

The Beat

aka

Point of Pressure

Screenplay

By

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An eerie, ambient SOUND plays over a BLACK SCREEN, the volume slowly rising to indicate tension building.

Suddenly, an abrupt GLITCH EFFECT occurs, triggering a transition to a WHITE SCREEN with a subtle glow.

CLOSE ON a SURDO (a Brazilian drum), its steady BEAT relentless, echoing loudly.

Another GLITCH EFFECT occurs on the screen before returning to a WHITE SCREEN on which BLACK TEXT begins to appear.

Each letter is typed onto the screen in accordance with the CLICKS of a typewriter, while the DRUMMING of the Surdo continues.

SUPERIMPOSE:

THE DRUMBEAT intensifies.

NARRATION

Since ancient times, humanity has used the drum to communicate forces of creation and destruction. The relentless power of the Batucada drives your descent into the Beat of Samba. These rhythms-rooted in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro, are known for their hypnotic driving energy. For some the Beat triggers a euphoric trance-like state, and has a soothing, calming effect. It has also been useful in pharmaceutical tests and psychological research studies, primarily in Brazil.

FADE IN:

EXT. RIO DE JANEIRO, *PAO DE ACUCAR* (SUGAR LOAF MOUNTAIN) - DAY

Aerial footage captures the grandeur of the mountain as the DRUMBEAT echoes ominously, carrying a sinister tone.

EXT. CHRISTO REDENTOR STATUE - DAY

The towering statue stands over the city - its gaze cold and detached. The DRUMBEAT echoes louder, disorienting.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL-DIMLY LIT, INDUSTRIAL

We CLOSE ON two BARE FEET, pale and calloused, slamming against the concrete steps, desperate and panicked as they ascend the stairwell.

Heavy breathing mingles with the DRUMBEAT, the sound of which feels inescapable, relentless.

EXT. CHRISTO REDENTOR STATUE - DAY

CLARENCE E. SACTUN, disheveled and clad in a straitjacket, screams in anguish as he ascends the stairs frantically. Sweat drips from his brow, his eyes wide and frenzied.

CLARENCE
(screaming)
Jesus Christ! Can't you stop
it?!

His voice is swallowed by the deafening DRUMBEAT.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY-STARK LIGHTING, COLD TILES

A pair of BARE FEET running upstairs, blurred by motion. The DRUMBEAT is now invasive and suffocating.

Clarence bolts through the corridor, the straitjacket restricting his movements. His SCREAMS blend with the DRUMBEAT, fractured and fragmented.

INT. HALLWAY-ELEVATOR BAY

The elevator doors slide open abruptly. Two ORDERLIES rush out; urgency etched on their faces.

INT. STAIRWELL-CONCRETE WALLS, ECHOING SOUNDS

Clarence stumbles into the stairwell, the DRUMBEAT now unbearable, each THUMP like a hammer to the skull. He glances down at the two orderlies charging up toward him.

He is trapped; cornered. In a moment of frenzied desperation, Clarence attempts to leap over the railing, but the orderlies close in. They restrain him, as one flailing leg swings and tangles. The drumbeat stops abruptly. Silence – deafening and suffocating.

Clarence's panting fills the void as he is zip-tied and dragged away to a treatment room.

INT. CLARENCE AND MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The morning sun filters through half-closed blinds. A buzzing red digital alarm clock reads "6:15 AM." Traffic HUMS faintly outside.

Clarence, a muscular man in his 30s, sits at his kitchen table, dressed in his police uniform. He methodically butters toast, his movements stiff and mechanical.

Across from him, MICHELLE SACTUN, early 30s, attractive, sips her coffee, her eyes scanning him.

MICHELLE
(softly)

You barely said a word last night.

Clarence chews slowly, not looking up.

CLARENCE

Long shift.

MICHELLE

It's always a long shift.

Clarence checks his duty belt, adjusting his holster. Michelle watches, concern growing.

MICHELLE (CONT'D).

Maybe you should talk to Eugene.

Clarence tenses, his jaw tightening. He stands and grabs his keys from the counter.

CLARENCE

I gotta go.

Michelle EXHALES, watching as he heads for the door.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

A gray overcast hangs over the precinct parking lot. Clarence steps out of his cruiser and heads inside. CHARLES ROBINSON, late 30s, his on-duty partner, leans against the squad car, coffee in hand.

CHARLES

You look like hell.

CLARENCE

Feel like it.

CHARLES

Vincent's throwing a get together this weekend. Said you should swing by.

Clarence gives a half-shrug, uninterested. Charles eyes him for a beat.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You should. It might do you some good.

After a brief pause, Clarence finally nods and heads inside.

INT. PRECINCT LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Clarence opens his locker, revealing an artfully arranged shelf of police gear. He pulls out a framed photo: a younger version of himself with EUGENE SACTUN, late 40s, both smiling, arms around each other.

Clarence stares at it, his expression unreadable.

A montage of Clarence's life as a police officer.

Suddenly in walks **SGT.LANNY FITZGERALD**.

FITZGERALD

Hello Clarence. How are you buddy?

CLARENCE

I'm fine.

FITZGERALD

Hey, you wanna make some extra dough?

CLARENCE

YOU MEAN O.T.?

FITZGERALD

No. Not the street. We've partnered with a market Research firm to promote a new watch. To test it's accuracy and durability. The SGT displays:

INSERT: MEN'S **SAMBA** watch.

Clarence buckles it on.

FITZGERALD

We only need a few officers to wear them while on duty to compare and verify the accuracy. It's just 3 weeks. It pays well.

CLARENCE

How much?

FITZGERALD

1000.00 a week. And you get to keep the watch.

CLARENCE

I'm in.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Clarence responds to a domestic disturbance call. A MAN YELLS at his partner while NEIGHBORS watch. Clarence's presence briefly quiets the chaos, but the tension lingers.

INT. POLICE CAR-DAY

Clarence drives through a neighborhood marked by graffiti and neglect. Charles sits beside him, scrolling through his phone. They pass a memorial of candles and flowers on the sidewalk.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A SUSPECT stares blankly at Clarence while he questions him. The suspect's silence and defiance wear on Clarence's patience.

EXT. CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Clarence stands over a BODY covered by a sheet. Flashing red and blue lights illuminate the scene. He exchanges glances with Charles, both weary.

INT. PRECINCT-LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Clarence changes out of his uniform. His reflection in the mirror appears strained, his eyes heavy. He takes a long breath before slumping his shoulders.

END MONTAGE.

INT. VINCENT'S APARTMENT -LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

VINCENT GILLIAM, Eugene, and a few friends are lounging around, beers in hand. Clarence sits on the edge of the couch, distant and tense.

VINCENT

Man, you need a break. You've been wound up tight for months.

EUGENE

He's right. You've got to let off some steam. Being honest with you, chaos is not the option, and lately you have been out of your head.

Just ask Michelle how she feels.

CLARENCE

Not again, why are you bringing Michelle in on this? And I'm fine. Just...work's been heavy.

EUGENE

Look--

VINCENT

Just calm down, boys. And Clarence, you need a night out. We're hitting this samba club tomorrow - a real samba spot in LA. Music, dancing, the whole deal.

EUGENE

C'mon, Clarence. It'll be good for you. Get out of your head for a while.

Clarence hesitates, his eyes dropping to the floor.

CLARENCE

I don't know, man. I'm not really in the mood for a scene like that.

VINCENT

That's the point. No stress. Just tight dresses, music, and get your drinky-drink on. You deserve it.

After a pause, Clarence forces a thin smile and nods.

CLARENCE

Alright. I guess it couldn't hurt.

Vincent pats him on the back, grinning.

INT. SAMBA CLUB -LOS ANGELES -NIGHT

The club pulses with energy. Dancers fill the floor, moving in rhythm with the POUNDING BEATS. Micro-phoned drums BLAST through the speakers - intense, unyielding, loud. Bright, flashing lights cut across the room, adding to the sensory overload.

Clarence enters with Vincent, Eugene, and a few other friends. They grab drinks, laugh, and take in the chaotic yet captivating atmosphere.

Vincent pulls Clarence to the dance floor. Clarence hesitates but eventually lets loose, swaying to the infectious BEAT. For a moment, he is in sync with the crowd, with the noise, the energy, the excitement.

The DRUMS grow louder, almost oppressive. The beat feels sharper. One drummer is playing a tamborim- with power and precision, cutting through the air and Clarence's ears. His face

COTINUED:

tenses, and he presses his palms to his ears, but it does nothing to soften the sound. The lights flash rapidly, causing him to feel disoriented.

Clarence's breathing quickens. His gaze darts from the stage to the crowd, searching for a way out.

INT. CLARENCE'S APARTMENT -BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight seeps through the blinds. Clarence lies in bed, eyes open, exhausted. The room is quiet. He sits up slowly. As he moves through his morning routine - brushing his teeth, getting dressed - a faint DRUMBEAT can be heard. It's distant, almost imperceptible, but almost immediately, Clarence's eyes shift and his brow furrows.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Michelle is at the counter, sipping coffee. Clarence enters, still distracted.

MICHELLE

Morning. You, okay?

Clarence pauses, listening. The DRUMBEAT lingers, barely there.

CLARENCE

Yeah. Just...tired.

A montage of Clarence as the drumbeat grows.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Clarence sits at his desk, trying to focus on reports. The DRUMBEAT is slightly louder and persistent. He glances around, but no one else reacts.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Clarence walks his beat, but the sound follows,

synchronized with his FOOTSTEPS. He looks over his shoulder, suspicious.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Charles drives. Clarence sits silently, eyes unfocused. The BEAT grows sharper. Charles glances at him.

CHARLES

You alright, man? You just vanished the other night.

Clarence forces a nod, but the sound ECHOES in his head.

END MONTAGE.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Through a partially closed window blind, we see Clarence at his desk, writing a report. The station is mostly quiet, save for some MUTED CHATTER and occasional RINGING PHONES.

A loud SURDO DRUMBEAT sounds. Clarence grimaces, his head snapping up. The relentless, invasive BEAT echoes in his ears.

We CLOSE ON Clarence's eyes, as they blink rapidly, his eyelids fluttering, strained and unfocused.

We then CLOSE ON a handgun, resting at the corner of the desk. It is polished, loaded, and within reach.

Clarence's face tightens, frustration spilling over. He cups his hands over his ears, pressing hard, but it's useless. The DRUMBEAT won't stop.

Amid heavy breathing, his gaze locks onto the handgun. He grabs it, trembling. Slowly, he brings the barrel to his mouth. His thumb presses against the trigger, finger tightening.

A CLICK, followed by a hollow, deafening silence. Clarence freezes, sweat beading down his face. His eyes widened as the drumbeat suddenly stops.

He pulls the clip out - a single bullet in the chamber, waiting to fire. The realization crashes over him. He

collapses forward onto the desk, feeling the suffocating weight of it all.

INT. POLICE CAR - EARLY MORNING

Clarence drives down Crenshaw Boulevard. Charles sits in the passenger seat, TAPPING his fingers on the frame of the door. The sun casts harsh shadows on the dashboard.

CHARLES

Hey, Clarence. My buddy in homicide is over at the murder scene in Florence. They recovered the weapon. It was a ghost gun.

CLARENCE

Not surprising. Even with all its benefits, technology in some ways makes our job harder.

CHARLES

And with the increased use of meth and fentanyl, it's only going to get worse.

CLARENCE

One way to avoid it is to stay out of alleys at 2 am. In alleys, things happen. Bad things.

Charles glances at Clarence, a hint of concern in his side eye. Clarence's expression is unreadable.

INT. CLARENCE AND MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Clarence enters the apartment. The TV is on, emitting a low HUM. Michelle sits on the couch with a glass of wine.

MICHELLE

Hey. You're home late.

Clarence doesn't respond. He heads straight to the bedroom, loosening his tie.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Clarence...we need to talk.

Clarence pauses but keeps his back to her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Lately, it's like you're not here. You're somewhere else, and I don't know how to reach you.

Clarence sits on the edge of the bed, rubbing his temples. A faint SURDO DRUMBEAT echoes – steady and unavoidable.

His hands press against his ears. His breathing quickens. Michelle watches from the doorway.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You're not taking care of yourself. This job is eating you alive. I can see it. Why can't you?

The drumming gets louder. Clarence's face tightens.

CLARENCE

(voice

strained)

Just...stop. Please.

MICHELLE

I'm trying to help you! Why can't you just talk to me?

The drumbeat pounds harder.

CLARENCE

(shouting)

Shut up!

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Just listen...

MICHELLE

What?

CLARENCE

That beat, can you hear that?

MICHELLE

What beat, Clarence? You are not making any sense to me right now!

Silence.

Michelle is startled. Clarence stares blankly ahead, then slowly lowers his hands. The DRUMBEAT fades.

CLARENCE

(quietly)

I'm sorry...It's not something you can understand.

He grabs his jacket and leaves. Michelle stands still, unsure.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Clarence sits on a bench with his brother, Eugene. Eugene TALKS, but Clarence's attention drifts.
- B) Vincent laughs, trying to connect. Clarence forces a brief smile, distracted.
- C) Michelle drives. She glances at Clarence, who stares out the window, disconnected.
- D) Charles tries to joke with Clarence, whose reaction is delayed and tense.
- E) Michelle lies awake. Clarence is in the living room, his head down, exhausted. The DRUMBEAT echoes softly in his mind.

A montage of the drumbeat's grip on Clarence.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

INT. CLARENCE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clarence sits alone on the couch, staring blankly at the TV. The VOLUME is low, but the DRUMBEAT echoes loudly in his head. He presses his hands against his temples and

eyes clenched shut.

Michelle enters the room, watching him cautiously.

MICHELLE

Clarence...you've barely said a word all week. Talk to me.

Clarence's eyes snap open. He forces a composed look.

CLARENCE

I'm fine. Just tired. Work's been stressful. Got me uptight.

Michelle steps closer, her concern deepening.

MICHELLE

It's more than that. I know it. I can see it.

Clarence's jaw tightens. The drumbeat seems to thump louder.

CLARENCE

I said I'm fine, Michelle. Just drop it.

Michelle hesitates, then slowly walks away. Clarence's gaze follows her, conflicted.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Clarence walks his patrol beat. The city moves around him — people, cars, noise — but the DRUMBEAT is louder, sharper, invasive.

A MAN accidentally bumps into him.

MAN

Hey, watch it!

Clarence spins around, fists clenched, eyes wide. The man takes a step back, startled. Realizing his reaction, Clarence quickly turns away, his breathing uneven.

INT. POLICE STATION - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Charles leans against a row of lockers, watching Clarence as he splashes water on his face.

CHARLES

You alright, man? You seem...off lately.

Clarence wipes his face, eyes narrowed. The drumbeat is still there - pounding, relentless.

CLARENCE

I'm fine, Charles. Just handling things.

CHARLES

Handling what? You almost snapped at that kid yesterday. Just... maybe, talk to someone, you know?

Clarence stares at his own reflection, tension building.

CLARENCE

I don't need help. I'm just tired.

Charles hesitates, then nods slowly.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michelle lies in bed, awake. Clarence stands by the window, staring out, his eyes distant. The DRUMBEAT is unyielding, like a hammer against his skull.

MICHELLE

Clarence, please. Whatever is going on, you need help.

Clarence's expression shifts to frustration, anger, fear.

CLARENCE

I'm not crazy, Michelle. You think I don't see the looks? The whispers? I'm fine.

MICHELLE

No, you're not. You're scaring
me.

Clarence's eyes meet hers, the weight of his struggle
heavy. He turns away, the drumbeat louder than ever.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

Clarence sits at his desk, attempting to fill out a report.

The DRUMBEAT pounds steadily in his head, overpowering the
noise of phones ringing and officers talking. His hand
trembles, smudging the ink on the paper.

Charles walks by, noticing the unfinished report.

CHARLES

Hey, Clarence, that report was
due an hour ago.

Clarence's eyes snap up, unfocused and bloodshot.

CLARENCE

I said I'm working on it!

Charles steps back slightly, concern flickering across his
face. Clarence rubs his temples, the drumbeat CRASHING
louder.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Clarence stands on a street corner, eyes darting. Cars rush
by, and people pass— but the DRUMBEAT echoes over
everything. He spots a group of teenagers playing MUSIC
from a speaker.

The DRUMBEAT merges with the BASS, twisting his perception.
Clarence marches over, shoving through the group.

CLARENCE

Turn it off! Just turn it off!

The teenagers exchange glances, confused.

TEENAGER

Chill, man. It's just a song.

Clarence's fists clench. His eyes twitch. The drumbeat is deafening.

CLARENCE

I said shut it off!

The teenagers quickly disperse, leaving Clarence alone, panting, but the BEAT doesn't fade.

END MONTAGE.

INT. CLARENCE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clarence paces back and forth. The room is messy, cluttered, with scattered papers and empty bottles. The DRUMBEAT resonates, reverberating through his skull.

He grabs the remote, turning the TV VOLUME up to drown out the noise, but it only makes it worse. Frustrated, he hurls the remote against the wall, SHATTERING it.

Michelle enters, alarmed.

MICHELLE

Clarence! What is going on with you?

Clarence's eyes are wild. The DRUMBEAT pulses in his ears.

CLARENCE

I can't make it stop, Michelle!
It won't stop!

Michelle cautiously approaches, her voice gentle.

MICHELLE

Maybe you should talk to someone. Get help.

Clarence's face contorts, a mixture of anger and desperation.

CLARENCE

I don't need help! I just need
it to stop!

Michelle steps back, startled. Clarence catches himself,
his breathing heavy. The DRUMBEAT hammers on.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Clarence sits across from a SUSPECT. Charles stands beside
him.

The suspect TAPS his fingers on the table, the sound
blending with the relentless SURDO DRUMBEAT.

CLARENCE

Stop that!

The suspect looks confused.

SUSPECT

What?

CLARENCE

Stop the fuckin tapping!

Charles places a firm hand on Clarence's shoulder,
steadying him.

CHARLES

Hey, easy. What's going on with
you, man?

Clarence's eyes dart between Charles and the suspect. His
grip on reality loosens as the DRUMBEAT drowns out
everything else.

CLARENCE

I said stop that shit!

In a sudden burst, Clarence lunges across the table,
grabbing the suspect by the collar. He SLAMS him against
the wall, teeth clenched.

CHARLES

Clarence! What the hell are you
doing?

Clarence's eyes snap to the side. He sees a fiendishly masked figure approaching – distorted, menacing. Panic surges through him. Without hesitation, he tackles the masked man to the ground, fists flying. The suspect SCREAMS, trapped between fear and pain.

More masked figures rush in. Clarence pulls out his pistol, his eyes wild.

CLARENCE

Stay back! I'll shoot!

A heavy hand grips his shoulder, jerking him back. The masked man beneath him pulls away – and suddenly, everything shifts.

The masks are gone. It's his colleagues staring back, shocked and horrified. The man he had beaten lay curled up on the floor – it's Charles, blood trickling from his nose. The suspect SOBS, cradling his battered face.

NOISE fills the room – shouts, confusion, questions. Clarence's chest heaves. The DRUMBEAT is deafening now.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I... I'm sorry. I need to go
home. I need to get out of here.
I need SILENCE.

He stumbles out of the interrogation room, the echo of the SURDO DRUMBEAT pounding relentlessly as the door SLAMS shut behind him.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Clarence walks with heavy steps; his eyes lost in the chaos of his thoughts. He pauses in front of a nearby movie theater, its marquee glowing softly. Needing an escape, he buys a ticket and steps inside.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Clarence sits alone in the front row. The theater fills slowly - moviegoers CHATTER, some text on their phones, and others juggle snacks. A brief commercial plays on the screen.

We CLOSE ON Clarence's face, as the Surdo DRUMBEAT continues, faintly but unmistakably.

Clarence glances around, searching for the faces of those around him. No one reacts. The DRUMBEAT fades slightly as the overhead speaker CRACKLES.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please set
your phones to vibrate or mute.
The feature presentation will
begin shortly.

The lights are dim. The screen flickers, and the SURDO BEAT lowers, giving way to the rhythmic strokes of the *Cavaquinho*, a lively, high-pitched four-string Brazilian guitar.

A packed *Sarabódromo* on Avenida Sapucaí, the heart of Rio's Carnival. The energy is palpable - crowds CHEERING, camera flashes, vibrant dancers in elaborate costumes, and massive, decorated floats inching down the avenue. The THUNDERING of drums and the relentless percussion fill the air. A single drummer gives a WHISTLE alert, and then a drum cues to stop.

We CLOSE ON the PUXADOR, a samba singer.

PUXADOR

Choro Cavaco!

The performance explodes with powerful drumming, which then intensifies and is accented by costumed dancers providing a burst of color, choreography, and electrifying vibrancy. Clarence watches, his face a mix of awe and unease.

EXT. AVENIDA SAPUCAI - NIGHT

On-screen, amid the dazzling chaos, Clarence sees himself fully costumed, parading and dancing with the performers.

His expression mirrors both joy and madness.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

We CLOSE ON Clarence, his eyes wide. He looks around the theater, which is now empty. Not a single person remains. The screen plays a commercial ad with no sound. The space is silent.

The SURDO DRUMBEAT sounds persistent and invasive.

Clarence abruptly stands, glances once more at the screen, and then rushes out of the theater. DRUMBEAT follows.

INT. SACTUN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michelle stands in the dimly lit room, arms crossed, watching Clarence pace restlessly. His eyes are weary, dark circles beneath them. The faint SURDO DRUMBEAT lingers in his mind, ever-present.

MICHELLE

Clarence, please... I can't watch you tear yourself apart like this. You need help.

CLARENCE

I'm fine, Michelle. I don't need a shrink. I just need some peace and quiet.

MICHELLE

Peace and quiet? You don't sleep; you barely talk to me. You snap at everyone. Clarence, you're not fine.

Clarence rubs his temples, the sound of the DRUMBEAT rising. He looks at Michelle; frustration mixed with exhaustion.

CLARENCE

You don't understand. Nobody does.

EXT. EUGENE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Clarence leans against the railing while Eugene stands before him, concern etched on his face.

EUGENE

I know it's tough, man. The job gets to you, but you've got to talk to someone. Bottling it up isn't working.

CLARENCE

I don't need a lecture, Gene. I'm handling it.

EUGENE

Are you? Because from where I'm standing, it doesn't look like it.

Clarence's jaw tightens. The drumbeat THUDS louder.

CLARENCE

I said I'm handling it. Just back off.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Clarence sits at a corner table with Vincent. Empty beer bottles scatter across the surface. Vincent eyes Clarence cautiously.

VINCENT

Look, man, we've been through a lot. If you need to talk, I'm here.

CLARENCE

I don't need pity, Vincent. I'm not a charity case. I have HANDS not BOWLS.

VINCENT

It's not pity. It's concern. You're scaring people, Clarence. Michelle, Charles, me.

Clarence's eyes dart to Vincent, anger flaring. The DRUMBEAT hammers in his skull.

CLARENCE

Then stop worrying. I don't need saving. You're not Reverend Know-it-all.

Vincent SIGHS, defeated. Clarence pushes his chair back abruptly, grabs his coat, and leaves the bar without another word.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Clarence walks alone, the SURDO DRUMBEAT relentless, echoing in his head, bouncing around his nervous system. He glances at strangers who pass, suspicious and wary. He is hopeful someone will be able to hear it as well.

Clarence's denial and increasing paranoia alienate those closest to him, leaving him trapped in a cycle of isolation and confusion.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

Clarence walks down the corridor, the SURDO DRUMBEAT THUMPING louder with each step. OFFICERS pass by, nodding casually, but their faces begin to distort - grinning, twisted versions of themselves, wearing sinister Carnival masks. Their LAUGHTER echoes in distorted Portuguese.

OFFICER #1

(voice distorted,
echoing, taunting)

Voce nao consegue escapar!

Clarence's breathing quickens. He presses his palms against his ears and eyes wide. Suddenly, Charles grabs his shoulder, snapping him out of the hallucination.

CHARLES

Clarence! Hey, you good?

Clarence's gaze focuses. The masks are gone.

The DRUMBEAT dulls for a moment.

CLARENCE

Yeah...yeah, just tired.

Charles studies him, hesitant, but Clarence walks off without further explanation.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Clarence stands at a busy intersection. The DRUMBEAT PULSES, louder and faster. PEDESTRIANS cross the street — faces painted like Carnival performers. Some wear elaborate, grotesque masks, sneering and jeering at him. Their VOICES blur into chaotic, mocking shouts.

PEDESTRIAN #1

(voice distorted)

Voce e um fracasso, policia!

Clarence grips his head, squeezing his eyes shut. When he opens them, the street is back to normal. Confusion and panic flash across his face.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Clarence stares out the window as he drives, his reflection distorting with each BEAT of the drum. The cityscape shifts — street vendors wearing masks and samba dancers appear in traffic. Clarence blinks rapidly, his hand trembling.

CHARLES

Hey, you listening, man? I was talking about the precinct picnic next week.

Clarence snaps his head toward Charles, disoriented.

CLARENCE

Yeah...yeah, sorry. Got a lot on my mind.

Charles eyes him cautiously, concern building.

INT. CLARENCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clarence sits on his bed; the room dim and suffocating. The DRUMBEAT pounds. He presses a pillow over his ears, but it seeps through - unrelenting. His eyes dart to the window, and suddenly, he sees a crowd below.

Masked figures dance wildly in the street, drumming and shouting in Portuguese, their faces leering at him.

Clarence's breaths quicken. He stumbles back, colliding with the nightstand.

The noise is deafening, but exclusively for Clarence: a CACOPHONY of sound: the Cuica crying unashamedly, multiple Tamborims slicing the air like a saw, and led by a monstrous MARACANA- the Boeing 747 of drums, followed by shouts, and laughter. The room closes in, suffocating.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

Clarence? What's going on?

Her voice cuts through the chaos. He blinks, and the street is empty. Silence, but just for a moment. The DRUMBEAT resumes - steady, persistent.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Clarence interrogates a suspect. The DRUMBEAT persists, droning in his ears. The suspect's face warps - grotesque, masked, smirking. The suspect LAUGHS - a cruel, echoing sound.

SUSPECT

(voice distorted)

Voce nunca vai escapar!

Clarence SLAMS his hands on the table. The suspect recoils, shocked. Charles rushes in, grabbing Clarence's arm.

CHARLES

Clarence! Enough! What the hell are you doing?

Clarence's chest heaves. The mask vanishes – the suspect's face is just a terrified man. Charles's grip is firm but gentle. Clarence looks lost, trapped in a reality he can't trust.

SERIES OF SHOTS - CLARENCE EXPERIENCES A PANIC ATTACK

A) Clarence stands in front of a mirror, splashing water on his face, staring at his own distorted reflection.

B) In the locker room, he hears the drumbeat echoing between the metal doors.

C) On patrol, he grips his steering wheel, eyes darting nervously at every person he sees, each face potentially hiding behind a mask.

D) At home, he locks himself in the bathroom, his hands trembling, muttering to himself, "It's not real....."

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Darkness blankets the narrow alley, punctuated by the flickering glow of a distant streetlamp. Garbage bags are piled against the walls, and a stray cat scurries past. FOOTSTEPS echo – hurried and heavy.

Clarence, in plain clothes, moves through the shadows, his posture tense, eyes wild. The SURDO DRUMBEAT is persistent, pounding in his head. Sweat drips from his forehead, his jaw clenched. He scans his surroundings, searching for something unseen.

At the alley's end, two YOUNG MEN exchange cash and a small bag – a typical street deal. They spot Clarence approaching, their faces wary.

DEALER

Yo, man. You lost or something?

Clarence's eyes are narrow. The DRUMBEAT gets louder relentlessly, suffocating.

CLARENCE

What did you say?

BUYER

(smirking)

He said, "Are you lost, ninja?"
If not, you better kick rocks.

Clarence's breathing grows rapid, the sound of the DRUMS thrumming in his skull. He raises his shirt; fingers twitch toward the holster on his hip.

DEALER

Hey, chill, man. We don't want
no trouble.

Clarence's vision blurs. In his mind, the men wear grotesque Carnival masks – twisted, grinning faces. Their LAUGHTER echoes, mocking.

BUYER

Yo, this dude's trippin.

CLARENCE

(voice trembling)

Shut up. Shut the hell up!

Suddenly, Clarence lunges, grabbing the dealer by the collar and SLAMMING him against the wall. The buyer stumbles back, shocked.

DEALER

(struggling)

Man, what's your problem?!

Clarence's grip tightens, the DRUMBEAT thundering. The dealer's face becomes distorted – a demon mask, sneering. The mask LAUGHS, its hollow eyes staring into his soul.

CLARENCE

(voice strained)

Stop laughing...Stop it!

He draws his service weapon and points the barrel at the dealer's forehead. The buyer backs up, then freezes in fear.

DEALER

(shaking)

Yo, man. Don't do it!

Clarence's finger hovers over the trigger. His heart races – the DRUMBEAT deafening. For a moment, his eyes flicker with clarity. He sees fear in the man's eyes, human terror. The mask vanishes.

The DRUMBEAT suddenly stops.

Silence.

Clarence's eyes widen; his grip loosens. The dealer pushes him away and takes off, sprinting after the buyer and leaving Clarence alone in the silence of the alley.

He stares at his trembling hands, the weight of the gun pressing down on his palm.

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Charles and a GROUP OF OFFICERS review security footage from the alley. The video shows Clarence's unhinged confrontation – the aggression, the weapon drawn, the suspect fleeing in terror.

CHARLES

(somber)

That's...that's Clarence.

The room falls silent. Officers exchange uneasy glances. Some look stunned, others wary. Clarence's behavior has become impossible to ignore.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

CAPTAIN HARRIS, stern and weary, sits across from Charles and a few DETECTIVES.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

I don't care how long he's served. We can't overlook this. He's become a liability.

Charles hesitates, guilt and frustration battling within him.

CHARLES

Sir, Clarence needs help. This isn't just...misconduct. There's something seriously wrong with him.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

And what happens when he pulls the trigger next time? On an innocent person?

The weight of the question hangs heavy. Charles looks away, resigned.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Marked police cars and OFFICERS gather outside. Clarence is led out of the station in handcuffs, his head lowered.

Charles watches from a distance, conflicted and helpless. The other officers exchange uneasy glances, WHISPERS rippling through the crowd.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Clarence sits alone, his eyes glazed over. The Surdo DRUMBEAT pounds in his ears, muffling the voices of the two DETECTIVES questioning him. Their words become unintelligible noise.

DETECTIVE #1

Clarence, do you understand the seriousness of these accusations?

Clarence blinks, sweat glistening on his forehead. The DRUMBEAT drowns out everything.

DETECTIVE #2

Did you hear us, Clarence?

Clarence's gaze shifts, unfocused. The detectives exchange worried glances.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - PROCESSING AREA - DAY

Clarence's fingerprints are taken. His mugshot flashes vacant eyes, a hollow stare. He is processed, stripped of his personal items, and handed a standard-issue jumpsuit.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Clarence sits on a metal cot, staring at the wall. The cell is cramped, occupied by two other inmates. They exchange glances, eyeing Clarence's tense demeanor.

INMATE #1

(Leaning back, smirking)

Props...You got balls, man.
You're a real one.

Clarence glances over, his face expressionless.

CLARENCE

Thanks. You just provided me
with motivation.

INMATE #1

Motivation? To do what? You're
in jail.

CLARENCE

To kick your ass.

Without warning, Clarence lunges at the inmate, fists flying. The confined space amplifies the chaos - GRUNTS, SHOUTS, the METALLIC CLANG of bunk beds against the cell's bars. The other inmate backs away, startled.

INMATE #1

(shouting)

Yo guards! Get this sicko!

Correctional officers burst in, tackling Clarence to the ground. They struggle to restrain him, pinning his arms behind his back.

INT. ISOLATION CELL - NIGHT

Clarence is now alone in a narrow, concrete cell. A small window casts a thin sliver of moonlight across his face. His breathing steadies, the adrenaline fading. Silence settles, heavy and suffocating.

The faint, steady SURDO DRUMBEAT returns.

Clarence leans against the wall, staring at the small window. The DRUMBEAT, no longer deafening, becomes a rhythmic lullaby, a twisted comfort.

His eyes slowly close, and he drifts into a restless sleep.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - EVALUATION ROOM - DAY

A sterile room with gray walls, a metal table, and two plastic chairs. The fluorescent lights HUM softly. Clarence sits hunched in the chair, wrists cuffed to the arms. His eyes are bloodshot, his hair disheveled. A DOCTOR, composed and measured, sits across from him, a clipboard resting on the table.

DOCTOR

Clarence, do you understand why you're here?

Clarence shifts uncomfortably. The SURDO DRUMBEAT thrums faintly in his ears. His eyes dart to the corners of the room, suspiciously.

CLARENCE

(voice strained)

I'm here because they think I'm
crazy. But I'm not. You don't
hear it, do you? The drum.
It's always there.

The doctor glances at his notes, maintaining a professional demeanor.

DOCTOR

You've been experiencing auditory hallucinations – sounds that others cannot hear. It's a symptom, Clarence.

CLARENCE

(sympathetic laugh)

Symptoms? No. It's not just sounds. It's them. The masks. The laughter. They're out there, watchin. Always watchin.

Clarence leans forward, the cuffs RATTLING. The doctor maintains his composure, but his grip on the clipboard tightens.

DOCTOR

We've diagnosed you with paranoid delusions, acute clinical depression, and schizophrenia. These conditions can distort perception.

Clarence's eyes lock onto the doctor's. The DRUMBEAT grows louder – an oppressive, throbbing pulse.

CLARENCE

(voice rising)

This is real. I know it is. They're punishing me. guiding me. If you could hear it, you'd understand!

The doctor SIGHS, scribbling a note.

DOCTOR

Clarence, we want to help you. But you need to accept it. Medication, therapy, testing, – it can help quiet the noise.

CLARENCE

(bitterly)

Quiet the noise? You think pills or shots can stop them? I'm not sick.

You're just afraid. You don't
get it.

The doctor leans back, considering his approach.

DOCTOR

What about your family,
Clarence? Your wife, Michelle.
Your brother, Eugene. They're
worried about you.

Clarence's expression falters. The mention of his family
creates a flicker of recognition, a moment of clarity. But
the DRUMBEAT surges back, louder, more relentless. His face
contorts in frustration.

CLARENCE

They don't understand. No one
does. They lie...they all lie.
He who feels it...knows it.
He who hears it...fears it.

The silence stretches between them. The doctor writes
another note, his expressions a blend of concern and
resignation.

DOCTOR

We'll continue with the
evaluation, Clarence. I hope
you'll eventually accept our
help.

Two ORDERLIES enter, standing by the door. Clarence looks
at them warily, his breathing unsteady. The DRUMBEAT pounds
like a war cry in his ears.

CLARENCE

(voice low)

They're here too. In the
shadows. Watching...waiting.

The orderlies approach and guide Clarence out. He doesn't
resist, but his eyes remain fixed on the doctor, a
lingering distrust.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Clarence sits alone in a small, padded room. A single, grated window allows a sliver of moonlight to filter through. The SURDO DRUMBEAT fills the space – taunting, oppressive. He closes his eyes, covering his ears, but the sound remains.

His breathing shudders, caught between sobs and rage. The moonlight catches his tear-streaked face as the DRUMBEAT continues, unrelenting.

B) Bare feet pound against the floor, blurred by motion. The SURDO DRUMBEAT is invasive and suffocating.

Clarence, trapped in a straitjacket, sprints through the corridor, his SCREAMS fractured by the relentless thumping.

C) Elevator doors burst open. Two orderlies rush out, urgency on their faces.

D) Clarence stumbles into the stairwell, the drumbeat a hammer to his skull. He sees the orderlies charging up – trapped. Desperate, he tries to leap over the railing, but they reach him – restraining, tussling.

The drumbeat stops. Silence. Suffocating.

Clarence's panting fills the void as he is restrained and dragged away to a treatment room.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM

Clarence thrashes against the restraints, his breathing ragged. The room feels too bright, sterile. A low, distorted HUM lingers under the relentless DRUMBEAT-like resonance pressing in from the walls.

A NURSE injects a sedative into his arm. His muscles twitch as the cold liquid seeps in. The BEAT doesn't stop. The door CREAKS open as Dr. Lee enters, his expression unreadable.

DR. LEE
(soft, calculated)
Hello, Clarence. I'm Dr. Lee.
How are you feeling?

Clarence stares at him, eyes darting, sweat dripping down his temple.

CLARENCE
(Hoarse, desperate)
I want it to stop. Plain and simple.

The lights flicker. The HUM warps, almost like a WHISPER beneath the drum.

DR. LEE
I'm here for you. Now, according to your chart, you have concerns regarding the truth.

Clarence's eyes are narrow. The DRUMBEAT pulses louder.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)
So, I'm going to ask a favor of you.

CLARENCE
(suspicious)
What do I have that you need?

Dr. Lee tilts his head, his glasses catching the overhead light.

DR. LEE
Something the world believes in. We need to establish something cherished by all. Trust.

Clarence lets out a low, bitter CHUCKLE.

CLARENCE
Why should I trust...you?

The DRUMBEAT distorts, like a heartbeat choking on itself. The walls seem to move in rhythm.

DR. LEE

Because I'm here to help you understand the "inner" you. To help you cope, channel your thoughts...defend against darkness and fear.

Clarence SHUDDERS, his jaw tightening. His eyes dart to the corners of the room. Shadows shift - subtle, unnatural.

CLARENCE

(strained, trembling)
Shut up! I don't wanna hear-

His words begin to distort. The sounds fracture, repeat, and echo.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

(shattered, overlapping)
Shut up. Shut up. Shut up!

The DRUMBEAT explodes.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Clarence's grip tightens on the steering wheel. The DRUMBEAT pounds faintly in his head, like a warning, an order, or command.

CLARENCE

(voice strained, cracking)
Shut up! I don't wanna hear your goddamn mouth!

GANG BANGER

(defiant)
To hell with you. I know my rights!

CLARENCE

Your rights?

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The police cruiser jerks to a stop. The tires SCREECH, echoing off the alley walls. Clarence yanks the suspect out of the back seat, his eyes wild and unfocused. The DRUMBEAT quickens - louder, chaotic.

Clarence slams the gang banger's head against the trunk. THUD! THUD! Then again. THUD! Each impact seems to synchronize with the relentless BEAT.

CLARENCE
(through gritted teeth)
You have the right to remain...

The gang banger's face is slack, his breath ragged.

Blood smears the trunk.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
(whispering, barely audible)
Silent.

Clarence releases him, letting the body slide down the trunk and crumple against a fence. The BEAT slows to a dull, suffocating drone.

Clarence's eyes flick to the shadows - faces twisted and watching. They vanish when he blinks.

The DRUMBEAT distorts and warps. Clarence stumbles back to his car, shoving the keys into the ignition. His breaths are uneven.

He drives off, the BEAT following - never fading.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM

Clarence sits silently, eyes unfocused. The drumbeat HUMS softly, like a pulse no one else can hear.

DR. LEE
Silence is the enemy, Clarence.
Let's engage and defeat the
enemy.

CLARENCE

You might be the enemy, for all
I know.

DR. LEE

I'm trying to help you
understand--

CLARENCE

How can I make you understand?
You can't help me understand
what you don't hear. I can hear
it. I can feel it.

DR. LEE

Your chart says you've been
struggling with clinical
depression and hallucinations.

CLARENCE

You make it sound so cold, like
I'm the only one broken. Have
you seen the news? You think
you're clean, Dr. Lee? No cracks
in that polished mind of yours?

DR. LEE

(smiling, restrained)

Not exactly...but you're right.
There are cracks everywhere,
Clarence. All we can do is face
them, one by one. Today, let's
face yours.

CLARENCE

Okay. Where do I start?

DR. LEE

The beginning.

CLARENCE

(repeats slowly)

The beginning...wasn't so long
ago. Wait--

THE DRUMBEAT intensifies.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Okay... everything was fine. No complaints. Dr. Lee... are random thoughts real?

DR. LEE

It depends. They're real in your mind's eye. But sometimes - sometimes they break out. Without warning.

CLARENCE

Meaning?

DR. LEE

Random thoughts can fester, turn violent. Old wounds, grudges - things buried deep. They boil over, become something uncontrollable. Sometimes it's called temporary insanity.

CLARENCE

I've been to crime scenes...seen things that should stay buried.

IMAGES: Crime scene photos showing disfigured faces, smeared blood, and stains that won't wash out.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Ordinary people, neighbors, friends...it's always the same: "He was so nice. Always helping. A good man."

DR. LEE

What about your random thoughts, Clarence?

CLARENCE

They come and go. Constant as the shifting sea. The ebb tide.

DR. LEE

Can you control them?

CLARENCE

I try. Like swatting at shadows.
I pretend I can't hear it.
Pretend it's not there.

DR. LEE
This sound...does it haunt you?

The DRUMBEAT quickens, igniting chaos.

CLARENCE
Always.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM-DAY

Dr. Lee stares at Clarence. The DRUMBEAT returns, sharp and loud. It pierces the silence – steady, unstoppable.

CLARENCE
Oh, shit...

The beat PULSES louder, unforgiving. Clarence's eyes dart, trapped.

DR. LEE
Is something wrong?

CLARENCE

Wait...gotta see...if it will
approve.

DR. LEE

Approve? Is this an ongoing
issue?

The DRUMBEAT pulsates, suffocating Clarence.

DR. LEE (CONTD)

When does it occur?

CLARENCE

When I'm on duty. At home. Everywhere.
And any time. Unannounced.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

Clarence sits across from Dr. Lee. The room is sterile, uninviting.

DR. LEE

There are times when our subconscious becomes overloaded unable to process what's happening. That can disrupt rational thought.

CLARENCE

How long have you been a psychologist?

DR. LEE

Twenty-five years.

CLARENCE

I've seen interviews with soldiers talking about war's impact on their families, stress, alcoholism, even suicide. Does it ever bother you that you're playing games with people's minds?

DR. LEE

Excuse me?

CLARENCE

Maybe I should rephrase. People trust you with their deepest secrets. You could manipulate that trust. Ever think about it?

DR. LEE

If I'm not mistaken, you should be answering questions, not asking. You're an ex-cop. What's that like?

CLARENCE

I have re-hire status. Once you clear me, I can get back to work. Get my life back.

(beat)

Being a cop? It's not like a show on Netflix or Power. Fresh out of the academy, it's a rush. Then, your first murder scene...changes you. You get cold, numb. Frustration kicks in.

DR. LEE

Why frustration?

CLARENCE

Because you wish you could stop it – the senseless violence. But then there's politics, lawsuits, the media breathing down your neck. And now, even a traffic stop has your finger ready on the trigger.

DR. LEE

So, what does it all lead to?

CLARENCE

You survive the shift. A split second decides if you go home or end up on the 10 o'clock news. There are more suspensions, resignations, suicides. Some drown it in a bottle – others just check out. We all made a choice, but it's a hard one.

DR. LEE

That's insightful, Clarence. Tell me more.

CLARENCE

Before the force, I was a security guard. One night, they called me in because the graveyard shift guy snapped.

DR. LEE

Snapped how?

CLARENCE

He started seeing things.
Thought the supervisor was
spying on him from a 50-foot
water tower. Alone for too long
at night... his mind started
cannibalizing itself.

DR. LEE

Do you think it was always
there, or did the job bring it
out?

CLARENCE

Do you have a therapist, Doc?

DR. LEE

Why do you ask?

CLARENCE

I read a study once - some
therapists need as much help as
their patients. Sometimes more.

DR. LEE

I wouldn't doubt it.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)

Therapy is a mirror - you learn
about others, and sometimes that
reflection cuts deeper than
expected.

CLARENCE

What drives people crazy, Doc?

DR. LEE

There are countless theories.
Genetics, chemical imbalances,
trauma. I think it's when the
mind can't sort out or process
facts or when logic is fractured
by lies.

(beat)

There is, in all cases, a
defining moment. The precise
instance in which a person is

mentally unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality. This is known as the point of pressure.

CLARENCE

Switching gears. What is the difference between dog fighting and big game hunting?

DR. LEE

Tell me.

CLARENCE

Poverty and wealth. They call it "equal opportunity," but that's a lie, Doc. Agree or disagree?

DR. LEE

Whether I agree or not doesn't change anything.

CLARENCE

Translation: You don't give a damn.

DR. LEE

Let's save this for another session.

He checks his notes.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)

We'll need 8 to 12 more meetings before I can submit my evaluation.

CLARENCE

Why so many?

DR. LEE

Because you're not quite ready to re-enter society. Your file shows paranoid delusions, depression, and schizophrenia.

CLARENCE

So, what now?

DR. LEE

We'll start medication. Lithium.
Then, after six months, we
revisit therapy.

CLARENCE

Six months? We just started.

DR. LEE

Your insurance ran out.

CLARENCE

Are you fuckin kidding me?
Insurance? I'm a cop! That's
it?

DR. LEE

Coverage limits. Until it
reactivates, you'll have to
manage. Coexist with your
demons; maybe get to know them
better. But don't act out in
anger.

CLARENCE

So, I'm just a paycheck. When
the money dries up, I'm out on
the street, and you drive home
to Malibu.

DR. LEE

Clarence, I don't have all the
answers.

Clarence stares at Dr. Lee — with a mix of rage and
resignation.

Adjusted Excerpt:

A sudden, intense strobe light flickers, causing
disorientation and confusion. The SURDO DRUMBEAT stops.

INT. MENTAL FACILITY - OBSERVATION ROOM

DR. LARRY BUCKWALD and DR. SHAKU GUPTA observe through a two-way mirror. Inside, two patients are strapped to tables, their eyes vacant, staring at the ceiling.

DR. GUPTA

What do the tests show?

DR. BUCKWALD

They've been on Zydacol for two weeks. Only one shows signs of Ekbohm's Syndrome. Both are still experiencing severe psychotic episodes.

DR. GUPTA

We can explore higher dosages or combine with new experimental anti-psychotics. Whatever you need to advance your research, Dr. Buckwald.

DR. BUCKWALD

I'll contact you when we begin Phase Two.

They shake hands, and Dr. Gupta exits.

Dr. Buckwald washes his hands. The faucet DRIPS.

The SURDO DRUMBEAT resumes: a slow, heavy BEAT syncing with each drop. The tempo quickens, the VOLUME swells relentlessly.

REVEAL: The two "patients" are CLARENCE and DR. LEE. Their faces contort; eyes bulge. The DRUMBEAT pounds, faster and louder.

Their mouths open and simultaneously emit piercing, unholy SCREAMS.

As the screams continue and echo, the DRUMBEAT pulses deep, slow, and heavy. Each strike sounds closer, conjoined, like a heartbeat inside flesh.

FADE IN:

INT. ABANDONED SAMBA HALL - NIGHT (PARALLEL REALITY)

Flickering fluorescent lights HUM overhead, echoing like an electric swarm. The room is cavernous and cold. Half of the hall is in ruin - broken mirrors, shattered tile, cracked columns. The other half is a dream-like Carnival parade frozen in time: Dancers in mid-spin, Malandros quick step and slide, the *Cuica* HOWLS with melancholy, confetti floats...but it never lands.

A lone SURDO drummer stands at the center, his face obscured by a cracked porcelain Carnival mask, arms bloodied, mallet twitching at his side. He hits the drum once. THUMP. The mask crumbles and we see his face. This master drummer stares ahead but does not see, for he has been blind from birth.

The room vibrates. Walls bend inwards, mirroring Clarence's breathing.

Clarence appears at the edge of the room. He is shirtless, soaked in sweat, pale under the flickering light. He steps forward barefoot, dragging one leg. His eyes dart to corners of the room.

CLARENCE
(Quietly, in a whisper)
Where am I...?

Behind him, a trail of bloody footprints.

A JUMP-CUT representing a glitch shows everything stuttering violently. Now, the room is filled with dozens of samba dancers in full regalia, faces twisted into mocking grins. They don't move; they vibrate like corrupted video frames, glitching in place.

A sudden SCREAM is heard (0.S.)

A dancer's face splits open, revealing another face beneath, wearing Dr. Lee's expression, but LAUGHING with an echo. It repeats on another dancer, then another, until every single face is Dr. Lee's, distorted and echoing LAUGHTER.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Stop it! Get out of my head!

The DRUMBEATS multiply, like a wall of synchronized heartbeats. The drummer strikes faster. Blood begins to pool under the drum. The ceiling cracks with each THUMP.

A pitch-shifted SAMBA SONG plays backward under the DRUMBEATS.

Clarence turns – a mirror appears, suspended in the air. He stares into it. His own reflection wears a Carnival mask. The mouth doesn't move, but a VOICE comes from inside the glass.

MIRROR CLARENCE

You failed. You all failed.

CLARENCE

No!

MIRROR CLARENCE

You think you're hearing drums?
You're hearing truth.

Clarence punches the mirror. It SHATTERS, but the shards float in place. The floating glass rotates slowly, each reflecting a different hallucination.

SERIES OF SHOTS OF CLARENCE'S HALLUCINATIONS

- A) Michelle is crying blood.
- B) Charles with a melted face.
- C) Eugene dangling from a rope.
- D) Clarence, in full riot gear, gunning down samba dancers in slow motion.

Clarence collapses to the floor. Blood drips from his nose.

He crawls, ears ringing.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

Dr. Lee sits in front of Clarence, clipboard balanced on his knee. The room is bright but sterile, HUMMING with artificial light. The world is almost normal here - too normal.

Clarence is strapped to a chair again. Sweat coats his hair, eyes sunken, twitching with paranoia.

DR. LEE

You've said the drums began in a club downtown LA. It has followed you since then, correct?

Clarence doesn't respond. He stares past Lee, at a security camera blinking red in the corner.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)

Who do you think is watching you?

CLARENCE

Everyone. No one. It depends on the beat.

DR. LEE

Clarence...the drums aren't real. They are manifestations of trauma, amplified by isolation, loss, survivor's guilt.

CLARENCE

(In a low creepy voice)
You said that last time.

Dr. Lee frowns.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

But in that instance, you and I screamed at the end. When the light flashed. Remember?

DR. LEE

What?

CLARENCE

(In a clear tone)

You screamed like your soul was
boiling through your teeth.

Dr. Lee freezes.

A faint DRUMBEAT begins again. The camera in the corner
glitches, jerking left, then right, and it then freezes
mid-turn.

DR. LEE

(Softly)

You're back there again, aren't
you?

CLARENCE

I never left.

The wall behind Clarence rips open, like tearing digital
fabric. Through it, a swirling tunnel of mirrored
reflections, infinite versions of Clarence – some cops,
some killers, some corpses.

Dr. Lee's voice distorts.

DR. LEE (V.O.)

This is the mind's mirror,
Clarence: every event layered;
every trauma stacked; every
memory reloaded.

Clarence begins screaming. THE DRUMBEAT is unbearable now.

CUT TO:

The experiment room, where the twist is revisited and a new
perspective introduced.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

A glass wall separates Clarence and Dr. Lee, both now
strapped in medical chairs, restrained, heads tilted at
strange angles.

Dr. Buckwald and Dr. Gupta stand outside the glass, lit by

harsh fluorescence.

DR. GUPTA

Are they stable?

DR. BUCKWALD

No. But that's the point.

Inside the chamber, the DRUMBEATS now echo as brainwaves spike on a monitor.

INT. TESTING ROOM

Clarence fights against his restraints.

The DRUMBEATS are inhuman now – mechanical, alien, layered with WHISPERS in Portuguese. He presses his palms over his ears. He SCREAMS – a primal, raw sound.

CLARENCE

Make it stop! Please – it's in
my bones! It's in my heart! It's
in my mind!

Across from him, Dr. Lee begins LAUGHING – not nervously, but deliriously. His laughter rises like the drums feed it. He throws his head back.

DR. LEE

(Laughing, screaming)
It's beautiful! You finally see
it, Clarence!

CLARENCE

(shouting)
You lied! You said you wanted to
help!

DR. LEE

No. I wanted you to wake up.

INT. EXPERIMENT ROOM - FINAL IMAGE

Clarence and Dr. Lee remain in the chairs. Both are now slack-jawed, eyes wide, motionless.

A red light on the wall turns from "ACTIVE" to "INCOMPLETE."

A monitor flashes:

SUBJECTS IN STAGE III RECURSIVE
TRAUMA LOOP INITIATE NEURAL
CLEANSING SEQUENCE.

A DRUMBEAT: one final, earthquake-like THUMP.

INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Soft lamplight glows across the room. Michelle sits curled on the couch, with a blanket over her knees. Her hand trembles as she holds a framed wedding photo - her and Clarence, smiling under the Malibu sun.

Her thumb runs gently across his face in the photo. She smiles, small and distant.

A single tear slips down her cheek. She wipes it away with her finger, straightens, inhales deeply - trying to stay composed.

A phone rings.

Michelle fumbles slightly, then answers.

INTERCUT with Eugene's apartment.

Eugene sits at a cluttered desk, tired but alert, as police scanner static murmurs behind him.

EUGENE
(into phone)
Hey, Michelle.

MICHELLE
(into phone)
Eugene. Thank God.

She takes another breath, her voice cracking slightly.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Any word? Anything?

EUGENE

(into phone)

Just...pieces. Charles told me Clarence's been off the grid recently. They're saying he might've hurt someone.

MICHELLE

(into phone)

That's not him. That's not my Clarence.

Eugene rubs his temples.

EUGENE

(into phone)

Yeah, well...whatever's happening, it's bigger than him. Or us.

A long silence lingers. Both teeter on the edge of grief.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

I'm heading out soon. I'm gonna try to find him.

MICHELLE

(into phone)

Eugene...please be careful.

EUGENE

(into phone)

Keep the line open. Just in case.

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

The camera sweeps across a decaying metropolis. Sirens SCREAM in the distance. Fires smolder beneath a blood-red moon.

The SURDO DRUMBEAT - low, industrial, slow.

SERIES OF SHOTS - A CITY IN COLLAPSE

A) A group of masked criminals assaults a convenience store. Gunshots RING out.

B) A police officer arrives and is shot point-blank. His badge falls onto the bloodied pavement.

C) On a different street, a corrupt cop, eyes glazed, drags a screaming couple from their car. They plead.

D) He opens fire, silent and mechanical. Their bodies crumble in the rain.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Eugene stands alone, flashlight sweeping along a graffiti covered alley. He pauses, spotting a figure in the shadows.

EUGENE
Clarence?

Clarence steps forward from the dark. His hands tremble. His face is hollow.

EUGENE
(Softly)
You need help, brother. This...
this isn't you. We can fix it.

CLARENCE
You think this is broken?
Clarence's eyes twitch. He
raises a gun.

EUGENE
Clarence--

BANG.

INT. MICHELLE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michelle still holds the phone, frozen - her eyes wide in horror. A distant gunshot echoes through the call. Then quiet.

MICHELLE
Eugene...? Eugene!

Silence.

Her breath quickens. Panic sets in. She lowers the phone — then hears THE BEAT for the first time.

The all-encompassing SURDO DRUMBEAT. A closeup reveals a gold ring watch with a blue dial on her hand. The brand is the same as a watch Clarence owned. **SAMBA**.

MICHELLE
No...no, no, no...

The sound builds. She clutches her head.

A phone CHIMES. She hesitates, then glances at the screen.

MICHELLE
Hello?

CLARENCE
The drum. That sound is annoying
as hell, isn't it?

She SCREAMS, dropping the phone. Her legs give out beneath her. She crawls, covering her ears.

The DRUMBEAT is now rapid, distorted, crawling under her skin via the ring watch.

The furniture begins to glitch. The photo of her wedding warps, her smile slowly morphing into a Carnival mask. She claws at the floor, SOBBING uncontrollably.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Clarence is on top of Dr. Lee, choking him against the padded wall. Foam lines the edge of Clarence's mouth. Dr. Lee GASPS, his eyes bulging, mouth open but silenced by Clarence's shaking hands.

CLARENCE
Make it stop! Stop the sound or
I swear, I'll--

The doors BURST open and three OFFICIALS in white coats rush in. OFFICIAL #1 injects Clarence in the neck, while OFFICIALS #2 and #3 peel him off Dr. Lee.

Clarence convulses. His body slumps, his breath ragged. His eyes roll back, as he slowly loses consciousness.

Dr. Lee lies on the floor, COUGHING, but LAUGHING weakly.

DR. LEE
(panting)
He's waking up. Finally waking
up...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME NIGHT

Dr. Buckwald and Dr. Gupta stand behind the two-way glass. On the other side, Clarence and Dr. Lee are now both restrained in adjacent chairs, unconscious but twitching slightly. Electrodes run across their scalps.

DR. GUPTA
He nearly killed your lead.

DR. BUCKWALD
That's expected. Zydacol's
binding sequence is unstable at
the trauma crossover threshold.

He makes a note.

DR. BUCKWALD (CONT'D)
We increase the dose. Stage Four
begins at dawn.

DR. GUPTA
Even after this outburst?

DR. BUCKWALD
Especially after this outburst.

They stare silently as the room beyond begins to flicker — the heartbeat of the SURDO DRUM syncing with the pulse of the fluorescent lights.

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP.

FADE IN:

INT. ISOLATION CELL - NIGHT

BLACKNESS.

The SURDO DRUMBEAT is faint, distant, like it's playing from the other side of a concrete wall. A muffled THUMP, slow and steady. THUMP... THUMP....

A fluorescent light flickers to life above.

Clarence lies on the floor, curled into himself. His breathing is shallow. Dried blood crusts beneath his nose. A thin layer of sweat clings to his skin, glistening in the light.

He opens his eyes slowly - pupils dilated, gaze unfocused. His hands twitch, then his arms, as sensation crawls back into his body. The DRUMBEAT grows louder, moving from his ears to his chest, vibrating in his rib cage.

CLARENCE
(whispers)

Still here...

The walls around him are matte-gray concrete, feature-less except for a small, rectangular window high on the wall, sealed with reinforced glass.

He tries to sit up, but a wave of nausea slams into him. He steadies himself; palms pressed to the freezing floor.

A low HUM of fluorescent bulbs is layered under the DRUMBEAT.

CLARENCE
(Quiet, hollow)

It never stops...

He staggers to his feet, using the wall for support, muscles heavy from sedation. He looks up - the window.

A shadow moves across the adjacent hallway.

Clarence blinks hard, lurches toward the glass, hands pressed flat against it. His breath fogs the surface.

METALLIC echoes, along with SHUFFLING, SCUFFING feet.

Through the frosted edge, a GROUP OF WHITE-COATS AND ORDERLIES pulls a limp body down the hallway—that of Dr. Lee. His legs are dragged. His head lolls to one side.

Just then, Dr. Lee begins to stir. He SCREAMS.

The SURDO drumbeat quickens. THUMP-THUMP. THUMP-THUMP.

Every syllable of his scream lands in perfect unison with the drum, as if the beat is controlling or responding to it.

Clarence flinches. His hands go to his ears. Useless.

DR. LEE (O.S.)

Get off me! Let me go! He knows! He knows!

THUMP.

Clarence watches, frozen, eyes locked on the shadowy figures dragging Dr. Lee.

SCREAMS distort, glitching and skipping like a warped record.

DR. LEE (O.S.)

He knows, he knows, he knows, he--

The drumbeat climaxes with a metallic SLAM.

Clarence falls back against the wall. The DRUMBEAT continues at a relentless, machine-like rhythm.
BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!

He sits, back pressed to the wall, face slick with sweat. His eyes trace the seams of the room — looking for anything not flat, not sterile.

There's nothing.

INT. OBSERVATION CHAMBER - CONCURRENTLY

Dr. Buckwald stands alone in front of a six-monitor surveillance array. The center screen shows Clarence in his isolation cell, eyes wide, head twitching with each BEAT of the drum.

Another screen shows Dr. Lee, restrained to a surgical gurney, sweat beading on his face, pupils dilated.

CAMERA FEED - AUDIO: ACTIVE

DR. LEE (V.O.)

(from monitor)

It's evolving. You don't understand it's not auditory anymore. It's invasive. Intelligent.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Narrating into a recorder)

Subject 1-A. Clarence E. Sactun. Continues to exhibit synchronized psychotic rhythm resonance. Subject 1-B. Dr. Lee. Now showing parallel patterns of auditory synchronization and visual distortion.

He adjusts the dial. The sound of the DRUMBEAT spikes in volume, causing Lee to convulse on the table.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

(Into monitor, panicked)

You think it's in my head? It's not. It's here. It's in the walls!

DR. BUCKWALD

Note: synchronization appears externally contagious. Further study required on proximity thresholds.

He turns to another monitor: brainwave scans. Lee and Clarence's EEGs pulse in time with the exact same rhythm: Identical peaks, matching frequencies.

DR. BUCKWALD

(To himself)

Fascinating.... He sips cold coffee, his eyes staring.

INT. ISOLATION CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence paces like an animal: three steps, turn, three steps, turn. The DRUMBEAT still hammers, but now with added textures, like distant LAUGHTER, samba INSTRUMENTS trying to claw their way into the rhythm but failing.

He punches the wall. Once. Twice. Blood streaks the concrete. We hear the WAIL of a *Cuica*, as if CRYING and LAUGHING from Clarence's punches.

He looks at the window again.

CLARENCE

You watching? You watching me now, Buckwald?

The room GLITCHES, as lights dim, BUZZ, and flicker.

He SCREAMS and throws himself at the glass, but it doesn't budge. He sinks to his knees, trembling.

Suddenly, silence. The drumbeat stops.

Clarence looks bewildered. He SLAPS his ears. No sound. He stands up, dizzy with disbelief.

CLARENCE

Is it gone...?

A faint SHHH-SHHH-SHHH begins, like sand scraping against metal.

CLARENCE

(whispers)

No...no, no, no....

He falls to the floor. The BEAT plays on. His body curls tighter. He sobs without sound.

INT. OBSERVATION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Buckwald watches silently. He doesn't smile, doesn't react; he simply observes - eyes reflecting the flickering monitors.

Behind him, Dr. Gupta enters. She watches the screen showing Clarence curled up, shaking.

DR. GUPTA

He's breaking.

DR. BUCKWALD

He's merging.

She walks closer, uneasy.

DR. GUPTA

You're pushing him too fast.
There's no protocol for this.

DR. BUCKWALD

There's no protocol for
discovery....

He presses a button.

DR. BUCKWALD (CONT'D)

...only acceptance.

(beat)

Let's see what he does
next...when the sound starts
speaking.

CUT TO:

INT. ISOLATION CELL - SAME TIME

Clarence lifts his head.

On the wall, a shadow moves: a silhouette, female, dancing, backlit by nothing. The motion syncs, her hips move with the BEAT.

Her face is Michelle's.

But then it twists. A Carnival mask slides down from her forehead. Lips still Michelle's, but the eyes: empty, black pits.

The DRUMBEAT returns in full force.

Clarence SCREAMS and crawls backward into the corner. He begins to LAUGH and SOB at once, clutching his ears.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - FINAL MOMENT

Dr. Buckwald increases the VOLUME again. Clarence's body on the screen begins to seize. Dr. Lee, on the other screen, wakes up SCREAMING. Their voices keep repeating the same words at the same time.

CLARENCE/DR. LEE

(synchronously)

Stop it! Stop the sound - it's
inside me!

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - RECORDS ROOM - NIGHT

The precinct is mostly empty, fluorescent lights BUZZING overhead like trapped insects.

Charles sits alone at a cluttered desk deep inside the records room. Folders are spread out like crime scene pages marked with red ink, highlighter, and sticky notes. The desk lamp casts a sharp circle of light that barely reaches beyond his elbows.

He flips open a thick folder marked: "Sactun, Clarence E. -

Internal Investigation Pending."

IMAGES: Photos of Clarence: a mugshot, a service photo, bodycam freeze-frames, a blurred image from the alley incident.

Charles exhales, rubbing his eyes.

CHARLES

(to himself)

You were the sharpest one. Until you weren't.

He reaches for a second folder. Labeled in black ink: "Officer Suicide - Murphy, R. Officer Suicide - Kim, L. Officer Suicide - De La Vega, M."

He opens each, noticing a pattern begin to emerge. Three officers, all from different divisions, who all experienced psychotic breaks before dying.

He continues reading:

"COMMON NOTES: Hallucinations. Paranoia. Auditory triggers. Temporary suspensions. Each is flagged as 'stress-induced psychosis.'"

Charles flips to a clinical form buried at the back of one report. A field he hadn't noticed before: "Medication: Zydacol - 4 mg daily"

His brow furrows. He checks another case. Same field: "Zydacol - 6 mg...Zydacol - 5 mg."

CHARLES

What the hell is Zydacol?

He types it into the precinct's medical records system - no matches found.

He leans back, stares at the ceiling, then digs deeper, querying federal prescription logs, flagged meds, and off-label trials.

The screen flickers. Then:

"Zydacol. Status: experimental.
Manufacturer: Azul Vitta
Farmaceutica Ltda. (Brazil).
Distribution License: Provisional
(Import Clearance Granted Under
Emergency Officer Resilience
Program - EORP)."

Charles clicks open the import license. Only ten officers in the city were part of the EORP pilot program.

Clarence is on the list.

So are Murphy, Kim, and De La Vega. His blood runs cold.

A door CREAKS open quietly behind him.

Vincent enters, his hoodie pulled low, eyes scanning the room.

VINCENT
Been looking for you.

Charles doesn't look up.

CHARLES
You bring it?

Vincent nods and tosses a manila envelope on the desk. It's wrinkled, stamped with multiple customs seals.

CHARLES
Where'd you get this?

VINCENT
Buddy of mine. DEA liaison out of Sao Paulo. Says something unusual has been going on for months. Unregulated pharma loads entering the US through backdoor import deals. Mostly under humanitarian exemptions.

Charles opens the envelope. Inside is a printed article from a Brazilian medical journal. A classified PDF marked: "Eyes Only - U.S. Embassy."

Inside is a list of pharmaceutical trials conducted between 2021-2025 by Azul Vitta Farmaceutica.

He scans an article headline.

"Zydacol e o estado alternado da consciencia: Estudo de casos em oficiais militares (Zydacol and the altered state of consciousness: Case studies in military officers)"

Charles mutters aloud as he reads.

CHARLES

Hallucinations...neural
synchronization...elevated
compliance under rhythmic
auditory stimulation?

He looks up at Vincent.

CHARLES

They used this stuff on
soldiers.

VINCENT

Brazilian Special Forces. Jungle
units. It was supposed to keep
them calm under stress; increase
reflexes; turn trauma into
tunnel vision.

CHARLES

And instead?

VINCENT

Six of them walked into the
Amazon and never came out. One
survivor tore his own ears off.

Charles stands, gripping the desk. The fluorescent lights flicker.

CHARLES

So, someone green-lit this shit
for cops?

VINCENT

Fast-tracked under some Homeland
sub-clause about "post trauma
optimization." Small pilot group:
officers flagged for behavioral
drift...you know, mood swings,
fatigue, burnout...

CHARLES

Like Clarence?

VINCENT

Exactly like Clarence.

Charles opens the PDF. It's a translated internal memo from
Azul Vitta to U.S. Liaison.

Clarence

(reading aloud)

"Subjects demonstrate accelerated
neurological entrainment to
external rhythm stimuli. Risk of
cross-reality delusion escalates
with prolonged exposure. Further
testing required before
permanent deployment."

CHARLES

Cross-reality delusion? They knew
this would happen.

VINCENT

They were counting on it. They
thought they could modulate it.
Make the brain more obedient
under pressure.

CHARLES

Jesus...

Charles closes the folder slowly.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

They put him on this shit
without telling him. Let the
beat get inside him, let it
build.

VINCENT

And when he broke, they buried
it under the guise of "paranoid
schizophrenia" and threw him in
a facility.

CHARLES

Who's funding it?

Vincent shrugs.

VINCENT

No hard trail, but Azul Vitta
has silent investors - biotech
shells through Miami, LA, even
Berlin. It might be military,
might be private pharma, maybe
both, but someone wants to prove
that Zydacol works. And when it
doesn't, they just say it was
the subject's fault.

Charles looks at Clarence's photo again.

CHARLES

He didn't snap. They detonated
him.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Charles and Vincent walk quietly toward the exit. Their
FOOTSTEPS echo against tile. The precinct feels colder now,
emptier. As if something was watching.

CHARLES

You said Sao Paulo. You think
this thing started there?

VINCENT

Started? Nah. It lives

there...it's the birthplace.

They reach the stairwell. Vincent pauses.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

There's one more thing. My guy said some of the subjects in Brazil...they reported hearing some sort of sound. Like a beat.

Charles freezes.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

A beat. Never the same. Sometimes it started soft or loud. Sometimes it came in dreams. But once it started, it never stopped.

Charles stares ahead, his jaw clenched.

CHARLES

The Surdo drum.

VINCENT

Yeah. That one.

They looked at each other, no words needed.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - LOBBY - DAY

The sterile, cold walls of the psychiatric facility seem to swallow the sunlight as it filters through the high windows.

The air is heavy, tinged with antiseptic and the faint scent of overripe fruit from the cafeteria.

Michelle stands at the entrance, clutching her purse tightly, her nerves visible in the way her fingers tremble. Eugene stands beside her, calm but concerned. He places a hand on her shoulder, offering what little reassurance he can.

EUGENE

(Quietly)

You sure you're,
okay?

MICHELLE

(nods)

I'm fine.

Eugene doesn't buy it, but he says nothing. They exchange a look before Michelle walks toward the front desk.

A SECURITY GUARD greets them from behind the desk. His skin is pale, eyes distant and glassy. There's something unsettling about the way he looks at them.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Can we see Clarence E. Sactun?

The guard stares at them for a beat too long, blinking

slowly.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Room 14B. You'll need to sign
in. Wait here.

Michelle and Eugene exchange a look, unease growing between them.

EUGENE
(whispers)
Something's not right.

As Michelle and Eugene sign in, a loud metallic CLANK echoes from the hallway. They turn just as a DELIVERY TRUCK pulls up outside. A MAN wearing a plain brown uniform jumps out, his face obscured by the brim of his baseball cap. He pushes a cart filled with boxes into the building.

Michelle's eyes narrow, catching a glimpse of boxes labeled with a bright yellow logo: *Drogas de Rio*, the name of a Brazilian pharmaceutical company.

MICHELLE
(whispering)
Who's that?

Eugene doesn't respond, but his gaze follows the delivery man into the building. They both feel a strange tension in the air.

The guard waves them forward.

SECURITY GUARD #1
(Softly)
Room 14B. Please be quick.

Michelle and Eugene move down the hallway, the BUZZ of fluorescent lights echoing. The air feels heavy, like the walls are closing in.

They reach 14B and stop in front of the door. Another SECURITY GUARD stands there, his expression just as vacant.

SECURITY GUARD #2
You can go in.

He steps aside, and the door opens with a CREAK, revealing Clarence, sitting on a thin bed, staring blankly at the floor. His uniform is wrinkled, hair unkempt. He looks smaller than the man Michelle remembers.

MICHELLE
(Gently)

Clarence?

Clarence slowly lifts his head, his eyes unfocused. His gaze drifts over to Michelle and Eugene, recognizing them only faintly. He opens his mouth, but his voice comes out hoarse and broken.

CLARENCE
(Hoarse)
Michelle...

MICHELLE
(Softly)
Hey...how are you?

Clarence doesn't answer right away. He stares at her, distant.

CLARENCE
(Quietly)
You shouldn't have come.

Michelle steps forward, but Eugene gently places a hand on her arm, stopping her.

EUGENE
(Softly)
This place isn't helping you,
Clarence.

Clarence looks around nervously, as if the room itself might be watching. His voice drops to a whisper.

CLARENCE
They're listening.

MICHELLE
Who's listening, honey?

Clarence's eyes dart around the room, and he leans in closer, his voice barely audible.

CLARENCE

The SURDO...the beat...always
watchin. It's everywhere. I
can't escape it.

Michelle's eyes widen. The mention of the SURDO drumbeat is the first time he's spoken about it directly.

MICHELLE

(whispering)

What do you mean, the beat?

Clarence flinches as if he's hearing something that only he can perceive. He recoils from Michelle's touch, shaking his head in fear.

CLARENCE

They know you're here...They
won't let me go.

Michelle looks at Eugene, who's already scanning the room, his brow furrowed in concern.

EUGENE

(softly)

We need to get you out of here.
This place - it's not helping
you.

Clarence's face twitches, a flicker of recognition in his eyes, but his expression remains vacant.

The sound of something heavy THUDS outside the door, followed by MUFFLED SHOUTING.

MICHELLE

(Whispering, urgently)

We need to go. Now.

EUGENE

(Quietly)

Let's go.

Before Michelle can respond, the door opens abruptly. The guard from earlier stands in the doorway, his eyes hollow, expression unreadable.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Time's up.

Michelle steps toward him, her voice rising.

MICHELLE

What's going on here? Who's
behind all this?

The guard doesn't answer. He simply gestures for them to leave.

SECURITY GUARD #2

(Flatly)

Please.

Michelle and Eugene exchange one last glance at Clarence, whose hollow eyes follow them. His lips barely move.

CLARENCE

Go... or they'll make you stay.

The door closes behind them with a dull THUD. Michelle feels the weight of Clarence's words, but there is no time to process them. They hurry down the sterile hallway. The faint sound of the Surdo DRUMBEAT echoes through Michelle's mind, her thoughts scattered.

As they pass the security desk, Michelle's gaze flickers toward another DELIVERY TRUCK outside the building, almost identical to the one from earlier. She notices MEN unloading large crates, again, marked *Drogas de Rio*. She stops, her heart pounding.

MICHELLE

(Whispering)

There it is again.

Eugene glances over his shoulder, eyes narrowing.

EUGENE
(Quietly)

That's the third one today.

The sight of the delivery sends a shiver through Michelle, and she quickens her pace.

As they exit the building, she can't shake the feeling that something far more sinister is happening here, something she can't yet understand, but that she knows they've only just begun to uncover.

INT. PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

The fluorescent lights HUM softly, casting a sterile glow over the lab. The walls are lined with shelves filled with scientific journals, equipment, and monitors flashing with data. Dr. Gupta is at a desk, eyes locked on a screen, deep in concentration. The room is silent, save for the occasional BEEP of a machine.

CLOSE ON the screen, which shows disturbing data.

It displays a pattern of brainwave synchronization between multiple patients, including Clarence. The results don't match the expected parameters; the patients' brains are inexplicably synchronizing, a phenomenon that shouldn't be happening.

DR. GUPTA
(under her breath)
This...doesn't make sense.

Her fingers hover over the keyboard as she zooms in on the patterns, scrolling through the data. Her eyes widened in disbelief. The synchronization isn't a glitch; it's happening in real time, across all patients.

She CLICKS through several simulations, hoping for a mistake, but each result confirms the strange phenomenon: the patients' brains are tied together, despite being isolated.

DR. GUPTA (CONT'D)

(alarmed)

This can't be right...

She runs a secondary check, her fingers trembling as she punches in the command. The same results appear, with Clarence's brainwaves tied perfectly to the others. She opens another window, double-checking the patients' records, and she then looks back at the synchronization chart. Her face shows confusion and anxiety growing.

DR. GUPTA

(whispering)

Why are they...connected?

She quickly flips through the data again, trying to find an explanation, but there's nothing there. The patients are isolated in separate rooms. They shouldn't be experiencing this kind of connection.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE LAB - SAME TIME

FOOTSTEPS echo sharply in the corridor. Dr. Buckwald strides down the hallway with a brisk, deliberate pace, coffee cup in hand.

His face is calm, but his steps are quick, as if there's something urgent driving him.

He stops outside the glass window of the observation room, watching the patients. Their eyes are dull, vacant.

He takes a sip of coffee, studying them.

As he checks his phone, his fingers pause. The updates on his screen show data from Dr. Gupta's experiment, and a slight furrow appears in his brow. He pockets the phone and walks toward Dr. Gupta's office, the sense of urgency now even clearer in his movements.

INT. PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH LAB - DR. GUPTA'S OFFICE -
MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Gupta remains seated at her desk, staring at the screen. Her eyes are glued to the display, her mind racing

through the possibilities. Dr. Buckwald enters without knocking, his expression calm but his eyes narrowing as he surveys her tense posture.

DR. BUCKWALD

(smoothly)

Dr. Gupta, what's going on?

Dr. Gupta doesn't look up immediately, her fingers hovering over the keyboard as if frozen in uncertainty. When she does speak, her voice is tight, edged with alarm.

DR. GUPTA

There's something wrong. I've been reviewing the latest data...and it's not right.

Buckwald raises an eyebrow, stepping toward her desk.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Slightly dismissive)

A glitch, maybe?

DR. GUPTA

No, it's not a glitch. Look at this.

She turns the screen toward him. The data are clear: brainwaves from several patients – Clarence included – are synchronizing in real time. The graphs show patterns that shouldn't exist.

DR. GUPTA (CONT'D)

This...this isn't possible. The patients shouldn't be connected like this.

Buckwald leans in, studying the screen closely. His expression doesn't shift. He crosses his arms, assessing the situation with a calm demeanor.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Frowning)

What do you mean connected? Are you suggesting some sort of telepathy?

DR. GUPTA

It's more than that. Their brainwaves aren't just mirroring each other. They're linked, like they're responding to each other.

Dr. Gupta runs another test, pulling up a graph of Clarence's brain activity. Dr. Buckwald looks over her shoulder, his eyes narrowing.

DR. GUPTA (CONT'D)

(Alarmed)

It's not just a coincidence. This is real-time synchronization.

DR. GUPTA (CONT'D)

Every patient's brain is reacting to the others. There's no way they should be connected.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Coldly)

And you're sure it's not a malfunction in the equipment?

DR. GUPTA

I've run the tests twice. These results are consistent.

She types quickly, pulling up another window to show the synchronization patterns in greater detail. The link between the patients is undeniable. Clarence's data pulses in rhythm with the others.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Skeptically)

Let's say it's not a malfunction. It's probably some kind of side effect. Nothing to get worked up over.

DR. GUPTA

(Urgently)

No, Dr. Buckwald. This isn't a

side effect. Something is happening to them, to all of them. They're being affected by something, and I don't know what it is.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Sternly)

Dr. Gupta, we can't afford to panic. Run more tests. If there's anything more, we'll deal with it then.

Dr. Gupta's frustration mounts. She wants to push further, but she knows Dr. Buckwald's control over the situation will prevent her from making any further moves without his approval. She stares at the screen, her mind racing.

DR. GUPTA

(Quietly)

What exactly are we trying to accomplish here?

Buckwald remains silent for a moment, his eyes on the data. He takes a slow sip of coffee, then sets the cup down deliberately. He meets Dr. Gupta's gaze, his voice measured, but with an unsettling calmness.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Softly)

We're trying to understand the human mind...push it to its limits. This is the next frontier, Dr. Gupta. We're on the cusp of something...monumental.

Dr. Gupta's gaze doesn't waver. The weight of his words sinks in, and a chill runs down her spine. She looks back at the data, her hands shaking as she re-checks the graphs.

DR. GUPTA

(Softly)

You're playing with their lives.

DR. BUCKWALD

(Flatly)

We're doing what's necessary.

He turns away, clearly closed off to any further discussion. Dr. Gupta watches him go, her mind whirling with the implications of what they're really doing. Her gaze lingers on the screen for a moment longer before she grabs a notebook and begins to scribble down her thoughts.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME TIME

The camera zooms in on Clarence's face through the one-way mirror. His eyes are wide, vacant, yet there's something unsettling about the emptiness in them. The synchronization is affecting him, just like the others. The SURDO DRUMBEAT pulses in the background, its rhythm pounding with increasing intensity. through the air, drowning out all other sounds. The patients, wearing Carnival masks, move in strange, fluid synchronicity.

Their limbs bend and twist in unnatural ways, their bodies vibrating as if possessed. The chaotic, rhythmic sound intensifies, and everything warps with it. The world seems to tilt.

Clarence stands frozen at the door; his mind caught in a whirlpool of fragmented thoughts. His hands twitching, his breaths ragged. He can hear the BEAT in his chest, louder than his heartbeat, louder than his own panic.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE - SAME TIME

Dr. Lee walks hurriedly, the sound of the SURDO DRUMBEAT thumping in his ears. His movements are jerky, almost robotic. He pauses at the observation window, staring inside at the dancers, their movements distorted. His reflection in the glass seems off, stretched unnaturally.

He grips his head in confusion, his fingers scraping at his scalp as the noise fills his mind.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - SAME TIME

As Clarence's hands reach for the door frame, his fingers trembling. His gaze flickers from the patients- back to Dr. Lee, who has now entered the room, his face twitching. The air is thick, suffocating. The world doesn't seem right. It feels like reality itself is cracking.

CLARENCE

(Whispering, tense) It...
it's all...too much.

The SURDO DRUMBEAT gets louder, suffocating. Clarence stumbles, his thoughts a scrambled mess.

DR. LEE

(Staring at the
patients, his voice
strangely hollow)

It's a dance, you know. We're
all dancing. You, me, them. All
of us...trapped in the rhythm.

He LAUGHS a strange, hollow sound.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)

Did you hear it too? The BEAT,
Clarence? It speaks to you,
doesn't it?

Clarence's face is pale, his eyes wide, wild. His breathing quickens as his vision distorts. He presses his palms to his ears, trying to block out the unbearable sound, but it keeps pounding.

CLARENCE

(Panicked, shaking)
It's too loud, Dr. Lee! I
can't... stop it!

DR. LEE

(chuckling to
himself, eyes
darting)
You can't stop it, Clarence. It

can't be stopped.

He stares at the mask of one of the patients.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)

They hear it too. Did you see them? They're all here, just like us. Isn't it beautiful?

Clarence's eyes dart to each of the patients, their faces twitching beneath their grotesque masks. The rhythm surges, pounding harder. The air is thick with sweat and confusion.

CLARENCE

(Voice trembling)

No...no, this is...this is all a dream. None of this is real.

DR. LEE

(Turning sharply to Clarence, eyes wide with manic energy)

Not real? Not real!? We're all dancing, Clarence. Don't you see? This is our reality.

He looks around, his voice rising.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)

We are the dance, we are the rhythm, they've been watching, all of them. The masks? We wear the mask that grins and cries. They are the people we were, the people we will be. Don't you hear it? They want us to join the *pas de deux*...the tango!

CLARENCE

(Dazed, muttering)

Join...join the dance...

Clarence steps back, his body trembling. He glances at Dr. Lee, but the man's face distorts before his eyes. His features stretch like rubber, contorting them into grotesque shapes. Clarence blinks, and the vision shifts again, as

though it was never there.

He shakes his head violently.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
(His voice breaking)
What's happening to me?

DR. LEE
(Grinning with bloodshot eyes)

Happening? It's all happening!
It's happening right now!

He suddenly quiets his voice, almost to a whisper.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)
It's been happening all along.

The patients move in synchronicity, but now, it's worse. Their dance is not joyful - it's mechanical, almost zombie-like. They rotate in loops, their hands twitching, heads snapping at odd angles. The movements blur together, as if there are too many people in one body.

CLARENCE
(Gasping)
What are they - what is this?
Is...is this me?

Dr. Lee's eyes widened, his pupils dilated. He steps closer, almost too close. His voice comes in fragments; pieces of logic shattered into nonsensical pieces.

DR. LEE

(Grinning madly)
Are you sure it's not you?

He begins to shift back and forth between SPEAKING and LAUGHING.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)
Maybe we're all or nothing at
all.

(beat)

Do you hear it, Clarence? The voices? The rhythm? They're all connected. They've been connecting us... pulling us... they're pulling you, pulling me.

The room spins faster. Clarence clutches the edge of the wall, trying to ground himself, but it feels as though the wall is shifting beneath his hands. He can feel the cold metal pressing through his skin. His chest tightens.

CLARENCE

(Screaming)

No, this can't be - this CAN'T be real!

DR. LEE

(Voice suddenly turning calm)

But it is, Clarence. It's real because they say it is.

He pauses, glancing at the patients.

DR. LEE (CONT'D)

We're all part of this. This is the experiment. You're the experiment. We are the experiment.

Clarence's gaze shifts rapidly from the patients to Dr. Lee, his head spinning. The SURDO DRUMBEAT pulses in his ears, louder, shaking the room.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

Dr. Gupta watches the screens, her face a mask of tension. She grips the edge of the console as she watches Clarence's brainwaves surge erratically on the monitors. Something is off. The synchronization is accelerating faster than expected.

DR. GUPTA

(Speaking into the intercom, panicked)

Dr. Buckwald, you need to look

at this. It... it's happening
too fast. The brainwave patterns
syncing with each other too
much. It's spreading beyond
Clarence!

INT. PATIENT ROOM - SAME TIME

Clarence stumbles, barely able to stand. His vision
distorts further. The faces of the patients twist and
shift, their bodies caught in a grotesque dance that is
both unnatural and disturbingly beautiful.

He can see the shadows behind them, flitting in and out of
the darkened room - creatures that should not exist.

CLARENCE
(Voice shaking,
almost laughing)
I... I'm becoming them.

The room is too bright, too dark - there is no escape from
the dance, from the rhythm.

Clarence drops to his knees, his hands clasped over his
ears, but the BEAT does not stop. It's in his mind, it's
his heartbeat, it's everything. The chaos intensifies.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
(Softly, deliriously)
I can't escape--

DR. LEE
(Whispering, eyes
wild, as if in a
trance)
You never could.

The room begins to spin like a top. The SURDO DRUMBEAT
swells to a deafening roar. The patients' movements blur
into chaos, and the world seems to break apart into
fragments. Reality folds into itself, spiraling out of
control.

INT. ABANDONED CARNAVAL WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Charles and Vincent slip into the dilapidated Carnival warehouse, their flashlights casting shaky beams across rusted rafters and broken Carnival masks. They sift through a pile of documents and photographs scattered across a metal table.

CHARLES

(Quiet, scanning papers)
This doesn't make sense. Every name in here...they're all former cops. And they're all tied to Zydacol.

VINCENT

(Frowning, flipping through more papers)
It's not just a couple of cases, Charles. Look at these reports. Some of them were part of undercover operations in the favelas. They were testing this drug on cops like Clarence.

CHARLES

(Gritting teeth)
And they all disappeared or ended up in some damn institution. But why? What are they doing here?

They move deeper into the warehouse, passing a collection of worn-out Carnival costumes. They stop at a storage room, where documents are shoved haphazardly into a drawer. Charles pulls out a file labeled: "Zydacol - Local studies."

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(Pulling out papers)
Here. It's all here. They're not just testing the drug on a few cops - this is a massive operation. They're using ex-cops from the favelas as test subjects.

VINCENT

(Leaning in, stunned)
It's worse than we thought.
They're running a full-scale
international clinical trial in
secret, Charles.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

And it's Zydacol, the same drug
Clarence is on. The
drumbeat...it's a side effect.

CHARLES

(Looking around, anxious)
We're talking about real
manipulation. They've been doing
this under the radar for years.
This isn't just about treating
mental illness. It's about mind
control.

Vincent flips through more papers, pulling out an old map
of the warehouse layout.

VINCENT

(Quietly)

This place...it was a Carnival
storage facility before it was
repurposed. Now it's a testing
ground.

CHARLES

(Squinting at the map)

A damn pharmaceutical lab. All
these ex-cops being pumped with
Zydacol, driven mad. And it's
all connected to this place.

They exchange a look. The DRUMBEAT echoes faintly through
the warehouse, almost like it's alive, pulsing in the
background.

VINCENT

(Under his breath)

They're using Zydacol to break
them down. It's the cause of
everything. The hallucinations,

violence and murders.

CHARLES

(Tensely)

We need to expose this before it's too late. The force has been using these people like lab rats in these trials. And Clarence...he's just one piece of this puzzle.

VINCENT

(Stepping back, grim)

If they can do this to cops...what's next?

Charles and Vincent move deeper into the shadows. The SURDO DRUMBEAT rises in intensity, blending with the warehouse's eerie silence.

Charles and Vincent stop dead in their tracks, hearing a SCREAM cut through the silence. It's chilling, a desperate cry for mercy.

VOICE (O.S.)

(Screaming)

Stop it! Stop it!

They exchange a look, their bodies tense. They follow the sound, creeping further into the darkness, moving toward the source. As they step cautiously through the cluttered space, they stop short as a figure materializes in the dim light.

It's Dr. Gupta.

She stands in the darkness, a smirk emerging at the corners of her lips. Her voice is calm, almost too calm, like the eye of a hurricane.

DR. GUPTA

(Calling out, calm but eerie)

You're getting too close.

CHARLES

(Stern, hands raised)

What the hell is going on here?

DR. GUPTA

(Smirking, a slight chuckle in her voice)

You don't get it. This is about more than just curing mental illness, gentlemen. This is about control. It's about fine-tuning the mind. Zydacol is just the beginning. We're testing it on the ones who were already broken. The ones who didn't matter. Or don't matter.

Her words hang in the air like smoke, thick and suffocating. Charles and Vincent exchange an uneasy glance, but before they can react, the SCREAMS intensify. A haunting cry, raw and desperate.

CHARLES

(Tense, voice low)

What the hell is that?

SCREAMS grow louder. The tension builds, thick and palpable. The SURDO DRUMBEAT seems to pulse harder, matching the rhythm of the screams.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(Whispering to Vincent)

Keep your head on a swivel.

Suddenly, from the dark, a figure staggers toward them. It's Clarence, his eyes wild, sweat dripping from his face. His voice cracks with terror.

CLARENCE

(Screaming)

Please...make it stop. At least for a minute!

VINCENT

(Startled, reaching for Charles)

That's - Clarence?

CHARLES

(Urgent, hand on gun)

What the hell is happening here?

Before they can move any closer, Clarence's eyes snap

toward them. A twisted, manic grin curls across his face as he raises a hammer high in the air.

CLARENCE

(Screaming, voice shaking)
Go away! Let it go away! Free
me! I'm sick and tired! What the
hell?? Where is Michelle?

CHARLES

(Panicking, reaching out)
Clarence, it's us! It's
Charles--

VINCENT

(Grabbing Charles's arm)
No! Get back!

But it's too late. Clarence brings the hammer down with a skull busting THUD. Charles's head explodes with a grotesque spray of blood, pouring out like tap water. The sound is deafening, and Vincent stumbles back, his face horrified as Charles crumples to the floor.

Blood pools beneath him.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(Voice shaking, afraid)
No... no...what the hell--

In a flash, Clarence's eyes snap open. His surroundings are different now. He's no longer holding the hammer, and the blood is gone.

He lays on the cold floor, gasping for breath, his body tense and confused.

CLARENCE

(Screaming, terrified)
No! No! It wasn't real! What is
this?! Where am I?!

His voice breaks through the chaotic silence. He scrambles to his feet, looking around wildly, trying to make sense of it all. His panic builds, like an animal trapped in a cage. Suddenly, Clarence's voice SCREAMS into the void, a raw, primal sound of terror.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

(Screaming)

What the hell is going on?

From overhead we see Clarence alone in a sterile, dimly lit room, 14B stenciled above the door. His face is drenched in sweat, eyes wide, but something is different now – his terror is fading, replaced by confusion and a deep sense of unease.

The SURDO DRUMBEAT continues, its rhythm undisturbed, like the beating of a heart that never stops.

Suddenly, the scene shifts to a series of glitching snapshots, playing in reverse at a high speed and with a distorted layer of noise.

IMAGES (Flashing rapidly): Clarence alone in his home, staring blankly at a screen. The images flicker, glitching, as his emotions spiral into a chaotic mix of guilt, confusion, and anger. We see flashes of Clarence engaging in dark, criminal activities – gruesome images of gang violence, torture, and murder, all witnessed in some fractured state of consciousness. These flashes cut faster and faster, growing more jarring as the scenes intensify.

Suddenly, the screen glitches and shifts. Clarence is no longer an active participant in the violence. Instead, we see him numb, unable to disconnect from his own mind's unrelenting bombardment of memories.

INT. CLARENCE'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Clarence sits at the kitchen table, motionless in his police uniform. He methodically butters his toast, each motion deliberate, detached, mechanical. The sound of the knife SCRAPING against the bread is unnervingly loud, echoing through the otherwise silent room.

Across from him, Michelle, his wife, watches him intently. There's a palpable tension in the air. Her gaze lingers on him, full of concern.

MICHELLE

(Softly)

You barely said a word last night.

Clarence doesn't look up. His movements are slow, deliberate. He chews his food without tasting it.

A long pause.

CLARENCE

(Gruffly)

Long shift.

Michelle watches him, her concern growing.

MICHELLE

(Quietly)

It's always a long shift.

Clarence reaches for his duty belt, adjusting it without looking at her. His body language is stiff, guarded, as if the very act of interacting with her is a burden.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Maybe you should talk to Eugene.

The mention of Eugene triggers a sharp, almost imperceptible shift in Clarence. His jaw tightens, his eyes narrowing in a flash of anger.

He stands abruptly, moving toward Michelle with dangerous intent. He grabs her by the throat, his fingers tightening as he pulls her close.

CLARENCE

(Low, menacingly)

Don't you ever interrupt my peace again.

Michelle GASPS, her eyes wide with fear. Clarence's grip tightens for a moment before he releases her, backing away as if nothing happened. He grabs a bottle of liquor from the counter, unscrews the cap, and begins drinking.

MICHELLE
(Quietly, broken)
Clarence.

Michelle doesn't say another word. Tears fall as she turns and walks out of the room, leaving him alone with his spiraling thoughts.

INT. DR. GUPTA'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is clean and professional, lined with bookshelves filled with psychology texts, medical journals, and plants. Clarence walks in, disheveled, his eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep. He sits on the couch across from Dr. Gupta, who is focused on a notepad, awaiting him to begin.

DR. GUPTA
(Softly)
How have you been, Clarence?

CLARENCE
(Voice strained)
The medication isn't working anymore.

Clarence shifts in his seat, his hands trembling slightly.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
I've seen a lot of violence...more than I can handle. It doesn't let me sleep; doesn't let me think straight.

DR. GUPTA
(Assuringly)
We can adjust your treatment. But rest is crucial, Clarence. You need rest.

CLARENCE
(Agitated, raising his voice)
It's so easy for you to say that. I can't sleep, Doctor! I can't turn it off.

He opens his eyes wide, showing the bloodshot redness. His face is tense, exhaustion seeping through every pore.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

(Voice cracking)

I'm tired of this life. I just want to escape.

Dr. Gupta remains calm, stands up, and steps to a corner of the room. She dials a number on her phone, her voice a soft murmur to the person on the other end.

Clarence sits in silence, staring ahead, his body stiff with frustration.

After a few moments, she hangs up and walks back to Clarence. Her expression is calm but firm.

DR. GUPTA

(Softly)

Clarence, I understand this is overwhelming, but you must hold onto hope.

Dr. Gupta sits next to him, her tone gentle as she speaks.

DR. GUPTA (CONT'D)

You're not alone in this. We can get through this, but you must keep working.

Clarence's shoulders slump, and his face tightens as he holds back tears.

His emotions crack, and he begins to sob quietly. Dr. Gupta's hand rests on his shoulder, offering quiet support.

After a moment, she reaches for a syringe from her desk and prepares the injection.

Clarence watches her, his eyes weary but resigned. She injects him with the medication, her touch steady and professional.

She then hands him a small bottle of pills.

DR. GUPTA

Here, take these. They're in tablet form. They should help but be mindful. Whatever you

focus on might become more
vivid. It's important to
distance yourself from what's
troubling you for now.

Clarence takes the pills from her, nodding silently.

CLARENCE

(Faintly)

Thank you, Doctor.

Dr. Gupta smiles gently as he stands to leave, her calm
demeanor unwavering.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - HALLWAY - DAY

The stark, cold walls of the facility seem to close in on
two NURSES, standing just outside a staff room. Their
conversation is casual, but to Clarence, it feels like a
dagger to his psyche.

NURSE #1

(Whispering)

You heard about Zydacol, right?
It's working faster than they
thought. The patients are...more
compliant.

NURSE #2

Yeah, I've seen it. They've gone
from being violent
to...completely under control.
It's not just the medication -
there's more to it.

NURSE #1

(Quietly)

It's not just about the
patients. Zydacol is a part of a
much bigger plan. They're
testing it on people like

him...people who don't matter.
The ones they can experiment on
without anyone noticing.

INT. FACILITY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The facility goes dark. The lights flicker and shut off, plunging the hallway into complete darkness. Dr. Lee stumbles forward, feeling along the walls to keep his balance. His breathing is shallow as he moves through the corridor, eyes straining in the pitch black.

He hears muffled footsteps in the distance, growing louder. The floor under his feet shifts, no longer the cold, clinical tiles. He senses the change, but it's too late.

Dr. Lee's focus shifts to the blueprints in his hand, which appear out of place against the vibrant scene. He holds them up, recognizing the facility's structure - but something is wrong. The blueprints indicate that this building is constructed above sacred ground, a site known for ritual drumming.

His mind races as he realizes that the facility's foundations are tied to something much older, something beyond just medical.

Dr. Lee looks up and spots a door labeled Dr. Silva's Office. His hands shake as he rushes toward it.

INT. DR. SILVA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Inside the office, Dr. Lee flips through a pile of documents, each one more cryptic than the last. He holds up the blueprints of the facility, now clearer in the room's dim light. The building is not just a medical institution; it's sitting on top of sacred drumming grounds - a fact hidden beneath layers of bureaucracy.

He quickly scans more papers, finding details of a hidden ritual room in the basement. His eyes narrow.

There's something much darker at play here. Something involving the drumbeats.

EXT. RIO STREETS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The scene shifts abruptly. Eugene, another patient, walks through the streets of Rio at night. He approaches the samba club he previously investigated. The drumbeats grow louder, an oppressive sound controlling everything around him.

Inside the club, Eugene approaches the blind drummer - a man whose hands are visibly decaying. The drummer strikes the Maracana drum, but the drum's surface is disturbingly made from human skin.

INT. FACILITY - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dr. Lee moves through the dimly lit basement, where the air smells damp. He steps cautiously, hearing the drumbeats grow louder as he nears the source.

A large metal door at the end of the hallway is cracked open just enough for him to squeeze through.

Inside, the room is vast. In the center, a SURDO drum rests on a raised platform. The skin is stretched tightly, and Dr. Lee freezes as he sees Clarence's face - his skin

stretched over the drum head.

Dr. Lee's expression is frozen in horror.

INT. FACILITY - ROOM 14B - DAY

We see an empty bed.

Time passes.

EXT. BEACH - SUNRISE

The first light of dawn paints the sky a soft amber as the ocean waves crash rhythmically on the shore. Michelle stands solemnly on the sand, her body weary with grief.

She is wearing Clarence's SAMBA watch on her left wrist. She clutches a tattered uniform, once worn by Clarence, and with a heavy heart, she kneels.

She slowly begins to bury the uniform in the sand, her fingers moving with precision, almost as if performing a ritual.

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The sound of the waves rises, filling the air with a deep, resonant Surdo rhythm, each beat echoing like the pulse of her sorrow.

In the distance, on the high cliffs, the blind drummer beats the SURDO. His face is Eugene's, ghostly against the horizon.

Michelle's eyes drift upward, meeting Eugene's gaze for a brief, silent moment. She doesn't look away. Her expression is full of silent resignation.

The waves crash louder, mingling with the drumbeat as the final grains of sand cover Clarence's uniform.

FINAL REVELATIONS - FLASHBACK

INT. SACTUN FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

The house is dimly lit, the oppressive atmosphere heavy with the tension of years of abuse. Clarence stands in the

living room. His face is twisted with anger, his posture rigid with frustration.

He's drunk, loud, and ready for confrontation.

CLARENCE

(Snapping)

I gave you everything, Michelle.
Everything! And this is how you
repay me? With whining and daily
complaints?

MICHELLE

(exasperated)

I didn't sign up for this.

CLARENCE

(Ignoring her)

Of course, you didn't! You never
did, did you? All this
suffering – you act like I'm the
bad guy!

Clarence storms forward, knocking over a chair.

Michelle flinches, retreating into herself, but not for the first time.

This has been the pattern. Over the years, she's learned to endure.

But the bruises go deeper than the physical.

Clarence's words, his cruelty, his indifference, all of them stabs at her soul.

Eugene, standing in the doorway, watches it all. His face darkens, eyes burning with something unfamiliar.

EUGENE

(Calm, but firm)

Stop. You've made your point,
Clarence.

Clarence swings around, eyes narrowing.

CLARENCE

(Mockingly)

Oh, look who it is. The good
brother, come to save the day.
What is it this time, Eugene?
Think I'm being too hard on her?
Stay in your lane. Check
yourself.

EUGENE

(Slowly, with
growing anger)

You've always been hard on her.
Too hard. You've never seen her
as a person, Clarence - just
something to control. And you're
ruining her. Destroying her. In
the process, you have harmed
yourself more than anybody else.
You are suffering and making
others suffer.

Clarence laughs bitterly, stepping forward to face Eugene.

CLARENCE

(Grinning)

Oh, you think you're the good guy? You don't even know what you're dealing with, Eugene. She's mine. She owes me.

Eugene's hand clenches into a fist.

BEGIN FLASHBACK.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

The atmosphere is thick with tension, the room dimly lit by a low-hanging light. Dr. Gupta stands across from Eugene, her expression cold and calculating. A vial of Zydacol sits on the table between them, a quiet symbol of their plan.

DR. GUPTA

(Slowly, with a cold smile)

Are you sure you want to do this? You're playing with forces you don't fully understand, Eugene.

EUGENE

(grimly)

I know exactly what I'm doing. Clarence must be stopped.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

He's broken her. I don't care how long it takes, but I will make him pay.

Dr. Gupta leans in slightly, her gaze intense.

DR. GUPTA

(Quietly)

Zydacol is powerful, but it isn't just the drug - it's a parasite. We'll turn Clarence into something else, Eugene. The question is, do you want him to feel every second of it...or do you want him gone for good?

Eugene doesn't hesitate.

EUGENE

(Sternly)

We do it right. I want him to know what he's done. Every bit of it.

DR. GUPTA

(Slowly nodding)

Then we'll need a full ritual. It will break him, just as if he's broken Michelle. Zydacol will do the rest.

Eugene's face hardens, the plan now set. He glances at the vial, his gaze unwavering.

EUGENE

(Coldly)

Good. Then, we end this.

INT. NEWSROOM - PRESENT - DAY

The news anchor's voice is calm, but the content is chilling. The screen shows images of Clarence's face, his lifeless expression frozen in a snapshot. The breaking news reads like a tragic end to a long saga of suffering.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Authorities have confirmed that Clarence Sactun has been found dead in what appears to be suicide. While the cause is still under investigation, local officials have linked the incident to an ongoing investigation into the experimental drug Zydacol, previously used in unapproved clinical trials.

The report continues, but the camera lingers on the still image of Clarence, his life snuffed out, leaving behind a legacy of torment.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. BEACH - SUNRISE

Michelle stands at the water's edge, the morning light bathing the ocean in soft hues. She's holding her composure. Her eyes are red from crying.

CLOSE ON RING WATCH

The blue dial is labeled "**SAMBA.**"

Her hands tremble as she sits with a lit candle at the spot where she buried the last remnants of Clarence - the uniform he wore when he destroyed her, now buried in the sand.

MICHELLE

(Quietly, to herself)

She who feels it... knows it.
I will find them.

The SURDO DRUMBEAT (maracacao) continues. The screen reads:
"The rhythm of samba is the soul of Brazil."

THE END.