

"AD NIHILO"
The Sheridan Tapes - Season 03, Episode 75
Recording Draft - October 4, 2022

by

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Based on story and characters from
"Homestead on the Corner"
By Trevor Van Winkle

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1. INT. JERRY PRICE'S HOME - BEFORE DAWN - 1/30/20

The quiet of very, very early morning. The sun won't be up for another hour, but Russel's already awake, whining and scratching at the bedroom door.

A groggy Jerry finally opens the door. Russel skitters across the tile as Jerry pads after him, GRUMBLING.

JERRY PRICE
(not happy to be awake)
Yeah, yeah... just give me a
second.

Russel runs laps around the living room as Jerry starts the coffee maker. Russel pauses, then makes a worried whine.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
(talking about Bill, Rob,
and Maria)
They're not here anymore, buddy --
remember? They just stopped by to
get Maria's van out of the
backyard.

Russel gives an unhappy whine, then remembers why he woke up in the first place, scratching at the sliding glass door.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
(warning, but still tired)
Hey, hey! What did I say about
that?

Russel whines, then sits back as Jerry makes his way to the sliding glass door.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
Good boy. There you go.

Jerry pushes the door open and Russel sprints out into the darkened yard -- nature calls. JERRY CHUCKLES, closing the door.

Crossing to the kitchen table, Jerry starts his tape recorder with a faint CLICK.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
(dictating)
Jerry Price, notes for "Robin's
Return" by Thurgood Vice -- January
30th, 2020.
(pause, collecting
thoughts)
(MORE)

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

"I thought you said you were getting out of this town for good, Robin," said Tucker, grip tightening on the handle of his baseball bat, "Will told me you were smart enough not to come back."

"I thought I was done with this town too," Robin muttered, head still ringing from the impact, "But I had... unfinished business."

(pause, annoyed)

'Unfinished business' -- god, could you stop writing cliches for five minutes?

(beat, tries again)

"It's this town that isn't done with me."

"Oh trust me," Tucker replied, knuckles going white, "this town was done with your bullshit a long time ago. If you need another reminder..."

"No, no -- one's enough," Robin winced, rubbing his forehead. He could already feel a small, hard lump swelling over his right eye, but at least he didn't have a concussion -- that meant he still had time to make his case before Tucker lost his temper. And since time's arrow only flies one way, since cause always proceeds effect, he...

Jerry trails off, confused.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

(confused)

Where the hell did that come from?

The coffee maker sputters to a stop, and Jerry quickly pours himself a mug, stirring in a spoonful of sugar as he talks.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

(CLEARS HIS THROAT, starts over)

That's pretty much all I had for chapter 4 anyways -- let's move on to structural notes. The act 2 turn still feels a little weak...

(MORE)

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

Robin had a clear reason for taking on the heist in *Run*, but it still feels forced for him to do the same thing here. I'm trying not to see that as a sign of how the whole book is going to feel, but it's...

(trails off, shakes head)

I don't know. Right now, it almost feels like he's being forced into taking the job -- not like any of the other characters are forcing him, more like... he already knows this has to happen, since it's already happened, and he's just stuck on a path that was chosen for him. Like it's... fate.

(trailing off, almost mesmerized)

Fate.... fate... I am the master of my fate... I am the captain of my...

(cuts off, dismissing his own worry)

I mean... he's the master of his own fate. That's the key to his whole character. I can't lose sight of that.

Jerry pauses, then opens the refrigerator and pulls out a container of milk.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

(musing as he opens it)

I had a couple of ideas for how to address it, but they're--

(cuts off, smells milk)

Oh Jesus, how old is this?

(checks label)

Best by November twentieth, 2019... shit.

Jerry shakes his head, then tosses the carton of mouldy milk into the trash and opens a window to air out the smell.

As he does, Russel starts barking outside -- he sounds nervous.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

(worried)

That better not be coyotes again -- Russel! Here, boy!

(WHISTLES)

Russel stops barking, and Jerry returns to his notes.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

(worried, growing more
distant as he goes)

I've also been giving a lot of thought to act 3... about the ending. Or... endings in general, I guess. *Run* felt like it wrapped up on a pretty final note -- the heist ended, Robin left town, and even if everything wasn't perfect, it was better than it was before. He'd won -- he had everything he needed, and he was... well, maybe not happy, but at least he finally got a chance to rest. But it didn't feel like it was going to last. He'd made enemies, and they were going to find him eventually -- at least, they would if the book did well enough to warrant a sequel. But that's the thing, isn't it? He could only be happy if he didn't succeed -- if the book didn't succeed, I mean. But it did. The story didn't end, even though it *could* have ended there. Maybe it *should* have ended there. Maybe happy endings are only possible if you end the story before it's too late... and looking at where things are heading now, I don't know how happy that ending can really be. Every time he comes back from a victory, the stakes just get higher and higher, and sooner or later, it will get to the point where it just... isn't possible for him to win. When the deck's too stacked, when he's climbed too high and all he can do is fall... even with the help of others, even with allies and support and friends, even with all his power -- sooner or later, the question will not be "what would you do to save yourself," but "do you believe you can *should* be saved--"

Jerry cuts off, suddenly realizing he has no idea what he's saying.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

(unnerved)

What that hell is going on?

Outside, Russel starts barking again, sounding more alarmed than before.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
 (calling out)
 Russel? Russel, why are you still
 out there? Get back in--

Jerry stands up and opens the door. The moment he does, Russel sprints past, panting in terror and hiding down the hall.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
 (confused, worried)
 What is happening?

Suddenly, a low rumble like a distant, dull explosion shakes the ground, rattling the windows slightly. Jerry hesitates, then grabs a flashlight and steps out into the dark.

2. EXT. JERRY PRICE'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Jerry switches on the flashlight, sweeping the beam back and forth across the bare dirt of his backyard.

JERRY PRICE
 (calling out, warning)
 Hello? Is anyone out here? This is
 private property, you can't be out--

Jerry cuts off, noticing something in the distance.

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
 (growing terror)
 Oh my god.

A low, pulsing noise rises in the distance. As it does, Russel runs out of the house, racing in front of Jerry and barking at the strange noise and lights.

The noise just continues to grow, almost sounding like an answer to Russel's barking as it begins to overpower it.

Jerry just stares in slack-jawed terror and awe... then something inside him shifts, and he quotes from memory:

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)
 (mesmerized, almost
 hypnotic)
 "Not hear? when noise was
 everywhere! it tolled
 Increasing like a bell.
 (MORE)

JERRY PRICE (CONT'D)

Names in my ears
Of all the lost adventurers my
peers,—
How such a one was strong, and such
was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of
old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the
woe of years.

I saw them and I knew them all. And
yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips
I set,
And blew...

**'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower
came.'**"

CLICK.

MAIN THEME

3. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - CORRIDORS - DAY - 1/29/20 -
EVENING

Audio from the CCTV system crackles on as a JANITOR rolls
their cart down the hall of the living quarters.

They pull out a key card and swipe it in the lock, but it
remains locked. They try the handle, but it doesn't budge.

JANITOR
(frustrated)
Fucking key cards...

They try it again, only to get the same result. Then again.
They step back, confused.

JANITOR (CONT'D)
(realizing something's up)
Huh...

At that moment, a set of footsteps round the corner.

JANITOR (CONT'D)
Oh! Excuse me... Doctor Park?

REN PARK
(distracted, struggling to
remember)
Yes, uh... Mary?

JANITOR
(trying to correct
politely)
Maddy, actually.

REN PARK
(apologetic, tired)
Right, sorry, sorry, just...
haven't been sleeping well lately.

JANITOR
No problem, no problem at all --
uh, do you know why my key card
isn't working on Room 12? I'm on
the schedule for turndown today.

REN PARK
(confused)
You didn't hear?

JANITOR
Hear what?

REN PARK
(DEEP SIGH, frustrated)
Several members of the consulting
staff left Meriwether a bit...
suddenly. We're converting their
rooms back to storage.

JANITOR
(surprised by that)
Oh. Right.

REN PARK
I guess the memo didn't get to
maintenance yet. Sorry about that.

JANITOR
(pretending to be
gracious)
Oh, no problem Doctor Park...
thanks for letting me know.

REN PARK
(wants this conversation
to be over)
Sure.

Ren turns and walks off down the hall. As soon as they're out
of earshot...

JANITOR
 (SCOFFS, muttered)
 Nobody tells me anything around
 here.

BEEP.

4. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - CALDWELL'S OFFICE - LATER

A small clock ticks on the wall as Caldwell, halfway through a frustrating conversation, leans back in her chair.

DANA CALDWELL
 (irritated)
 I'm sorry Mr. Marshall, I just
 don't see what the issue is.

ACCOUNTANT
 (increasingly agitated)
 I told you, I'm trying to close out
 the paperwork for several of *your*
 consultants, but the system keeps
 rejecting them as fraudulent.

DANA CALDWELL
 (trying to get to the
 bottom of this quickly)
 No need to take that tone with me.
 I heard you the first time -- you
 just haven't explained *why* they're
 being rejected.

ACCOUNTANT
 (fed up)
 Come on, Caldwell. Bill Tyler and
 Robert Quincy.

DANA CALDWELL
 (annoyed, not confused)
 What about them?

ACCOUNTANT
 (exasperated)
 The address on their W9 is in the
 city of "Oslow, Nevada." I looked
 it up. It doesn't exist.

DANA CALDWELL
 (that gets her attention)
 I beg your pardon?

ACCOUNTANT

I understand wanting to fudge some numbers Dana, but could you at least pick something that actually sounds like a real place? Are those even their actual names?

DANA CALDWELL

(growing unease)

Max... Oslow is a real city. I sent Ren there on assignment two months ago. We've had surveillance on that apartment for most of a year.

ACCOUNTANT

(rolling eyes)

Well tell that to the IRS. According to their records, there is not and never has been a city of Oslow in Churchill County.

DANA CALDWELL

(completely lost)

Churchill... hold on, I'm pulling up the files for those operations now.

ACCOUNTANT

(exasperated)

Doctor Caldwell, even if it's on our internal records, we can't file their returns unless/they have a legal address to--

DANA CALDWELL

(relieved)

There. Nearly six months of continuous surveillance of the Tyler-Quincy residence, along with the Oslow County Police Department headquarters, and...

Dana trails off. A strange static starts to rise on the recording, and she leans in closer.

ACCOUNTANT

(breaking up slightly)

Dana? Dana, are you still there? I think I've got a bad connection... there's a lot of static on your end.

DANA CALDWELL

(confused)

I... I'm still here. The, uh... the data seems to be... corrupted, somehow.

ACCOUNTANT

(confused)

Corrupted, how?

DANA CALDWELL

(long beat, almost sounding drowsy)

...what were we talking about?

BEEP.

5. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - SERVER ROOM - LATER

One of the ISPHA technicians types a few lines of code into the console, then hits enter. Across the room, the fans go quiet as the server begins a controlled shutdown.

TECHNICIAN

There we go... should be safe for you to work now. We can switch off the power to this room completely if/we need to--

ELECTRICIAN

(shaking their head)

No need, I shouldn't have to get into the wiring that much. Sounds like a pretty easy fix.

TECHNICIAN

(SCOFFS)

If I had a nickel...

ELECTRICIAN

What does that mean?

TECHNICIAN

(dismissing worries)

Nothing, nothing, just... we've had a hell of a time keeping this place running since we got here. Lost a lot of good men doing it.

ELECTRICIAN

(confused and slightly concerned)

Like, they quit, or...

TECHNICIAN
(beat, refusing to answer)
Here, let me show you the problem.

The technician leads the electrician across the quieting server room.

ELECTRICIAN
(making small talk)
So... you been working here for long?

TECHNICIAN
Since last year. ISPHA's had this place since the 80's, but they only really started using the lower levels two years ago.

ELECTRICIAN
And what do they, uh... do here?

TECHNICIAN
(CHUCKLES)
What don't they do down here?
(beat, wincing)
Forget I said that, it's probably a violation of my NDA.

ELECTRICIAN
(concerned)
NDA?

TECHNICIAN
(tired)
One of many. Don't ask too many questions, or they'll make you sign one too.

ELECTRICIAN
What, seriously?

TECHNICIAN
Oh yeah. Word to the wise? Never underestimate how paranoid ISPHA can be. And don't take a job here.

ELECTRICIAN
(trying to lighten the mood)
Well, it's a little late for that, isn't it?

TECHNICIAN

(not liking the thought)
 Yeah... I guess it is.
 (beat, shaking it off)
 Contract work should be fine
 though, you'll be in and out in no
 time. I -- oh! Here it is. We keep
 getting intermittent outages on the
 RAIDS over there.

ELECTRICIAN

(focusing on the problem)
 No kidding, this looks like
 original wiring. You said this
 place was built in the 80's?

TECHNICIAN

Yeah? Why?

ELECTRICIAN

(mildly unhappy)
 The circuit definitely wasn't built
 to handle this kind of load... I'm
 surprised it's not causing you more
 problems.

(to Technician)

I might actually need you to switch
 the power off -- this is gonna take
 longer than I thought.

TECHNICIAN

(surprised, slightly
 embarrassed)
 Oh... right. I'll go do that...
 hang tight.

The technician runs off, and the electrician sets down their
 toolbox and begins unpacking it.

ELECTRICIAN

(muttering to themselves)
 Hmm... I can probably find a way to
 optimize with the other circuits on
 this floor... the lighting grid's
 all LED, so there should be--

Suddenly, the server behind them whirs noisily to life, fans
 spinning faster and louder than before.

ELECTRICIAN (CONT'D)

(calling out)
 Hey! Hey, I think you did something
 wrong... this server's back on!

No reply. A moment later, a second server switches on, this time with a faint buzzing noise that almost sounds... human?

ELECTRICIAN (CONT'D)
 (growing concern)
 Hello? Are you still there? I can't get started if the servers are powered on!

TECHNICIAN
 (muffled across the room)
 What? The power should be off by now.

ELECTRICIAN
 (completely lost)
 What? No, the servers are...

Suddenly, a third server whirs to life... and a voice echoes through the intercom, LAUGHING IN DARK AMUSEMENT AND VICTORY.

"FRED BLAIR"
 (dark, amused)
 Oh, there now... no need to be afraid. The power is still off. I just don't need it anymore.

BEEP.

6. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - ENTRANCE - EVENING - 1/30/20

CLICK.

A sleep-deprived Sam starts his recorder as he and Kate push through a small crowd at the entrance to Meriwether. Alarms blare and the intercom relays emergency information.

SAM BAILEY
 (trying and failing to get someone's attention)
 Hello? Excuse me, can you tell me where Ren is -- hello? What's going on? Hey -- Hey! Can someone please tell me what's/going on--

No one replies, but Kate has already pushed through to one of the intercom panels, switching to an open channel.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (into intercom, not messing around)
 Ren? Ren, where are you? What the hell is going on?

Kate's words echo through the facility. There's a momentary, surprised quiet... then people quickly return to whatever they were doing.

SAM BAILEY
(somewhat mortified)
I guess that's one way to get their attention...

KATE SHERIDAN
(frustrated and tired)
We just drove 15 hours through the desert for this. I'm not fucking around now that we're here.

Before Sam can reply, the intercom crackles to life again.

REN PARK (O.S.)
(through intercom, tired but relieved)
Oh thank god, you made it. Is Sam with you?

SAM BAILEY
(not expecting that)
Uh -- yeah, we're both here Ren. What's happening?

REN PARK (O.S.)
(he's been close to panic for hours now)
It's Manfredo -- apparently crashing the server back in November didn't actually kill him.

SAM BAILEY
(almost annoyed)
Oh, Goddamnit...

KATE SHERIDAN
(confused)
Why is the power still on?

REN PARK (O.S.)
(exasperated)
I don't know -- maybe he didn't think a blackout would help him this time, maybe he can't do it anymore.

SAM BAILEY
(making a plan)
No way we're that lucky.
(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
 We need to get down to the server
 room... see if there's a way to
 stop him.

REN PARK (O.S.)
 I'm already here with all the
 technicians we have left. Can you
 make it down to that level?

SAM BAILEY
 (unsure, struggling to
 remember the layout)
 We should be able to, so long as
 the elevators are still--

The power suddenly fails with a loud *clunk*.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (GROANS)
 You had to say something, didn't
 you?

SAM BAILEY
 (wincing)
 Sorry.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (ignoring him, to
 intercom)
 Ren? Ren, can you still hear me?

No reply -- the line is dead.

SAM BAILEY
 Okay, so... elevators aren't
 working.

KATE SHERIDAN
 We can still take the access
 tunnels, right?

SAM BAILEY
 (somewhat hesitant)
 So long as you're up for a climb...
 it's a long way down.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (urgent)
 Well hurry up, then!

Sam and Kate rush over to the nearest access point and pull
 the cover aside, revealing the steep metal rungs.

7. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - ACCESS TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

With a little difficulty, they begin to climb down -- Sam first, then Kate. Their footfalls echo and ping in the small, enclosed space.

SAM BAILEY
(calling up)
You good?

KATE SHERIDAN
(impatient, slightly
winded)
How far do we need to go?

SAM BAILEY
About ten levels... it's towards
the bottom of the facility.

KATE SHERIDAN
(not happy about that
answer, but carrying on)
Right. Okay.

SAM BAILEY
Hey, at least we didn't have to --
Ugh!

KATE SHERIDAN
(worried)
What?

SAM BAILEY
(grossed out, but
recovering)
Nothing, it's just... there's
something on the rungs. Be careful,
they're a bit wet.

KATE SHERIDAN
(note of worry)
Wet?

SAM BAILEY
More... slimy, actually.

KATE SHERIDAN
What is it?

SAM BAILEY
I don't know, I can't see in here.
Do you still have that flashlight
you were using?

KATE SHERIDAN
Yeah, one second...

Kate carefully rummages in her pocket, pulls out the small flashlight, then switches it on --

And they both freeze, eyes wide.

SAM BAILEY
Holy shit...

KATE SHERIDAN
(terror)
Is... is that...

An all-too-familiar sound of organic growth begins to fill the narrow tunnel as rhythmic static rises on the tape.

SAM BAILEY
(flight-mode)
Move.

Sam and Kate start down the ladder again, moving faster than before as the fungus grows above them.

KATE SHERIDAN
(panicked, struggling)
How did it get in here?

SAM BAILEY
(hyper-focused, panting)
Amanita. She used mycelia to bypass the security systems. The cleaners must have missed some.

KATE SHERIDAN
How is it growing this fast?

SAM BAILEY
Less talking... there might be spores in here.

KATE SHERIDAN
Oh god...

SAM BAILEY
We're almost out. Just... here.

Sam pushes open the entrance as the sounds of growth become almost overwhelming.

KATE SHERIDAN
(worried)
Sam...

SAM BAILEY
 (terror finally setting
 in)
 It's open, come on!

Sam steps out into the corridor, HELPING KATE OFF THE LADDER.
 The sounds of growth grow louder and louder before --

SAM SLAMS THE ENTRANCE CLOSED, PANTING.

KATE AND SAM SLOWLY CATCH THEIR BREATH as the metal of the
 cover rattles, as if a wild animal is banging against it.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (barely recovered)
 ...Manfredo and Amanita?

SAM BAILEY
 (PANICKED LAUGH)
 I guess so.

KATE SHERIDAN
 Why? Why both of them? Why now?

Neither of them have an answer for that.

8. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Before they can start to theorize, Ren's voice drifts down
 the hall.

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (exhausted and angry)
 Are you *sure* we don't have another
 rover in storage?

TECHNICIAN (INDISTINCT)
 No Doctor Park... that was the last
 one. Someone needs to go in there.

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (cursing, to himself)
 Goddess... what are you waiting
 for, Dana?

Hearing his voice, Sam and Kate rush down the hall to the
 server room entrance. Several nervous technicians mutter
 anxiously.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (getting his attention,
 direct)
 Ren.

REN PARK

(relieved)

Oh thank god, you made it. I was worried about the elevators.

SAM BAILEY

They were out, we had to take the access tunnels.

KATE SHERIDAN

(getting to the point)

Ren, we need to warn everyone -- there's *Foribus Oraculi* growing in there... lots of it.

REN PARK

(stunned, then refocusing)

What? How did... you know what, never mind. I have a few of the techs working on getting emergency power up and running... hopefully we don't need to evacuate before then.

SAM BAILEY

(noticing someone)

Wait... is that Doctor Caldwell?

KATE SHERIDAN

(terrified)

What the hell is she doing in there?

REN PARK

(exasperated, worried, drained)

As far as I can tell... talking to him. To the Ouroboros.

KATE SHERIDAN

Why hasn't she shut the server down yet?

REN PARK

We've been trying. Every time we shut off the power, Manfredo turns it back on. It's like he's drawing power from somewhere else, but I don't know where.

SAM BAILEY

(whispered, worried)

The Source...

REN PARK
(confused)
What's that?

SAM BAILEY
(considers, then shakes
head)
Never mind. Too much to explain.

KATE SHERIDAN
Has anyone tried to get to
Caldwell?

REN PARK
(pained)
Several people. As soon as anyone
gets close enough to the console...
(MAKE A "POOF" NOISE)

SAM BAILEY
Shit. How many?

REN PARK
(worn out)
At least five, not including
whoever was in there when he
reappeared. That was before I got
here -- I've been trying to keep
anyone else from going in. We tried
sending in one of the rovers we had
upstairs, but...

KATE SHERIDAN
(mind made up)
Come on, Sam.

SAM BAILEY
Wait, what?

KATE SHERIDAN
We need to get her out of there.
Now.

REN PARK
(terrified)
Kate, we can't afford to lose you
two at a time/like this--

KATE SHERIDAN
You won't lose us. Sam, you can
push back if he tries anything?

SAM BAILEY
(hesitant, worried)
I... I think so.

KATE SHERIDAN
Good enough for me. Let's go.

REN PARK
Kate, let's just think about
this/for one second--

KATE SHERIDAN
We don't have a second, Ren. It's
here.

REN PARK
(lost, dread)
What's here?

SAM BAILEY
Anna's apocalypse, Ren. We're...
out of time.

REN PARK
(confused, skeptical)
How do you know that?

SAM BAILEY
(SCOFFS)
You wouldn't believe us if we told
you.

KATE SHERIDAN
(ending this conversation)
Sam, let's go.

SAM BAILEY
(slightly guilty)
We'll talk about this later.

REN PARK
(slightly overwhelmed)
I should hope so.
(longer beat, genuine)
Good luck.

Sam rushes after Kate into the server room.

9. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - SERVER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kate cuts a beeline straight towards the control console,
where Caldwell and "Fred" are deep in conversation.

(Note: The previous part of their conversation will be written and recorded separately and played under scene 8)

KATE SHERIDAN
 (calling out to her,
 urgent)
 Caldwell! Caldwell, can you hear
 me?!

"FRED BLAIR"
 (distorted GRUMBLE)
 Do you mind? Can't you see that
 Dana and I are having a lovely chat
 right now?

KATE SHERIDAN
 (ignoring it)
 Caldwell! Hello?

"FRED BLAIR"
 (amused)
 If you insist on interrupting us,
 I'll just have to remove you from
 the room/before you become more
 disruptive--

SAM BAILEY
 (distorted, at full power)
 You will not touch her.

"FRED BLAIR"
 (cowed, annoyed)
 Oh, you little spoilsport. I wasn't
 actually/going to--

SAM BAILEY
 (distorted, pushing back)
 Yes, you were. And if you try
 again, I will send you screaming
 back into the void which birthed
 you. I will burn your name from the
 history of this world and make you
 less than nothing. I will undo you
 from every place and time and world
 you've ever known and return you to
 the dark of oblivion you so deeply
 fear, and you will never return.

"FRED BLAIR"
 (trying not to sound
 afraid)
 Someone's learned a thing or two
 since Thanksgiving.

SAM BAILEY

(back to self, slightly
drained)

It's been a very long couple of
months.

KATE SHERIDAN

(physically shaking her)

Caldwell! Caldwell, look at me.

DANA CALDWELL

(confused, as if waking
from a dream)

Kate? What are you doing here...

(notices Sam, realizes
what's going on)

Sam? What's going on... weren't you
two in Fresno?

KATE SHERIDAN

(growing worry)

A day ago, yeah.

DANA CALDWELL

(confused, worried)

A day... how long have I been in
here?

SAM BAILEY

(trying to let her down
gently)

Sounds like it's been a while,
Doctor Caldwell.

DANA CALDWELL

(suddenly feeling
lightheaded)

Oh god, I'm starving. What time is
it?

KATE SHERIDAN

(direct)

Caldwell, look at me: what were you
talking about? What did he tell
you?

"FRED BLAIR"

(petulant)

"He" can hear you, you know.

DANA CALDWELL

(struggling to remember)

We were... talking about entropy...
about the end of the universe.

(MORE)

DANA CALDWELL (CONT'D)
 Heat death. I thought... I always
 thought that matter and energy
 would just endlessly spread out
 across space, getting further and
 further away until the last stars
 burn out and there's nothing left
 of the universe we know... that it
 would just stay that way forever.

"FRED BLAIR"

While I know that isn't true. You
 assume your universe is the only
 one in existence, that it's a
 closed system wearing itself out
 like an old pocket watch... but I'm
 not from your universe. I'm outside
 it -- pure information. And like I
 told you before, information is the
 only/eternal thing in existence--

KATE SHERIDAN

(angry)

When we want to hear your bullshit
 Manfredo, we'll ask. Only us non-
 murderers get to talk right now.

DANA CALDWELL

(confused)

Non...

(realizing, horrified)

How many?

SAM BAILEY

(trying to be sympathetic)

Doctor, it's--

DANA CALDWELL

(insistent)

How many!?

SAM BAILEY

(beat, honest)

At least five. Probably more.

DANA CALDWELL

(suddenly drained)

Gods...

"FRED BLAIR"

They are not dead, Daniella. I have
 them all here with me, on the other
 side of the veil. Do you want to
 hear their voices? Do you/want to--

SAM BAILEY
 (suddenly angry)
 Would you stop lying to her!

KATE SHERIDAN
 (surprised)
 Sam?

SAM BAILEY
 (rage, voice distorting)
 I have seen what happens to human
 minds beyond the veil, "Manfredo" --
 I have heard the voices of those
 lost in the sea beyond the sky,
 crying out in pain. How long will
 it be before the ones you've taken
 are worn away like chalk beneath
 the waves, like stones beneath the
 wind? The Source of all that was
 and was not and will be again is
 not a place where human minds can
 dwell, Ouroboros... and we *will not*
hear your lies.

Everyone goes silent at that... then "FRED" BEGINS TO LAUGH.

"FRED BAILEY"
 (amused)
 Oh, very good Samuel... very
 clever. I thought I might just draw
 this one in, but... you know all
 too well that we're all cheats and
 liars. It's the only way for our
 kind to exist.

DANA CALDWELL
 (confused, angered)
 What's he saying?

"FRED BAILEY"
 (gloating slightly)
 That we're both too late, Daniella.
He has won. *He* is coming. And he
 shall drag this universe down to
 hell before you or I or the thing
 growing in the cracks of your
 facility can do a thing to stop
 him. All that's left for our kind
 is to find islands in the storm --
 and you've spent years and millions
 transforming these tunnels into a
 place of power.

SAM BAILEY
 (horrified realization)
 Oh my god...

KATE SHERIDAN
 (worried)
 What is it?

SAM BAILEY
 He's not trying to take people this
 time... he's trying to take the
 whole facility.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (stunned beat, action
 mode)
 Caldwell, you need to order an
 evacuation, now.

DANA CALDWELL
 (flustered)
 We... we can't just abandon
 Meriwether like that. There has to
 be a way to shut him down/before he-

KATE SHERIDAN
 Ren's tried. The other technicians
 have tried. You *know* how smart they
 all are. Do you think they would
 have missed something?

DANA CALDWELL
 (remembering how many have
 died)
 We... we can't let them die for
 nothing. After everything we've
 done... after...

KATE SHERIDAN
 (hearing Anna's words)
 Doctor... it's too late. Guilt...
 your guilt isn't going to save
 anyone. It's just going to get you
 killed.

DANA CALDWELL
 (unsure of what to do,
 vulnerable)
 What do you think we should do,
 Sam?

SAM BAILEY

(debating)

I could try pushing Ouroboros back
across the veil...

"FRED BLAIR"

(CHUCKLES)

I'd like to see you try...

SAM BAILEY

(continuing)

But -- if I lose, then he'll
destroy me. And he's been around
much longer than I have... knows
more than I do. I don't think
that's a fight I can win, not on
the offensive. And Kate's right...
we don't have time.

DANA CALDWELL

(unhappy with this
conclusion, but agreeing)

So you're saying...

SAM BAILEY

(nodding)

Cut our loses. Let Ouroboros and
Oraculi deal with each other while
we get out of the crossfire. Live
to fight another day.

DANA CALDWELL

(DEEP BREATH, accepting)

So falls Meriwether.

(to Kate)

Signal the evacuation. Let's hope
there's enough power left in the
batteries to get the elevators
running.

KATE SHERIDAN

(surprised)

Wait... really?

DANA CALDWELL

(WEARY CHUCKLE)

Alea iacta est, Kate. If the price
for all of my mistakes is losing
this place -- then I'd say I'm
getting off pretty lightly.

CLICK.

10. EXT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - LATER

A small crowd mutters and shivers in the New Mexico desert as the sun goes down. A little ways off, the facility rumbles and shakes occasionally as Sam starts his log.

SAM BAILEY

(exhausted)

Samuel Isaac Bailey, recording for ISPHA internal records -- final mission report, January 30th, 2020 at 6:21pm Mountain Standard Time. The evacuation of Meriwether is complete. They're still checking to make sure everyone got out before we board the transports, but as far as I can tell we all managed to avoid the sections of the facility most affected by Manfredo and Amanita. Or... maybe not Amanita herself, but... I don't know how much use there is trying to separate her from the colony at this point. I haven't felt her presence or seen her around, at any rate. Maybe she was... needed elsewhere. God knows.

(beat, SIGHS)

Can't say I'm going to miss this place. Manfredo was already pulling entire chunks of the building into the Source by the time we got out, and it's only a matter of time before the structure fails completely. They have us at what they hope is a safe distance -- apparently they were storing a rather, uh... large amount of rocket fuel on the upper levels. Would have been nice to know earlier... or, maybe not so nice. I doubt any of us would've liked living down there with that over our heads. I thought Meriwether might end up being some kind of sanctuary, but... that was never going to happen. Jerry honestly had the right idea from the start. He's going to be insufferable when I tell him.

(CHUCKLES, shakes his head, refocuses)

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

I've been thinking about what Amy said -- as much as I could be, given... everything. Anna's alive. She's trapped in the Source. She knows who I am, and she's been trying to reach out to me from the beginning. I... I still can't quite wrap my head around that. I mean... how much of what's happened in the last year was her, pushing through the veil? I don't know how that's possible, but... she's been leaving me bread crumbs to follow the whole time, even if I didn't know it: that phone call to my apartment, her warning about the Echo, that page from her will... even the tapes themselves. Maria always said they shouldn't have been in her van, and if Amy's telling the truth, then...

Sam cuts off suddenly, a horrible realization twisting his guts.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(dread)

Oh god... the tapes. They're still in my room.

Without thinking, Sam bolts towards the facility. One or two technicians call after him, but no one stops him before he reaches the door.

11. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Sam pries open the door and rushes in. The entire building shakes and shudders as the two powers battle, and occasional unearthly screams can be heard in the depths.

Sam ignores these, making a bee-line for the elevators. He jams his thumb down on the button over and over again.

SAM BAILEY

(impatient, panicky)

Come on come on come on...

The elevator *dings* and the doors slide open... scraping over sticky organic material as flies buzz around something suspended from...

SAM MAKES A SOUND OF DISGUST, backpedaling and running into one of the intercom panels on the wall. It crackles to life.

"FRED BLAIR"

What's wrong, Samuel? Feeling queasy? If you can't handle the sight of a crown-capped corpse, then how will you stand against *him* who is the end of all beginnings, *him* who/watches the stars go dark--

SAM BAILEY

(shaking slightly,
distorted)

Be silent.

"FRED BLAIR"

(LAUGHS)

Why should I fear you, Samuel Isaac Bailey? My power grows with every inch of this place I claim, every secret/I consume--

SAM BAILEY

(growing stronger, feeding
on his own power)

You will fear me. I have seen what I am, and I *know*. I am the one who finds what is hidden and lost. I am the one who walks between worlds on paths unseen. I am the one who will find my way to where your fears yet dwell and set them loose within your mind. You *will* not stand in my way if you value your existence -- and I know that is the only thing you hold dear.

"Fred" does not reply. SAM BRIEFLY CATCHES HIS BREATH, then rushes down the corridor.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(trying to remember the
layout)

Let's see... that access tunnel is blocked, but there should be another one just this--WHOA!

Sam catches himself, tottering on an unexpected ledge in the middle of the hallway as rubble crumbles and falls away.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(terrified, disbelief)

Shit... he's taken the entire corridor. There's nothing here, just...

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
a gap all the way to level 3. I can
almost see the dorms from...

Sam cuts off, realizing.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(unhappy, but knowing he
has no other way)
Shit.

Sam hesitates, then takes a few steps back, runs, and JUMPS.

He COMES DOWN HARD two stories below, GRUNTING IN PAIN as he
rolls clumsily to try and break his fall.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(pained)
Gah... fuck.

Sam STANDS WITH SOME EFFORT, checking his body.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(scolding himself)
No injuries... goddamnit Bailey,
that's gotta be the stupidest thing
you've ever done.

Sam somewhat stiffly walks to the door of his room, trying
the handle.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
Shit... how did Kate get these open
again? She had a screwdriver,
and...

Sam trails off, realizing he doesn't have time. Instead, he
wheels back and KICKS THE LOCK OUT.

The thin wood splinters, and the door swings open.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(PANTING SLIGHTLY)
Open sesame.

Sam rushes into the room, moving to bed and pulling the cover
up... then stops.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
Where... where are the tapes?

Sam pulls the covers off the bed, rummaging beneath the frame
but... there's nothing.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
 (growing panic)
 Shit. They were right here. I left
 them right *here*.

Sam begins frantically tearing the room apart. The facility
 rumbles and shakes, but he ignores it.

12. CONTINUOUS

After a few moments...

SAM BAILEY
 (panicking)
 They're not here. How can they not
 be here?

NED LEROUX
 (more shaken than usual)
 Well, well, well... this is a fine
 mess y'all have gotten yourselves
 into.

SAM BAILEY
 (turning around, angry)
 You.

NED LEROUX
 (smarmy)
 Howdy, Bailey. How's life?

SAM BAILEY
 (growing rage)
 Where are they?

NED LEROUX
 (confused)
 Where are what?

SAM BAILEY
 (eldritch wrath)
 Don't lie to me, Leroux... I see
 your mind and know your thought--
 (cuts off, surprised)
 You don't know what I'm talking
 about.

NED LEROUX
 (completely lost and not
 liking it)
 No, I... I really don't.
 (beat, getting serious)
 What the hell's going on, Bailey?

SAM BAILEY
 (exasperated)
 I could ask you the same thing!

NED LEROUX
 (insistent)
 I asked first!

SAM BAILEY
 (trying to explain
 quickly)
 I -- something's coming. I don't
 know what, but... it's bad. Two...
 entities are trying to claim
 Meriwether before it hits -- ride
 out the storm.

NED LEROUX
 (sudden realization)
 Oh shit.

SAM BAILEY
 (hopeful)
 What is it? Do you know something?

NED LEROUX
 I wish I didn't.

SAM BAILEY
 (urgent)
 ...well?!

NED LEROUX
 It's Morrison, Sam. Something in
 the tunnels, it... he's changed.

SAM BAILEY
 (horrified realization)
 Oh god. It's *him*. It's always been
him.

NED LEROUX
 (weakly joking)
 Figure y'all might need a monster?

SAM BAILEY
 (shakes off stupor)
 We need to go.

NED LEROUX
 (wanting more time to
 ingratiate himself)
 Well, yeah, but/it's not like--

SAM BAILEY

No, you don't understand! The fuel tanks on the upper levels -- if Manfredo reaches them, this place is gonna--

BOOM. A muffled explosion shakes the foundations as the rocket fuel ignites above their heads.

DOOM. The buildings on the surface collapse inward onto the already-weakened structure below.

CRASH. The upper levels fall in on themselves in a rush of steel and concrete and earth.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(already running)

Run!!

Sam and Ned try to flee -- but the falling rubble catches them before they make it out of the room. SAM'S SCREAM IS CUT SHORT as the recorder is buried...

Then all is silent and still.

CLACK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME
AND CREDITS