

CONTINUED:

The first cells are empty.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hello?

(beat)

Help--

Eddie rushes to the next two cells--

CELL ONE contains A MAN, clean, white tunic, he appears to be unconscious, sprawled across the floor of his cell.

CELL TWO contains MARIA!

EDDIE

Maria?

Computer monitors on the cells indicate their biological data, and atmospheric conditions inside.

Maria rocks and shakes.

MARIA

Eddie?

Maria painfully stands, staggers to him, presses her hands to the glass. *Jesus.*

EDDIE

Oh, Maria--

And as Eddie looks at her, *something ripples* beneath her cheek, like a pencil-thin snake.

EDDIE (cont'd)

Oh no, no, Maria, what've they done to you?

MARIA

Please help me.

He scans the front of her cell, there's a LATCH-- some kind of magnetic lock.

Eddie grabs a small FIRE EXTINGUISHER and SLAMS it down on the lock. It dents, but nothing. He slams it again.

BANG! The lock BREAKS off and Eddie rips the door open as frozen air WHOOSHES into the lab and Maria COMES RUSHING OUT!

AN ALARM SOUNDS!

EDDIE

I'm gonna get you out of here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Maria LEAPS ON EDDIE, knocks him down and with surprising strength, PUNCHES HIM repeatedly in the chest and face. Maria, atop Eddie, wraps her hands around his throat, CHOKING HIM. Eddie struggles, gasping for air--

EDDIE'S POV: *for a split second, through thick swirls of frosty air, Maria's face looks like that of a MONSTER. BLACK, WITH SHARP TEETH AND A THICK, RED TONGUE.*

Maria's face returns as black goo emerges from the pores of her hands and slips into an unaware Eddie.

Maria suddenly weakens and Eddie gently pushes her off, she falls to the ground, out cold. He leans across and checks her pulse. His face says it all.

EDDIE (cont'd)
Maria-- oh God. I'm so sorry.

He staggers to his feet as he hears URGENT SHOUTING VOICES coming from beyond the closed lab door.

Eddie's eyes WHIP ABOUT, spotting another door across the lab. He takes one last look at his friend and bolts for the door.

INT. UNDERGROUND CORRIDORS - LIFE FOUNDATION - MORNING

Eddie sprints, skidding around a corner, running frantically down a perpendicular hall--

Two SECURITY GUARDS burst from the stairwell, race after him.

Eddie runs wildly as TWO MORE GUARDS appear in front of him.

Before either Guard can react, Eddie bounds off the wall, in an INSANE PARKOUR MOVE, lands behind the Guards and HITS THEM WITH A SERIES OF RAPID-FIRE BLOWS. Lightning-quick.

The Guards drop. Eddie stands there for a moment, incredulous at his own fighting skills-- *"Did I just do that?!"*

EXT. DELIVERY AREA - LIFE FOUNDATION - MORNING

Double-doors BURST open, blown off their hinges by-- Eddie, who runs up a delivery ramp as the cacophony of ALARMS build--

Eddie dashes across the Life Foundation campus towards the TEN-FOOT-HIGH SECURITY FENCE.

More SECURITY GUARDS spill out as Eddie runs for the fence and inexplicably SCALES IT in a single move.

He lands like a cat on a FIRE ROAD, which cuts through the woods.

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CONTINUED:

Eddie runs down the fire road, WAYYYY FASTER than he can normally run. A massive, HALF FALLEN TREE blocks his path.

Eddie attempts to leap it. To his surprise, he CRASHES THROUGH IT, shattering the massive tree and tumbling to the ground.

VENOM

Mmmmmrrrrr

He gets back to his feet and races wildly through the trees.

Suddenly the LIGHTS of an ATV land on him, strobing through the trees as it approaches from his right. Shouts of SECURITY GUARDS coming from his left.

Eddie skids to a stop as he is boxed in, all out of options.

The ATV stops, as do the Security Guards, confused-- *Because Eddie is no longer there.*

We MOVE UP the towering BISHOP PINES framing the highway.

And there, some 80 feet high... We FIND EDDIE. Clinging to the branches. Having somehow scurried up here like a rat.

He looks stunned. As he watches the lights of the security cars vanish into the horizon-line. Because...

How the fuck did he get up this tree? CUT TO:

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Eddie enters. He looks awful. Sweaty, shaking, scratching at parts of his body that don't really itch. Mud on his clothes.

Eddie scrolls his cell-phone for a number. Dials as he cracks two beers. We HEAR the outgoing message on SPEAKER.

SKIRTH (O.S.)

Hi, it's Dora. Leave a message.

Eddie swallows some beer. It tastes terrible for some strange reason. He SPITS it out!

EDDIE (INTO PHONE)

Hey, uh. It's me. I just got back-- I haven't heard from you, so I wanna know if you're alright, but yeah, uh, great call on the lab. You were absolutely right--Yeah listen, I gotta, I gotta guy, I'm gonna call him and uh, I got a bunch of photographs, he'll publish those photographs but I need you to come with me-- just call me back, call me back!

(CONTINUED)