this is their guy.

INT. CHASE WALBORN'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles breaks in, discovers that this is not the guy and is shot.

ACT THREE

INT. CHASE WALBORN'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles flees.

INT. TUCKER'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

The entrance seems awkward so change it from the second draft.

Samantha finds blood on Tucker's clothes. A fight ensues. He tells her he was in prison. He tells her what he really does for a living. Miles shows up, bleeding.

INT. TUCKER'S APARTMENT – LATER

Tucker stitches Miles up.

EXT. DON'S HOUSE – DAY

Andy looks for the receipt – finds it.

INT. IDA'S HOUSE – DAY

Miles discovers a new lead – the construction worker. It has to be something directly from Ida, not something Miles overlooked. Windows. Ida says that she saw the construction worker around for months but he wasn't there to fix the house. Thinks he was sweet on her.

INT. CMR – DAY

Miles gets the construction worker's name – John Rayford.

PACIFIC HEIGHT'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Lou fudges the break-in on purpose to get out of it.

BAR – NIGHT

Miles doesn't break in – he is a chameleon. He goes to the bar that John frequents and gets to talking to him. Asks him where he was – then it gets a little creepy when Miles follows him outside. But Miles is able to get the info he needs – this is not the killer.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Andy can't decide whether to bring the receipt to the cops or to burn it.

ACT FOUR

INT. AFTERMATH – DAY

Andy brings the receipt to Miles. The love letters.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

They review the love letters. Find out the baby was Ryan's and not her step-father's. He was at a veterinary conference. Miles didn't even suspect him. Miles tells Andy to take the letters to Fuller.

INT. AFTERMATH – DAY

Miles does a search on Matt – discovers that he's a veterinarian and his offices are located less than a mile away from where the murder weapon was found.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Miles tries Ryan's house – breaks in – nothing out of the norm, but he's not home.

LOU – NIGHT

Lou is followed and accosted by one of Jeffrey's thugs. But Lou gets away with the guy's gun.

INT. LOU'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles gets Lou to track Ryan's cell phone. Explain how he does this so it's not confusing. Miles takes the gun.

EXT. SWANKY BAR – NIGHT

Miles sees Ryan exiting.

INT. RYAN'S CAR – NIGHT

Miles gets Ryan.

INT. VETRINARY OFFICE – NIGHT

Miles questions Ryan. Ryan refuses to confess. Ryan knocks Miles out and ties him up.

INT. RYAN'S TRUNK – NIGHT

Miles wakes hogtied in the trunk. As Ryan is dragging him into his house, Miles is telling him all about the evidence he's leaving behind – telling him exactly how he's going to get caught.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE – NIGHT

At this point Ryan is confessing because he's going to kill Miles. He's not going to use the gun because that would be too loud.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Tucker initiates sex with Sam.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Andy has to get there first and be the one to talk Miles down.

Then Fuller shows up – she discovered that Ryan was unaccounted for during the time the murder took place and he didn't return until the next day just to check out. Miles says, I told you I'd get you something.

INT. FULLER'S HOUSE – DAY

Miles and Fuller have sex. Miles asks Fuller about the tape. She rolls her eyes, not this again. He flees.

TAG

INT. AFTERMATH – DAY

Andy wants a job. Miles shows her the photos again – she has to prove herself worthy of being on the team. She mentions the tape again and he asks her what he would use it for other than the suicide note – she believes he left it there for a reason – he must know you'd find the note but maybe he left something else that they don't know about.

INT. MILES' HOUSE – NIGHT

Inside are photos of the crime scene on the coffee table, on the carpet – blood photos, on the walls where the blood swipes were there are photos and a huge grid of photos of his dead wife on the kitchen floor. He recreated the scene for himself to try and figure it out.

They look all over the house but can't find anything. Andy stands on a chair and is checking the tops of doorframes – she always hides stuff there – miles already checked everywhere inside – outside too. She notices a book – Aesop's fables – she remembers that they are in a few photos. She picks it up and finds a lily inside – it's taped to the page, that's why it didn't fall out when he shook it before. And a written note – you're welcome.

NOT TAPE – it's the book she notices. A crushed Lily - Death-camas (greek mythology about breast milk flowing) between the pages of this story:

<http://aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?1&Androcles>

It is important to remember that once the camas has completed blooming--in the proper environment--the plant itself dies back until the following year.

APPENDIX H: AFTERMATH, INC. – 4TH DRAFT BEAT SHEET

AFTERMATH, INC. – BEAT SHEET – 4th DRAFT

TEASER

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

ANDY (27) enters. Delicate in a perverse way, wild strawberry hair. She goes into the bathroom, notices a blood swipe on the doorframe. She cleans it off. She steps out of the bathroom and we see a big bloodstain on the floor in the threshold of the master bedroom. She scrubs. It won't come out.

INT. MILES'S HOUSE – DAY

The sound of scrapping and a rip. A man sleeping, he doesn't move. Scrape. Scrape. Rip. His eyes finally open. This is MILES (40). The irritating sound doesn't bother him. Serene complacency. Not an ounce of fight left in him. If you were to fill him with stones he would sink to the bottom of the sea.

We find the source of the sound and JORDAN (13) a skinny tomboy. She's ripping down her wallpaper. The house is decrepit but livable. A place where promises are made but never kept. Jordan climbs on her loft bed and pushes on the square in the ceiling. It's painted shut. She hears Miles stirring, jumps down from the bed. She waits, expects him to come in and tell her to quiet down. He doesn't. "This house will be the death of me! Poisoned by asbestos" Miles responds (OS) "Bus will be here in an hour."

In their kitchen, Jordan asks why they can't go home – Miles gets a call – he has to go.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Andy walks Miles through her house. She asks him questions – how much will it cost, how long will it take, etc. She's planning to sell the house, and she has already started packing. Miles says he needs to assess the damage first.

Miles spots a trail of blood that leads from the bedroom into the kitchen. On the coffee table – a sterling silver rattle. We FLASHBACK TO: another silver rattle on a coffee table in a different house.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – NEXT

Miles stares at the floor. We FLASHBACK TO: a dead pregnant woman surrounded by blood in a different kitchen. When we return to the scene, we see on the floor – a bloody outline where a body used to be. No vomit.

ACT ONE

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Miles tells Andy what they'll do to clean up. The cops wouldn't tell her exactly what happened to her mother Rachel and she needs to know. Miles hesitates, but then he walks her through what happened. Miles follows the trail of blood into...

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

While Miles does this; he's reinventing the crime as the way he sees the serial killings – show his slip-ups and confusion as he's describing the scene. Show him looking for the suicide note too though he doesn't tell her this directly.

This is where it started. There was a struggle. A large bloodstain and blood spatter shows this is where she was stabbed – near the coffee table. Drops of blood around the living room, hallway, and bathroom (even though Andy cleaned the doorframe, Miles can still see traces of blood – Andy confirms she cleaned) show she then searched for something – probably a phone to call for help. Not finding it, she rushed into...

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Where she fell and bled out on the floor. Miles asks Andy who the lead investigator was – it was Fuller. He asks her if there is anywhere she can stay. He also asks something about her mother that doesn't make sense – this has to do with the faked suicide note but we don't learn until the next scene with Lou.

INT. LOU'S TRUCK – DAY

LOU (32) drives. On the phone with Miles, Lou realizes that this murder sounds a lot like the past serial killings but he isn't willing to rule out other motives – like breaking and entering. Lou scopes the houses – his point of view are the weak spots and security.

EXT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

Lou tells Miles that this neighborhood is ripe for the picking – relays the easy access that he sees in the houses. Miles is surprised to see Lou – Lou tracked his location while they were on the phone. Miles isn't pleased. Lou assures him he only does it for jobs.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY

They go over the specifics inside the house – what is similar and what is different inside the house. The only difference is the missing suicide note. But they're the one thing that isn't always found in the same place.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – MASTER BEDROOM – DAY

Miles looks around – finds blood on the jewelry box.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Miles meets up with OFFICER NICOLE FULLER (35). At first there is flirtation then Fuller wants to go.

EXT. PIZZA VENDOR – LATER

Romantic moment between Fuller and Miles but Miles has an ulterior motive – exchange the blood sample for the police report and info. *Make sure to mention the sterile saline wipes (the autopsy hasn't come back yet)*

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

Jordan at school. TWO GIRLS gossip about Jordan. Little scraps of conversation, like the twittering of titmice. A GOTH GIRL overhears, glances at Jordan. Jordan meets her gaze, she looks away.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY

Cleaning. Lou singing by himself. Miles comes in. The love letters.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM – DAY

Andy catches him in her mother's closet – he's putting the letters back but she doesn't see this, only that he is rifling through her dead mother's things. She is furious. Miles talks her down and asks her to come somewhere with him.

INT. AFTERMATH, INC. OFFICE – DAY

Miles shows Andy seven case files of women killed in the same way Andy's mother was murdered. Her mother makes eight. In all of the photos are the things he leaves behind – where they find the suicide note – always in different places. Although Miles confides that one of these victims was his wife, Andy doesn't want them to continue their investigation – she wants her step-father to rot in prison.

INT. MILES'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Fuller arrives. Jordan shuts the door in her face, walks away. "Who's there?" "A traitor." She gives him the police report, tells him the blood is at the lab and that they found the murder weapon – it makes up for the missing time – the husband did it.

ACT TWO

EXT. OFFICE PARK – DAY

Miles drives around the area. He spots a veterinarian clinic – a guy they already cleared who owns the place.

INT. VETRINARIAN OFFICE – DAY

Miles interrogates Ryan. Ryan is helpful and offers info willingly.

INT. CHOP SHOP – DAY

Jeffery trades info on the suspected robber to get Lou to case a house. Make sure Lou mentions how much money he's going to get for being falsely incarcerated – he doesn't need to do a job, not for the money anyway.

INT. AFTERMATH, INC – DAY

Miles calls Fuller at work to find out about the blood. Miles discovers that Fuller is on leave.

INT. FULLER'S HOUSE – DAY

Miles apologizes – says he'll fix this. Here we learn that Andy killed her brother. Fuller doesn't want to see him again – she's had it with Miles (though she blames herself for helping him).

INT. JAIL – DAY

Andy goes to see her father. We show Andy sitting in the visiting room – not sure which side she's on. He tells her about the receipt. Maybe change this because I hate it!

INT. JR. HIGH – LOCKERS

Goth girl stares – Jordan says what? The goth girl just walks away.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Jeffery shows Lou photos of the house he's going to rob. Lou agrees to do it, but he's going to do it his way. If you fuck this up, I'll kill you. Jeffrey gives him the name though we don't hear it until Jeffrey says it over the phone with Miles. Miles asks if he had to do anything illegal to get it he says not yet. Pretends he's joking.

INT. OTHER - NIGHT

Lou goes with Miles to the house – to help him break in. Lou is convinced this is the guy.

INT. CHASE WALBORN'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles breaks in, discovers that this is not the guy and is shot. Miles and Lou flee.

ACT THREE

INT. TRUCK – NIGHT

Miles convinces Lou that he'll be alright.

INT. MILES'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Jordan cleans Miles's wounds. Miles cringes. He's not afraid, but it hurts. Here he promises to take her somewhere on the night he tracks Ryan.

EXT. DON'S HOUSE – DAY

Andy looks for the receipt – finds it.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE – DAY

Miles coheres the medical examiner to give him info on the autopsy – saline wipes. He confirms that they are your garden variety (just as the ones from the serial killings) and are found in medical clinics, vet offices, convalescent homes, etc.

INT. JR. HIGH – DAY

Goth girl finally approaches Jordan. Asks her if her father really killed her mom. Jordan sets her straight. Then why does he clean up dead bodies now. She's more in awe than anything. Wants to come to a scene. One would think that Jordan would use this to make a new friend but it doesn't go that way – Jordan becomes completely unleashed, brazen.

INT. AFTERMATH, INC – DAY

Miles uncovers the info about John Rayford. A former doctor who lost his license and did jail time (10 years) for inappropriate behavior with several of his patients (family doctor). One of those patients was Rachel (she has a different name – her former husband – Andy's dad's name – Pratt). Finds he's a sex offender – which shows us his address. He can be there with Lou talking specifics. Compare and contrast. Lou shows up to see how he's doing, but his motives are something different, it's almost like he's saying goodbye because he knows what he's going to do later could send him back to prison.

INT. JR. HIGH – LATER

Miles picks Jordan up. We see the remains of the fight – the goth girl's arm in a sling, and a bloody nose.

INT. MILES'S WORK VAN – DAY

Jordan complains that he had to bring this van with him – how embarrassing. We actually see the van here. She's suspended. You're like a wild animal. Jordan blames him – if he were around more to train me proper. Miles notes she behaves like a boy. You're the one who gave me a boy's name. That was your mom's idea. Well, you let her.

INT – DAY

Fuller gets info on the blood results from the medical examiner. He's keeping her in the loop. It matches the blood found on the knife but not the suspect or the victim. Not in the database. Mentions that Miles stopped in.

PACIFIC HEIGHT'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Lou fudges the break-in on purpose to get out of it.

BAR – NIGHT

Miles goes to the bar that John frequents and gets to talking to him. Asks him where he was – then it gets a little creepy when Miles follows him outside. But Miles is able to get the info he needs – this is not the killer.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Andy can't decide whether to bring the receipt to the cops or to burn it.

ACT FOUR

INT. MILES'S HOUSE (former) – DAY

Inside are photos of the crime scene on the coffee table, on the carpet – blood photos, on the walls where the blood swipes were there are photos and a huge grid of photos of his dead wife on the kitchen floor. He recreated the scene for himself to try and figure it out.

Andy brings the receipt to Miles. He doesn't care – he's packing up the photos – he's done – until he hears about the love letters.

INT. ANDY'S HOUSE – DAY

They review the love letters. Find out the baby was Ryan's and not her step-father's.

MILES

checks his messages – It's Jordan reminding him about their plans tonight.

LOU – NIGHT

Lou is followed and accosted by one of Jeffrey's thugs. But Lou gets away with the guy's gun.

INT. LOU'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Miles gets Lou to track Ryan's cell phone. Miles takes the gun. Lou asks which case this is actually about. Lou isn't convinced that he's the guy who killed Miles's wife.

INT. MILES'S TRUCK – NIGHT

Miles is at the veterinary clinic. Ryan is still there. Miles is waiting for everyone else to leave when he gets the call from Andy saying that Jordan is missing. He chooses to go after Ryan instead of going home. She wants to call the police – they won't do anything until she's missing for at least 24 hours. But for you? Especially not for me.

INT. VETRINARY OFFICE – NIGHT

Miles sneaks after Ryan but Ryan gets the jump on him – knocks Miles out and ties him up.

INT. RYAN'S TRUNK – NIGHT

Miles wakes hogtied in the trunk. As Ryan is dragging him into his house, Miles is telling him all about the evidence he's leaving behind – telling him exactly how he's going to get caught.

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Ryan discusses what he knows about Miles. It's eerie and Miles is now convinced he's found the serial killer. Ryan says he did a little research on him after he came into the Vet clinic but Miles isn't convinced.

Miles uses his forensic skills to lure Ryan to move closer to shoot him – Miles is able to head butt him and get the gun.

Miles is ready to kill him. Just then Fuller comes in and talks him down. Have you even checked for an alibi for the other murders? Fuller questions his sanity and believes he's letting his emotions and need for revenge take over. She had an ultra sound earlier that day! There was no note. He didn't kill the others. You're so focused on what you want to see, your emotions and need for revenge blinded you to the facts – he's not your guy. "Told you I'd fix this." He slips away to go find his daughter.

INT. MILES'S HOUSE (FORMER) – NIGHT

He goes inside, searches for Jordan – she's not there.

EXT. MILES'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Andy waits on the porch. No Jordan. Andy asks why he called her to watch his daughter. He says that Fuller wouldn't answer his calls. She's the second choice. She tries to tell him about her, but he already knows. But you still let me watch your daughter? Everyone needs a second chance.

INT. MILES'S HOUSE – JORDAN'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Miles notices the paint chips on the bed – looks up to the attic door. It's been cut open.

INT. MILES'S HOUSE – ATTIC

Jordan is huddled in the corner with the skeletons of a family of dead possums. What happened to your face? What happened to yours? They share a sweet smile. He tells her they can go home. He's cleaned the house it looks just like – no. She doesn't want to. You're right. Let's stay here. But we're fixing it up.