

OF ALL THE GAMES

an esports murder mystery

Written by

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We're CLOSE on a green light. It's a webcam's LIVE indicator.
We hear gunshots and explosions. Male voices chatter.

TITLES: CRITICAL HIT

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
Fuck Fuck Fuck! I'm hit!

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
Ah shit! Need heals!

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
Overbored, where you at?!

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
Need heals!

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
I'm throwing the match. This chick
doesn't know how to heal.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - EVENING

The bedroom of a twenty year-old woman. Varsity sailing trophies stand out among posters for the video game: CARTOON DEATH MATCH.

Next to a factory build PC, condensation rolls down an energy drink. A small desk fan whirrs back and forth.

SUPER: 2012, SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA

MEREDITH, 20, sweaty hair dyed green, and paralyzed from the waist down, stares at her computer screen.

She wears a high end gaming headset. The dialogue from before continues.

MEREDITH
I've been healing you the whole
game. You won't stand still!

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
You don't deserve the ranked XP
I'll basically be winning for you.

MEREDITH
What the fuck, dude?

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
She's not that bad.

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
She fucking sucks, bro. We're
totally carrying.

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
I've had worse healers. Girls
always play healers. It's the
easiest class.

MEREDITH
You guys don't know what you're
talking about.

ON SCREEN: A bipedal turtle wearing white goggles, gloves, boots, and leggings sprints through a virtual war-zone. This is Meredith's in game avatar. In one hand it clenches a sniper rifle and in the other a medic bag with a red-cross emblem. Above the turtle in bold font is Meredith's Gamer Tag: XxOVERBOREDxX

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
Healers can rank up easier than
other class types, so, no wonder
you're in ranked.

ON SCREEN: Meredith's avatar is next to a small car, slowly moving down a road. She stays with it.

MEREDITH
I'm on the payload.

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
What? How'd you--

MEREDITH
You heard me.

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
Oh, shit! She is.

MEREDITH
You coming or not? I can hold it by
myself, of course, but you'll get
less points if you don't help.

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
Almost there!

ON SCREEN: Meredith clicks into scoped view and fires a single syringe at a mouse in fatigues running towards her.

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
Fuckin' A! Deploying turrets.

MEREDITH
Thank you.

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
You should be good to ride through
the checkpoint, now.

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
Fuck you guys... Wait for me -
don't cross without me!

MEREDITH
Oh sorry, I guess I was too busy
not healing to tell you I'd been
escorting the payload the whole
time. Woops.

LINKSAYS (V.O.)
Wooo!! Checkpoint!

DAPDAPDAP (V.O.)
Fuck you. Fucking stupid bitch.

MEREDITH
Boy Bye.

The game sound cuts off.

ON SCREEN (TEXT): *YOUR TEAM WON*

Meredith takes a sip from the energy drink can, but it's the very last sip. She holds it up over her mouth to get last drop.

A statistics page flashes up, with XP gained, and various game performance statistics. Meredith clicks out of this and a LOOT SLOT MACHINE screen comes up. She clicks the lever and it pulls, spinning the reels. She gets THREE HELMETS and a golden bar illuminates them.

MEREDITH
Fuckin' A!

ON SCREEN (TEXT): *NEW SKIN: DOWN WITH THE SHIP*

Tera Pain, now mocked up to look like a zombified Ship Captain, slowly spins.

Meredith looks over at a terrarium dressed with sand, a water area, an aesthetically pleasing stack of driftwood, some decorative foliage, a miniature statue of an Ariel-esk mermaid, and sitting on a rock: a turtle named TERA.

MEREDITH
 (to Tera)
 Tera darling, I must say, you look positively stunning.

DING, a notification sound goes off. Meredith looks at her computer screen and smiles. She clicks ACCEPT on a chat request.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
 Of all the games in all the world...

MEREDITH
 (responding)
 You had to log in to mine.

The voice belongs to BATZ5000.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
 Craziest thing happened. A real life celebrity streamer sent little old me a cute meme.

Meredith pushes her manual performance-oriented wheelchair over to Tera's terrarium.

MEREDITH
 Really? Who? What was the meme?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
 A pro-gamer, well she's about to go pro, but she sent me this video where this girl shows you how to get out of zip-tie handcuffs using nothing but a common shoelace! If that isn't a case against sandals I don't know what is.

Meredith opens a small container filled with a few LIVE CRICKETS and holds it up over the terrarium.

MEREDITH
 I sent you that.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
 Yeah, a real life celebrity streamer!

MEREDITH

What? I'm not a celebrity.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Well, you're trending right now, so I'd say you're a celebrity. The internet's a'buzz about tonight's event.

Meredith looks over to her screen now filled with a banner ad advertising **tonight's female gamer initiative**:

ON SCREEN (TEXT): *STREAMING LIVE 9PM: VIASOFT & CARTOON DEATH MATCH SHEROES OF DEATHMATCH PRO QUALIFIER INITIATIVE*

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Your new hair color looks nice by the way.

Some crickets escape their impending doom by jumping free of the container. One lands on her arm. Meredith snaps back, pinches the cricket off her arm, and drops it in.

MEREDITH

Oh, thanks.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

You're not gonna, like, forget about me, right?

MEREDITH

What? Why would you say that? Of course not.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Okay, cool... I'm sorry, this is weird, but I just really like talking to you, you know?

MEREDITH

I like talking to you, too. Everything okay?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

I'm fine. I'm sorry. You're doing so well! I can't wait to see you cross the stage at the ViaSoft World Championship.

Meredith can't help but look down at her wheelchair.

MEREDITH

Oh. Yeah... Totally.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
What?

MEREDITH
Nothing.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Okay, now you're being weird.

MEREDITH
(with a smile)
I'm not being weird!

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Yes you are! You're being a weirdo!

MEREDITH
I'm not a weirdo, ya weirdo!

Meredith's phone alarm goes off. It reads: *EMPTY BLADDER 6PM*

PRE-LAP: Water pours out of a bathtub faucet.

INT. BATHROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - EVENING

A coastal themed bathroom. Seashells and sailboats.

In a series of practiced moves, but still with considerable effort, Meredith lines her wheelchair up to the toilet, grabs her legs and positions them on the floor, plants one hand on the raised toilet stand, performs a chair to toilet transfer, and pulls her sweatpants down.

MEREDITH
It's not just like a loot giveaway or XP event or anything. This is like a real deal Willy Wonka I've got a fucking golden ticket opportunity! This is exactly what I've been working towards. I mean, there are only like five female pros and two are other pros' girlfriends and the other three are basically varying degrees of porn stars. This contest -- this could change everything!

From outside of the bathroom, a MALE VOICE booms.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
What?

MEREDITH
Are you even listening?

Meredith grabs a packaged single use catheter from the counter. She tears the packaging and removes the catheter.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
I can't find my valve oil. Have you seen it?

MEREDITH
What? No.

Like inserting a tampon, she maneuvers the catheter up into her bladder. The sound of urine trickling into the toilet.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Why would valve oil go missing?

MEREDITH
But like a sponsored initiative to at least pretend to even out the gender inequality in pro-gaming. Sure, it's kind of lame, but, still... At the end of the night, the winning team's highest scoring woman will get drafted to a pro team. I mean--

She reaches around and flushes the toilet. SASHA, 23, and too comfortable with himself, enters.

SASHA
I don't get it.

MEREDITH
It's just valve oil! Order some.

SASHA
No, why does it have to be gendered?

MEREDITH
Um, because that's literally the entire point of the--

SASHA
Yeah, yeah, I get that. But, if you're good, it shouldn't matter what gender you are. Like, equality.

He hits a button on a high end speaker/radio. Classical music plays.

MEREDITH

A lot of good that gender studies class is doing.

He bends down and checks the temperature of the water, and turns the water off.

SASHA

I never do the reading. Water's warm.

Meredith stares at him blankly.

SASHA

Hey, it's not like I'm not interested in feminist stuff! I just... I mean, it's all, just like, really wordy. Come on. Shirt.

MEREDITH

A little bit of privacy, please?

Sasha swivels so his back is to Meredith as she starts taking off her shirt with a huff.

MEREDITH

I don't know why you always have to be such a contrarian.

SASHA

It just sounds like a time suck.

MEREDITH

How so.

He stands up and moves to the closet.

SASHA

I mean, how much more time can you spend playing that game?

MEREDITH

Do I have something better to be doing?

He grabs a bathtub transfer bench and a waterproof cushion.

SASHA

I dunno, how about doing your PT exercises for once?

MEREDITH

Shit's a scam. They don't work.

Meredith crosses her arms over her bare chest. Sasha returns to her with the bench and cushion.

SASHA

That's because you have to actually do them to get better.

MEREDITH

Define better.

SASHA

You know, like, independent and happy.

MEREDITH

I am happy.

Sasha is like "oh yeah?".

MEREDITH

(louder)

I'm happy!

He submerges the cushion to the bottom of the tub and installs the bench over the side of the tub and the toilet.

SASHA

Yeah, with what? Playing a stupid game all the time?

MEREDITH

First of all, it's not just a game. Second--

SASHA

Presents awfully similar to a game.

Meredith repositions her wheelchair next to the bathtub. She begins a transfer.

MEREDITH

It's a community for your information. And, it's also a completely male dominated field so my participation is actually kind of radical.

Sasha gets up and stands over her, holding his arms out like she might fall.

MEREDITH

I'm fine. I'm fine.

SASHA
Yeah, but--

Meredith lowers herself into the tub.

MEREDITH
--I'm good, okay? See? In the tub.
Stop looking at me.

SASHA
Okay. Okay. I'm not looking at you.
Alright? God.

MEREDITH
Privacy please.

SASHA
You know, if you would just do Dr.
Warren's "steps towards privacy and
independence" or whatever, I'd
leave you alone.

MEREDITH
Just turn around! I'm not drowning!

Sasha huffs and sits down -- his back to Meredith.

SASHA
Okay, Jeez. Just trying to help.

Meredith relaxes slightly and starts to bathe. Sasha opens a
dating app and starts swiping.

SASHA
Hey, so... For my showcase--

MEREDITH
Not this again.

SASHA
No, I was thinking I could dedicate
it to Mom.

MEREDITH
What? Why?

SASHA
Cause it's the right thing to do?

MEREDITH
I think it's calling attention to
something that should stay buried.
Pun intended.

Sasha scrunches up his face.

SASHA
Don't joke about that.

MEREDITH
Who's joking?

SASHA
I'm working my ass off, you know?
It'd be great if you could show a
little respect. For me... And for
Mom.

MEREDITH
How am I not showing respect? I
promised I'd go. What more do you
want?

SASHA
It's your attitude! It freaking
sucks. We're all we've got, okay?
We need to support each other.

MEREDITH
No. That's not how that works.

SASHA
Yes, it is. It's basic decency.

MEREDITH
Then you can start by watching my
match tonight.

Sasha scoffs.

SASHA
I'm not gonna watch you play video
games all night! I have to
practice.

MEREDITH
That's what I thought.

SASHA
That's not fair. My showcase is--

MEREDITH
What's not fair is that you expect
me to care about your stupid
showcase, and think you're a hero
for dedicating it to Mom - when I
don't.

(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

And when you don't even listen to me when I'm telling you about what's important to me! So fuck off, dude. Leave me alone.

SASHA

You wanna talk about fair?

MEREDITH

I said leave me alone.

SASHA

No. I go to school all day and then I come home and I bathe you and I make you dinner and have to endure being yelled at all the time... Meanwhile, you sit around doing jack shit except for playing video games and I dunno talking to strangers in chat rooms or whatever. How's that for fair?

MEREDITH

You're an entitled privileged fuck. You know that?

SASHA

(taking a breath)

There are real things out there for you to do and be good at. Investing in a fake world is honestly the opposite of that.

MEREDITH

Thanks for your support. Really.

The song on the radio ends.

SASHA

I'm thinking about going sailing again by the way. I hope that doesn't weird you out.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

A hallway adorned with pictures of Meredith and Sasha when they were younger and had a Mom. Mixed in are paintings of sailboats and ocean views.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
 I welcome it. If some girl thinks
 she can outplay me... I say, come
 here little girl, let's dance.

Meredith, with earbuds in and wet hair up in a towel pops out of her bedroom. She watches a live-stream on her phone. The streamer is XAVIOR, an alt looking dude in his late 20's.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
 I don't care who it is, I'm the
 best and I'll always be the best.

She wheels down the hallway through to the:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

White walls with accents of blue and teal. Overstuffed white furniture pockmarked by nautical and coastal pillows and throws. Useless vases and seashells populate bookshelves. A local artist's painting of a sailboat hangs over the mantle.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
 Doesn't take a rocket scientist to
 see that giving one group of people
 an elevator to the top isn't gonna
 make them better players.

Meredith makes her way to the:

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Large and open. Decorated with rope and driftwood.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
 When they get off that elevator
 they're gonna be in for a rude
 surprise: me.

Meredith passes through and into the:

INT. KITCHEN - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sasha is washing vegetables in a large and surprisingly clean and adult kitchen save for an anthropomorphic penis doodled on the refrigerator whiteboard. A speech bubble cumming from it reads:

HOME AT 5. DON'T PLAY VIDEO GAMES ALL DAY. LOVE YA. -S

Meredith scribbles out the "don't".

XAVIOR (V.O.)
 So here's what I say to all the
 girls out there who think they've
 got what it takes--

She opens the fridge and grabs two energy drinks.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
 --Come at me, bro.

Using a reacher-grabber from the counter, she haphazardly
 grabs for a cereal box off the top of the fridge.

Sasha sees this.

SASHA
 Come on, I'm cooking us dinner.

He pulls A CHEF'S KNIFE off a magnetic strip on the wall.

MEREDITH
 More like trying to slowly murder
 me with healthy foods.

SASHA
 Way too much planning when I could
 just do it with this.
 (holds up knife)
 Then maybe dump your body in the
 bay? Good excuse to get out on the
 water again.

He begins chopping vegetables.

MEREDITH
 Nah, I'd counter murder you first.
 Anyway, I'm busy tonight. And I'm
 still mad at you. So, I won't be
 eating dinner.

SASHA
 (still thinking about it)
 Counter murder me? You couldn't
 counter murder me. For starters,
 I'm much bigger than you. And
 you're in a wheelchair. Unless I
 accidentally slipped or something
 and stabbed you in the leg which
 you wouldn't feel and then you like
 pulled it out and stabbed me back.
 God, I never thought about it that
 way. It's like having a superpower.

MEREDITH
I'd still die of bleeding.

SASHA
But, you wouldn't feel it!

MEREDITH
Okay, so like I said, I'm busy tonight. I'll be in my room. Please don't interrupt me.

SASHA
Busy tonight... In your room.

MEREDITH
Yeah. Just don't interrupt me, okay?

SASHA
It's just... that's an oxymoron.

MEREDITH
You're an oxymoron. Did you hear what I said?

SASHA
Yeah, yeah. No interruptions. You will be uninterrupted.

Meredith, loaded up with drinks and snacks, wheels away.

MEREDITH
Good.
(exiting)
Wish me luck!

SASHA
With what?

She's gone.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A new livestream plays on her phone. This streamer is DARKSPARKLE -- think Zoe Kravitz doing Cardi B in Billie Eilish drag.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
--and fam, if you think for one second I ain't gonna fuck up that man-child fuck boy, you got another thing coming.

(MORE)

DARKSPARKLE (CONT'D)

Cause you better believe I'm gonna show the dicks and the chads and the bros and the brahs and especially Mr. fuck-cunt himself: Xavior fucking fuckface... I'm about to bring it and do not even think for one second the competition will not be shook.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Meredith opens an application on her computer: CARTOON DEATH MATCH (CDM).

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Y'all've seen me play. Y'all've seen OverBored play. Y'all know what we bring. Y'all know we the shit and we out here about to prove it. I can't wait to see the faces of these bros - y'all know who I'm talking about - these bros on the pro teams whose masculinity is so fragile that they can't stand the thought of a chick beating they ass-

ON SCREEN: An animated cinematic cut-scene plays. It stars an eye-patched monkey holding a grenade launcher talking to a mink in soviet era sniper gear and a kung fu giraffe.

MAD DOG MONKEY

Certain death is inevitable and our mission is clear--

MEREDITH

--Okay, okay, we get it Mad Dog.

Meredith clicks her mouse and the cut scene disappears revealing the game's HOME SCREEN. It's decorated for the event. Female-ish presenting cartoon characters adorn the background with weapons pointed at each other. In the center, Meredith's avatar poses stoically.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

--Trust no-one, you know what I'm saying? These bitches out here think they sauce, but they ain't shit. They shit sauce, that's what. You know who you are. XAVIOR. Fuckin' chicken shit dipped in nasty ass shit sauce.

(MORE)

DARKSPARKLE (CONT'D)
Well, guess what? I'm coming fo'
yo' male fragility ass and there
ain't nothing yo' little white boy
pussy ass can do about it. PEACE.

The stream ends abruptly.

DING: An incoming call from Darksparkle. Meredith ACCEPTS.

MEREDITH
Heyyy.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Hey, honey. You ready?

MEREDITH
I've got it set to auto-stream now.
Just waiting on you to bring us
into the game.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Alright, setting it up.

MEREDITH
One thing, though. Are you sure we
shouldn't bring in Batz as our
third? I know she's not the best,
but at least we won't get stuck
with some random dude.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
You know how I feel about her.

MEREDITH
Yeah, okay. Just thought I'd ask.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Look, I have no doubt that you're
gonna get the pro draft tonight. We
are currently unstoppable. You hear
me? Un-fucking-stoppable! And then
you'll get the draft because you
always get more points than me even
when I get more kills. So, that's
what it is. Honestly, I just want
to beat Xavior. The fucking cunt.

MEREDITH
Oh, yeah, saw that. He's just mad
you dumped him. And then kicked him
off the team.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Doesn't make him not a cunt.

MEREDITH
Alright, are we gonna play or what?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Is there any other way to be a
baller?

EXT. THE POOL - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Sasha opens his trumpet case on a patio table next to the once family crown jewel - THE POOL. It now looks more like an infested bog, unused for more than a summer.

INTERCUT SASHA / MEREDITH

--Meredith takes a swig of an energy drink.

--Sasha pops his mouthpiece from it's rubber holder.

--Meredith cracks her knuckles.

--Sasha flutters his trumpet's valves.

--Meredith adjusts her headset.

--Sasha puts a CD into a portable CD Player. *Hummel: Trumpet Concerto in E flat*. He lifts his trumpet to his mouth and PLAYS along with the track.

His trumpeting over the song scores the ensuing scene.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

We hear gunfire, explosions, and gameplay chatter -- over:

--Keystrokes, single-clicks, double-clicks, wheel scrolls.

--Lights flashing on Meredith's face.

--Lights flashing on Tera.

--Meredith's body hunching. Eyes straining.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Mad Dog on the left, behind the
garbage cans!

MEREDITH
Fuck you, noob!
(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
(after a click)
Got him.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Headshot, too. Damn girl!

MEREDITH
Check this out.

She clicks and smiles.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
(laughing)
He didn't stand a chance! I think
he actually thought he'd get that
shot off.

MEREDITH
Nah.

A final flourish of clicks and keystrokes leads her into a
victorious Tiger Woods style fist clench.

ON SCREEN: *YOUR TEAM WON*

MEREDITH
Fuck yeah. I know you assholes are
probably watching this stream right
now, so, I just want you to know
that I thoroughly enjoyed whooping
your butts.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
There is nothing I enjoy more in
this life than emasculating faux
bros and fuck boys.

MEREDITH
You heard it here first folks,
SavageDan is a faux bro and
LexLuger69 is a fuck boy or maybe
the other way around, who knows!

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
My goal is to annihilate every
player with a penis that stands in
our way. The gall these guys have.
Logging on in droves in the middle
of a female pro search tryna keep
females such as ourselves from
qualifying. They're tryna block us
out of our own father-fuckin'
initiative!

(MORE)

DARKSPARKLE (CONT'D)

Fucking dudes smurfing and sabotaging games. Well, I'll tell you what. We on a win streak and rising fast, boys! I certainly wouldn't want to come up against us randomly and lose the points from the XP disparity. By the end of the night, we gonna cut the dicks off every last one of these incel 4chan trolls.

MEREDITH

Couldn't of said it any better. Ready for another?

DARKSPARKLE

Always.

A TIME LAPSE of Meredith playing through the next match. Tera defies her true nature, quickly moving about in her terrarium.

ON SCREEN: *YOUR TEAM WON*

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

I'm so fucking turnt for this comp, right now. Ladies and, well you know what, this one goes out to just the ladies. Tonight ya'll are witnessing history in the making. In just a few more games, our team, minus one unnamed pathetic loser, will rise above all the other teams and the pro scene will have to decide between two female players who can actually fucking play.

MEREDITH

We've been lucky so far. Here's hoping we don't get a third we have to carry.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Oh, honey, you know we will. I'd bet my life on it.

Hearts and HaHa's and Likes flood the screen.

Meredith's phone alarm goes off (TEXT): *EMPTY BLADDER 12PM*

MEREDITH

B.r.b., gotta pee real quick.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Of course you do.

MEREDITH
Hey! No shame in having to pee!

Meredith exits the live-chat, leaving the private chat window open.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
She's kind of a bitch, huh?

MEREDITH
She's not so bad. Alright, I really do have to pee.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Isn't your headset's wireless?

MEREDITH
Oh, yeah. I guess it is.

INT. BATHROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Meredith removes a hydrophilic coated catheter and removes a synthetic bladder strapped to her leg.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
You need to make sure you're staying ahead of her.

MEREDITH
It looks like my ranked score is rising faster than her's though. She mostly plays long range DPS.

She empties the bladder into the toilet and flushes.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
But what if your team wins and you're not the star?

MEREDITH
I dunno, I think that's a bit dramatic. May the best woman win, right?

She then thoroughly rinses and washes the bladder to sterilize.

BATZ5000

You know better than anybody how hard it is for women to go pro. It's like they don't even see us.

MEREDITH

But that's the whole point of this stupid initiative.

BATZ5000

Wake up! It's a PR stunt! The chances of both of you getting drafted... Well, you know.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Meredith pushes herself down the hallway towards her room.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Also, you play worse when you're streaming. You need to focus on getting your XP up.

MEREDITH

I don't think this is helping.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

I'm not trying to scare you, but, you might only have this one shot and you can't let anything stand in your way. And what if DarkSparkle is trying to distract you with all this streaming and branding shit?

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Meredith approaches her computer.

MEREDITH

She's not--

BATZ5000

I guess what I'm trying to say is, there are people out here that are counting on you to not fuck this up. It's like, people are living vicariously through you in a way that they can't with the other players. You represent something different, you know? A breath of fresh air.

She gets in position and locks her wheel.

MEREDITH

Alright. I won't fuck it up. Okay?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Good. Now get back in there!

MEREDITH

Alright, muting channel. Back to it.

She scrunches her eyes: *What was that all about?*

She takes a breath and enters a new game. The green LIVE light turns on as she is automatically reconnected to her livestream with DarkSparkle.

The game hasn't started yet, but, their avatars stand in a waiting area.

MEREDITH

Hello! OverBored here for all your healing needs.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Check who we're playing.

MEREDITH

What?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

On the other team. Guess who's on it.

Meredith pulls up a stats page. The only name on the screen that matters is: XAVIOR -- ON THE OTHER TEAM.

MEREDITH

You're shitting me.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Fuckin' Eggs Benedict Arnold.

MEREDITH

But that's... That's gotta be a coincidence, right? There's no way... He couldn't have planned that.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

He's probably watching us right now. Aren't you, ya fuck twat. You enjoying this?

(MORE)

DARKSPARKLE (CONT'D)

Well, suck my dick, we're gonna crush you and whatever noobs you've got backing you. I think I'll play the Comrade Minks from Minsk and do some high quality camping from the clocktower. And I don't wanna see shit from you cocksuckers in the comment feed about camping.

MEREDITH

Yeah, get a life bozos.

ON SCREEN: A third character materializes and begins jumping around in the waiting area. It's a chrome robot Elk (this is GRIMRAPER's avatar).

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Ah, do we finally have a third player on our team?

MEREDITH

Wow... We do... And his username is GrimRaper.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Of course it is.

MEREDITH

Grim, do you have a microphone?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

This is fucking perfect. A pervert without a microphone. Told you we'd have to carry.

The sounds of someone fumbling with a mic.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Ah! His Majesty, the Grim Raper, decides to grace us with his unholy presence.

A few last pops of the mic being secured in position.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)

Hi. Can you hear me?

GRIMRAPER sounds to be about twelve.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Oh, god.

MEREDITH
How old are you?

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
Sixty nine.

Children giggle in the background.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Fuck my life.

MEREDITH
Alright, well, Sparkle was gonna
take high ground and I usually
heal. You wanna maybe play DPS?

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
I play Elktron.

MEREDITH
You don't play any DPS characters?

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
Elktron's a DPS character.

MEREDITH
He's not and we really need high
damage for this team comp to work.

GRIMRAPER
Elktron's DPS.

DarkSparkle laughs.

MEREDITH (V.O.)
You know what, that's fine. I'll
play DPS. Switching now.

Meredith opens a character selection window.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
I thought you only play Tera Pain.

MEREDITH
I've got a few back ups in a pinch.

Meredith cycles through a few characters and lands on a dual
pistol wielding worm in matrix-esk leather.

MEREDITH
Alright, I'm back.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Neo-tode, nice.

MEREDITH
Where did the child go?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
I dunno, I was checking stats.

MEREDITH
Did he run away?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Hey dick-face, why don't you come
back here so you don't die the
second they see you.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
I'm by the payload.

ON SCREEN (TEXT): 3

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Come back here you little shit! The
game's about to start!

ON SCREEN (TEXT): 2

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
No, you come to me. I'm already at
the payload.

ON SCREEN (TEXT): 1

MEREDITH
We need to launch a coordinated
attack. Come back to HQ! Grim?

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
They killed me. Where were you
guys?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
We are not guys and we told you to
wait for us.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
We need a healer.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Our healer just switched to DPS
because you're playing Elktron on a
payload map.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
Yeah, but, we need a healer or
we're not gonna stay alive.

MEREDITH

I have a dual-wield load-out for
DPS, maybe we can combo with
Elktron's area shield approach
while Sparkle you cover us from the
clocktower.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Copy you, OverBored.

MEREDITH

Where is Grim now?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

He's not in the spawn?

MEREDITH

No.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)

I'm at the payload.

MEREDITH

What?!

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Fucking Hell!

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)

No one's here, I'm gonna move it.

MEREDITH

No!

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

No!

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)

I'm moving it.

MEREDITH

No, just wait for--

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)

They killed me.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Fucking Christ. How are you even at
this level?

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)

This is my brother's account.

MEREDITH

It's like a reverse Smurf account.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)

No, it's a real account.

MEREDITH
I understand the concept.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
You guys suck.

MEREDITH
You're a little twerp.

GRIMRAPER (V.O.)
Fuck you, lady.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
I'm gonna find out where you live
and cut off your tiny little penis
and make you eat it you pre
pubescent child molester in
training.

The sounds of a mic being jostled. An abrupt silence.

MEREDITH
Sounds like you scared him off.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
It's not like talking to him was
helping our strat.

A BUZZ. Meredith glances at her phone. A CDM app DM (Direct Message) from Batz5000.

BATZ5000 (TEXT): *Of all the games in all the world...*

MEREDITH
You had to log in to mine.

She winks.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
What?

MEREDITH
Sorry. Nothing.

BATZ5000 (TEXT): *you need to play this kid. use his inability against him.*

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
We are so fucked. We've pushed the
payload zero fucking feet this
whole game. I'm sure Xavior's
loving this.

MEREDITH

I think we can still win this.
Actually, I've got an idea.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

You gonna tell me, or?

MEREDITH

Just follow my lead. Pretend
they've got you pinned.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

I am pinned.

MEREDITH

Okay, well, stay there. I'll b-r-b!

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

You're leaving me to--

She switches to the main page, cutting the games sound off.
Search query: "GrimRaper".

BATZ5000 (TEXT): *do you remember that special event item you
won a couple months back? the jacket?*

She clicks the GIFT ITEM button. An inventory of items opens.

MEREDITH

(to herself)

Way ahead of you, Batz. Way ahead
of you. And it was a vest.

She scrolls to a suicide bomber vest. She clicks it.

MEREDITH

This noob's about to get
radicalized.

She clicks back into the game.

MEREDITH

Okay, hi, I'm back.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Perfect time to take a bathroom
break.

MEREDITH

Where's Grim?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

I don't know, he ran in and died
again while you were gone.

MEREDITH

Okay, just get ready to move the payload the next time he runs in. Trust me.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

My trust issues are only second in urgency to the movement timer that's about to expire, so fine. Oh, here he comes.

MEREDITH

I'm right behind him.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

And now he's frozen! What's everybody doing taking piss breaks in the middle of a game?

MEREDITH

I'm flanking. Get ready to move.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

They've got me pinned. I can't do shit. Oh, look, the sperm we're babysitting is moving again.

MEREDITH

Hold. Hold.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

And here he comes to get shot in the face like all the other times.

MEREDITH

Hold. Hold.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

I'm holding like a bitcoin bro, babe.

MEREDITH

Tell me when he's at the payload.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

He's at the payload.

MEREDITH

GO! GO! GO!

The sound of a huge explosion. And four deaths.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Holy Fuck! What the fuck was
that???

MEREDITH
That, my friend, was a team kill.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
But, he... Did you do that?

MEREDITH
I figured he wouldn't be able to
resist trying out a special gift.
Moving the payload.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
A full on team kill. And he takes
the death penalty. You gifted him
an item? Is that even legal?

MEREDITH
I'm here to win.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
Bitch, please. We'll see if yo' ass
gets DQ'd for item use in ranked
play.

MEREDITH
I didn't play it! Grim did. Almost
there! They haven't even re-spawned
yet because we never got a kill on
them!

Meredith laughs excitedly.

Batz5000 (TEXT): *i gotta say, unexpected, but delicious.*

ON SCREEN: Meredith and DarkSparkle's avatars push the
payload over the checkpoint line.

Text pops up: *YOUR TEAM WON*

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
See fam, I told you we the best.
Remember to like and subscribe,
Mwah!

The livestream cuts off. Immediately, a private chat request
from DarkSparkle pops up.

Meredith exits her live-stream. She ACCEPTS the chat request.

MEREDITH

Hey, what's up?

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Girl, don't you ever leave me in the fucking dark like that.

MEREDITH

What? I was just having some fun.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

In the middle of a fucking qualifying match? You got lucky and happened to have a special item that fit the bill. Could have played out a hundred different ways, all bad. Not to mention that move was this close to disqualification. I'm not here to watch you gamble with my career. And stop talking to Batz!

MEREDITH

I wasn't.

DARKSPARKLE

That shit couldn't stink any worse of Batz. Every Batz plan is Batzshit crazy. You left your stream on. I saw you talking with her.

MEREDITH

Alright, I'm sorry. I won't do it again.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Yeah. Better not.

The private chat ends. Tera slides into the water.

ON SCREEN: DarkSparkle's live-stream reopens.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)

Can you feel it fam? His downfall is within reach. Ya'll best be calling me Queen DarkSparkle right about now, try it on for size. We don't do no refunds, so make sure it fits. Ooo, yeah, that's my size, that's my size!

DarkSparkle pauses. She pulls a headphone off one ear and turns towards the door in the background.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
 What the fuck? Oh my god. Oh my
 fucking god.

The noises grow into the shouts of an infiltrating SWAT Team.

DARKSPARKLE (V.O.)
 One of you assholes SWATTED me?? I
 am gonna fuck you up so bad after
 this is over, I swear to fucking
 God.

DarkSparkle removes her headphones and places them on the desk as a SWAT TEAM BREAKS DOWN THE DOOR. They surgically enter the room WITH ASSAULT RIFLES TRAINED on DarkSparkle.

DarkSparkle turns and a SWAT Team Member FIRES TWO SHOTS.

The first shot HITS DarkSparkle.

The second shot HITS the webcam. The feed goes dark.

BACK ON MEREDITH

The color has drained from her face. She breathes in short little breaths. Her eyes tear up.

ON SCREEN: Comments flood in. "wtf?!?!!" "OMG I HOPE SHE'S OK!" "thoughts and prayers!" "holy shit whoever did this deserves to die".

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - MALL - MORNING

HIGH ANGLE on a GIANT parking lot at a mostly closed down mall. Sweltering heat SHIMMERS across an S.U.V. parked in the middle of the lot. The driver side door is open. Sasha kneels into the footwell.

INT. S.U.V. - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

A sweaty Meredith sits in the passenger seat staring at the CDM app. A notification takes up most of the screen:

Cartoon Death Match Gender Initiative Cancelled in Wake of Tragic Shooting Death of Star Player DarkSparkle

She clicks the notification.

ON SCREEN: A photo of DarkSparkle smiling with her father. Another -- a screenshot from one of her livestreams.

Copy reads: *The attack was captured on her livestream in what has been characterized as a bizarre police shooting. Authorities responded to a 911 caller who claimed to be perpetrating a shooting rampage inside the MacArthur residence. Police are saying this was a SWATTING, an internet phenomenon where...*

BACK ON MEREDITH

MEREDITH

No, no, no.

Sasha, installing handheld pedal controls, looks up.

SASHA

What's that?

MEREDITH

(not wanting to talk)

Oh, uh. Nothing.

SASHA

Well, would you get off your phone?

Meredith keeps reading.

SASHA

Meredith!

She looks up, startled.

SASHA

Jesus. Would you put your phone away? Maybe live in the present a little bit? Why don't you put the phone in the glove compartment for like ten minutes. Ten minutes! That's all I'm asking.

Meredith slowly follows his command.

SASHA

Thank you. Was that so hard?

(off hand controls)

So, I watched a youtube video. It seems relatively self explanatory.

Meredith is miles away. Sasha wipes sweat from his brow.

SASHA

(to himself)

Fuck, it's hot.

(MORE)

SASHA (CONT'D)

(picking up the thread)

Oh, that reminds me actually. I watched this other video where this woman... She's a quadriplegic, so, a little different. But, she soloed around the Horn of Africa by blowing and sucking on these, like, special straws. She had one straw that, like, hoisted the sails and another that turned the rudder and another for the engine. She was like an ocean cyborg. Her words. Not mine. A really inspiring person. Alright, these are about as secure as I'm gonna get em', need me to scoot you over?

Meredith is a statue.

SASHA

Meredith?

MEREDITH

Huh? What? Oh.

Meredith begins a transfer from passenger seat to driver seat. Sasha makes his way around the front of the car and into the passenger seat.

SASHA

Just think about it, though. Like, really picture it.

She grabs her left leg and puts it in the driver side footwell.

SASHA

The wind in your hair. The smell of salt in the air. The creaking of the lines.

She grabs her right leg and puts it in the driver side footwell.

SASHA

Don't you miss it?

She plants her arms and swings her upper body onto the edge of the driver seat.

SASHA

You've gotta miss it.

A few small shuffles and she's centered behind the steering wheel.

SASHA
I know you do.

Sasha sits down and grabs the hand controls instruction manual from the dashboard. He flips through it as he talks.

SASHA
I'm gonna get you on a boat if it's
the last thing I do.

He puts his feet up on the dash, knees bent. Meredith is lost in thought.

SASHA
Alright, so. The thumb thing is the
gas and you use your hand to brake.
Ready whenever you are.

Meredith is unmoving.

SASHA
Hey, it's okay. You're doing great.
You just gotta...

He leans over and turns the ignition. The engine roars to life. Meredith snaps back to the present moment.

SASHA
Now, just slowly push the--

Her thumb SLAMS on the gas. The car SCREECHES forward. She GRITS her teeth, WHITE KNUCKLING the steering wheel.

SASHA
Woah, ahh... okay.

The odometer CLIMBS -- 20, 25, 30...

SASHA
Maybe try the brake?

35, 40, 45 -- they're running out of parking lot.

SASHA
The brake! Fucking brake!!

She SLAMS on the brake and the S.U.V. SKIDS to a stop. Sasha's butt FLIES forward -- into the footwell -- his legs flung overtop of him.

MEREDITH

Cool. I think I got it. Can we go home now?

EXT. BAYSIDE HOUSE / INT. S.U.V., MOVING - LATE MORNING

The S.U.V. pulls into the driveway, with Sasha driving.

A NONDESCRIPED SEDAN is parked in the driveway.

Two people get out: AGENT PARK, a man in his 30's with the physique of a body builder, and AGENT MARIS, a woman in her 40's who appears to have dwarfism.

SASHA

(to himself)

The fuck is this? The circus?

Agent Maris approaches the car and smiles as she presents her F.B.I. badge.

AGENT MARIS

Hi there, I'm Agent Maris. This is my partner, Agent Park. We're with the F.B.I. We'd like to ask you some questions. Would that be alright?

INT. LIVING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATE MORNING

For the first time, because of the daylight, and through large windows, we see that just beyond the pool and down a craggy bluff is the great expanse of THE BAY.

SASHA

Well, she didn't do it! I don't understand. Can't you, like, trace the call?

The FBI agents sit on the large white couch across from a seated Sasha and a parked Meredith who is looking at her hands.

AGENT MARIS

How's your water?

SASHA

What?

AGENT MARIS

Your water. Is it hard? Soft? Tap? Filtered? Sparkling? Delivered?

(MORE)

AGENT MARIS (CONT'D)

What? Do you get it from a well? I do love well water. It's got a certain je ne sais quoi.

SASHA

Uh. I buy cases of bottled water.

AGENT MARIS

Terrible for the planet. But, you know, I am feeling quite parched. This terrible heat. Agent Park, would you say you are feeling properly hydrated? Would a bottle of water get you back into a place of focus and determination in your work as a Field Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation? Well, I, for one, could certainly use a bottle of water in this moment of thirst.

Agent Park nods - keeping his kind eyes glued to Meredith.

AGENT MARIS

(to Sasha)

You really can't beat the cleansing and restorative power of water. So, what do you say? Is it too much to ask? Would it be too much trouble? To get a couple of thirsty federal employees a bottle of water each?

Sasha goes to say something, but decides against it. He stands and exits.

Agent Maris watches him leave. Agent Park's eyes don't waver.

AGENT MARIS

Now, I don't know all that much about video games. I'm sure they're a lot of fun. I've got twin nephews who'd be doctors by now if they'd put in the same hours at medical school as they have into fighting monsters. But, my sister's parenting is neither here nor there, I'm afraid. What I am afraid is that you don't have an alibi for when the nine-one-one call was placed last night. Which we know was at...

(to Agent Park)

Do you have the print-out?

Agent park procures a folded print-out from inside his coat. He hands it to Agent Maris who unfolds it.

AGENT MARIS

Ah, thank you.

(off print-out)

Dispatch received the nine-one-one call at twelve-oh-four P.M. Your brother was sleeping, although he doesn't have an alibi for that, but he also doesn't have any discernible motive to call the police on the victim four minutes after twelve in the morning. Coincidentally, or not, your livestream broadcast was down for exactly--

(consulting the print-out)

--nine minutes and forty-two seconds starting at twelve-oh-one A.M. The last thing the recording captured was you looking down at your phone and then saying "b.r.b., gotta pee real quick." Then Chloe MacArthur says "Of course you do." And then you say "Hey. No shame in having to pee."

Meredith continues looking at her hands.

AGENT MARIS

As a woman doing a job where I often find myself asking the very people I've just interrogated if I may use their bathroom, I wholeheartedly agree, there is no shame in having to pee. Everybody pees. But, the thing is, it's not a very good alibi. You'd be surprised how many bathroom alibis we get. Don't we, Agent Park?

Agent Park nods ever so slightly.

AGENT MARIS

You see, the problem with bathroom alibis is that going to the bathroom in our culture, except for the earliest and latest stages in life, is quite often a solo endeavor.

(MORE)

AGENT MARIS (CONT'D)
So, you being in the bathroom,
presumably alone, at the exact same
time a hit was called on your
closest competition in last night's
event doesn't look too good on you,
now does it?

Meredith looks up.

MEREDITH
I wasn't alone.

PRE-LAP: A toilet flushing.

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Agent Maris approaches Meredith, Sasha and Agent Park.

AGENT MARIS
I'd shake your hands goodbye, but
you didn't have any towels in your
bathroom.

Agent Park takes a card out of his pocket.

AGENT MARIS
This is our card. Please call us if
you remember anything else you
think might be pertinent to this
case. Goodbye for now.

The agents begin to exit. Agent Maris turns around.

AGENT MARIS
Oh, one more thing. How did you
know Grim would accept the gift you
gave him?

MEREDITH
I just... Had a feeling.

Agent Maris nods and exits.

Meredith and Sasha watch Agent Maris and Agent Park get in
their car.

SASHA
You didn't do it, right?

MEREDITH
Of course I didn't do it!

SASHA

Had to ask. I'm sure they'll sort it out. They're the professionals after all.

MEREDITH

Yeah.

The FBI sedan pulls out of the driveway and into the street.

SASHA

Hey, so. Would it be alright if I still go to rehearsal tonight? It's really important because of the showcase tomorrow morning. I mean unless you need me here, or something, then I can totally stay. Up to you.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - DAY

MEREDITH

You have to tell them you were talking to me while I was in the bathroom. To, like, corroborate my alibi or whatever.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

It's obvious who it actually was.

MEREDITH

It is?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Xavior. Who else would it be?

MEREDITH

Oh my god. I don't know why I hadn't thought of that. Of course. Oh god. Oh my god.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

What?

In the distance we hear a buzzer: BRRRRRRRINNNGGGG

MEREDITH

What if I'm next?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

What? No. Don't be crazy.

BRRRRRRRINNNGGGG

MEREDITH

No, seriously. If he's getting revenge for kicking him off the team, I'm partly to blame. We kept disagreeing on strategy and team comps. He was mad that I didn't play more characters.

BRRRRRRRINNNGGGG

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Does he know where you live?

BRRRINNGG, BRRRRRRRINNNGGGG

MEREDITH

I don't know.

BRRRINNGGG, BRRRINNGGG, BRRRRRRRINGGGGGGGG

BATZ 5000 (V.O.)

Is that a smoke alarm?

Meredith realizes what the noise is.

BRRRRRIINNGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG

MEREDITH

No. It's my doorbell.

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

We hear Sasha playing trumpet out back.

BRRRRRIIIIINNNNNNGGGGGG

Meredith, still wearing her headset, slowly approaches the front door.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Is it him?

MEREDITH

I don't know. I'm checking.

BRRRIIIIINNGGGGGG. BRRRRRRRIIIIINNNNNNGGGGGG.

She quickly pulls back a curtain and SEES--

Two DELIVERY PEOPLE standing outside with many large boxes. A home appliance store truck is parked in the driveway.

Meredith opens the door.

DELIVERY PERSON 1

This seven-two-three south bayside drive? You don't have any numbers up.

MEREDITH

Well, seven-two-three and a half. But, yeah.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Who is it?

MEREDITH

It's the delivery guys.

DELIVERY PERSON 1

We prefer "delivery people".

MEREDITH

(to Batz5000)

Lemme call you back, okay?

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Meredith is at her computer. The Delivery People carry in various cooling appliances.

DELIVERY PERSON 1

You got a lot of fans, huh.

MEREDITH

Maybe a hardcore base of followers, but I'll need a lot more to go pro if I'm being honest with myself.

DELIVERY PERSON 1

Well, you near cleared us out. So, I'd say you're off to a good start. Where you want 'em?

MEREDITH

Oh, the fans!

DELIVERY PERSON 1

Yeah, the fans.

MEREDITH

Just need them to cool down my computer, it's slowing from the heat.

DELIVERY PERSON 2
They say the heat drives people
mad. To murder even.

MEREDITH
Is that so?

EXT. SIDE PATH - BAYSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Sasha is walking down the side path, carrying his trumpet case. He HEARS a crunching sound. He rounds the house and SEES Delivery Person 2 STUFFING cardboard into the recycling.

SASHA
Hey! Hey! What are you doing?

Delivery Person 2 looks at him and runs to the idling truck.

DELIVERY PERSON 2
Cool off, man! It's just the heat!

SASHA
(to himself)
What the fuck?

The Delivery truck drives away. Sasha gets in the S.U.V.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A thunderous roar -- the room is FILLED with fans, a window AC, and a standing AC -- all pointed at Meredith's CPU.

She is scrolling through a playlist titled ULTIMATE XAVIOR STREAMER RAGE COMPILATION. She plays one.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
Fuck this guy! Fuck this guy!!
Ahhhhh!!!

Xavior throws his headset and stands up. He walks out of the room and then comes back and sits down, puts on the headset.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
You fucking pussy. Go fuck
yourself. You gay ass whore. You're
garbage. Just because a blue pump
does a hundred damage now, you
fucking auto-kill me, you fucking
piece of trash. Fuck this guy,
dude. This guy's got like two
fucking subs in his channel, dude.

She copies the link and messages it to Batz5000. She then plays another.

XAVIOR (V.O.)
Get the fuck outta here you
cocksucker! No! Fucking No!!
FUCKKKK! FUCKKKKK!! FUCKKKKKK!!!

Xavior slams his fist onto his desk -- SLAM, SLAM, SLAM. Chips go flying, a monitor falls down, his headset slips to his shoulders.

XAVIOR
That's it! I fucking quit! This
game is rigged. I've fucking had
it! I quit. I'm done streaming.

She sends this one to Batz5000 before playing a third video.

XAVIOR
(screaming)
How is this nigger not dead?! How?!
How much damage did he just take?
Are you fucking kidding me, right
now?! How is this nigger not dead?!
YOU NIGGER. FUCKING
NIGGGGGGEEEEERRRR!!

DING -- a chat request from Batz5000. Meredith accepts.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Of all the games in all the
world...

MEREDITH
You had to log in to mine.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
He's like the definition of toxic.

MEREDITH
I dunno why I never watched any of
these.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
He wasn't ever like this with you?

MEREDITH
Never. He must have been hiding
that side of himself.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
How could you not have known?

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

The door opens and we creep forward along the floor. The hum of the fans is soft.

MEREDITH (O.S.)

I dunno. Maybe he's only like this when he plays KastleMoon? I never played KastleMoon with him. That game is just too boring.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Well, all I'll say is that I've never seen a woman behave this way. Not while streaming at least.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We move down the hallway. The hum grows louder.

MEREDITH (O.S.)

He doesn't have any streams recorded from last night. Or they're not up. Or he took them down.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

When was the last time he played?

MEREDITH (O.S.)

His account hasn't been active since last night at 12:16. Right after... You know.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As we approach Meredith's bedroom doorway, the hum morphs back into the thunderous roar.

We see the back of Meredith's head, silhouetted by her computer screen.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

That's strange. Don't you think? He's always playing. He plays more than you do!

We approach, inching closer.

Meredith is scrolling on Xavior's CDM public profile.

MEREDITH

It's definitely weird. I mean, he could just be sad or scared or something.

Meredith clicks on his last game's info. A new page pops up.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Or he's planning his next move.

MEREDITH

Hedgelord and Samurabbi.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

I'm sorry?

MEREDITH

Those were the players on his team last night. I bet they know something. Even if none of them were streaming, they'll know if he was acting weird.

We're right over Meredith now.

MEREDITH

I gotta game with them.

A hand reaches forward -- and pulls her headset off.

She GASPS and looks up to see--

Sasha.

MEREDITH

What the fuck!

SASHA

I said your name like fifteen times!

MEREDITH

Give me my headset back.

He lifts the headset just out of reach.

SASHA

(off the fans)

You're gonna blow a fuse.

MEREDITH

I'm gonna blow my brains out if you don't give me my headset back.

SASHA
 Okay! You don't need to be so
 dramatic all the time.

He hands her the headset. She puts it back on. We can no
 longer hear Batz5000.

MEREDITH
 Sorry. Yeah. My brother.

She laughs.

MEREDITH
 I know right?

Sasha walks over to Tera's terrarium.

SASHA
 (to Tera)
 Is she neglecting you?

He looks back at Meredith -- absorbed in CDM player profiles.

SASHA
 You want me to report her?
 (in strange accent)
 It's a turtle abuse of power.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - DUSK

Sasha drinks a glass of wine and flips through classical
 records. He makes his selection: Mozart's *Requiem in D Minor*;
Kyrie. He drops the needle and begins to dance strangely to
 the music.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Meredith flicks back and forth between Hedgelord's and
 Samurabbi's profiles. Both are OFFLINE.

INT. DINING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Sasha dances his way through the now darkened house flipping
 on lights as he goes.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Samurabbi's status switches to ONLINE. Meredith quickly
 clicks INVITE TO GAME.

INT. KITCHEN - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Sasha dances into the kitchen. Flicks on a light. And another light. Pours a new glass of wine. Puts a frozen mac and cheese in the microwave. He pauses before hitting "Start" and then -- dances out of the kitchen.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

A new game is loading. Meredith takes a swig of energy drink.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Sasha dances his way toward Meredith's room.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

The game loads revealing the waiting room. Standing in front of Meredith's turtle avatar is a mobster mouse with a tommy gun. Above it is the handle "SAMURABBI"

MEREDITH

Hi, I'm not sure if you recognize me, but I played a match with you last night and wanted to ask you some questions.

SAMURABBI (V.O.)

Uh. Okay.

Sasha approaches her...

MEREDITH

I guess I wanted to know if you noticed anything out of the ordinary.

SAMURABBI (V.O.)

Uh. No?

And lightly pulls one headphone off her ear.

MEREDITH

Ah!

SASHA

Sorry!

MEREDITH

What are you doing?!

SASHA
I said I'm sorry!

MEREDITH
I'm in the of something important!

SASHA
(quickly)
Okay, okay. But I was just wondering if I should heat something up for you? I'm taking it easy tonight, big day tomorrow, so I'm just heating up a mac and cheese -- you want one?

MEREDITH
Please, just go away.

SASHA
Okee-dokee.

He gently repositions the headset and backs away. We can no longer hear Samurabbi.

MEREDITH
No, I wasn't talking to you. Sorry.
Okay what were you saying?

Sasha looks at Tera.

SASHA
(to Tera)
You feeling chilly little lady? I bet you wouldn't have minded the heat wave.

His hands trace the heat lamp's cord around the terrarium.

MEREDITH
(to Samurabbi)
Like, did he say anything about SWATTING? Or anything weird or threatening?

SASHA
I tell you what. Tomorrow, after my showcase, I will personally clean out your tank. But, for now, let's see if I can't help a bud out.

He finds the cord's ON/OFF switch on the back of the tank.

MEREDITH
(to Samurabbi)
Wait, but how did he say "he was
gonna get us." Like in the game or
IRL or what?

He switches it to "ON".

--THE LAMP FLASHES RED AND THEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT. THE
HUMMING, DISTANT MICROWAVE, AND MUSIC, ALL STOP--

--MEREDITH'S COMPUTER TURNS OFF--

Meredith spins her head and pulls her headset down.

MEREDITH
What just happened? What did you
do?

SASHA
I didn't do anything!

MEREDITH
You must have done something!

SASHA
I didn't! Tera was cold!

MEREDITH
You're blaming this on a turtle?

SASHA
No, I just, I thought she was
probably cold.

MEREDITH
I don't care how cold she was! I
was in the middle of something
important!

SASHA
It's just a game! She's a living
creature.

MEREDITH
Who can survive a range of
temperatures! I'm trying to solve a
literal murder and you're doing
everything you can to sabotage me!

SASHA
You're what? I'm not doing
anything. I told you that you had
too many things plugged in.

(MORE)

SASHA (CONT'D)

This house has old wiring! What did you think was gonna happen?

MEREDITH

You never listen. You never listen! I'm saying to you now: This is important. Someone was killed and no one is doing anything about it.

SASHA

I mean, the F.B.I. did pay us a visit today. Not nothing.

MEREDITH

Yeah and they think it was me!

SASHA

But, it wasn't you.

MEREDITH

That's the whole point!

SASHA

I'm just saying you can't say no one is doing anything.

MEREDITH

Just. Can you please fix the fuse?

SASHA

There can be multiple people all doing something even if it's--

MEREDITH

Fix the fucking fuse!!

INT. BASEMENT STEPS - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Meredith, parked at the top of the steps, points her phone's flashlight down into the darkness below. The sounds of things being pushed around and things falling on concrete.

MEREDITH

When are you gonna get these stairs replaced? Ever heard of the ADA? I'm sending them after your ass, so watch out.

The noises stop.

MEREDITH

Did you find it?

The noises start again.

MEREDITH

Maybe we could clean it up and turn it into an office for me to work from. Streaming from my bedroom is kind of unprofessional.

The noises stop again.

MEREDITH

Now did you find it?

A grunt, and the sound of boxes of junk being shoved aside. The sound of a small metal door swinging open.

SASHA (O.S.)

Remind me why I should turn it on?

MEREDITH

Fine. I'm sorry I got mad at you. It would mean a lot to me if you would just help me sort out this power situation and get me back online.

(no response)

Please?

SASHA (O.S.)

Just promise me you'll be at my showcase tomorrow, no hiccups.

MEREDITH

That's it?

SASHA (O.S.)

Yes! Promise!

MEREDITH

Okay. I promise that if you turn on the power I'll go to a thing I assumed I was already being forced to go to. Happy?

A switch is flicked. Power is restored.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Like tributaries, power cords emanating from different rooms converge into Meredith's room.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The fans and AC's are back to the business of cooling. Sasha plugs in the last thing: Tera's heat lamp. He flicks it on. Meredith is cooled and Tera is warmed.

SASHA
Ok - everybody good?

MEREDITH
Yes. We thank you.

SASHA
Alright, well, good luck solving
the murder, detective.

Sasha goes to leave the room. Meredith opens CDM and waits for it to boot up.

SASHA
Just don't stay up too late, okay?

MEREDITH
(annoyed)
Okay. Bye.

SASHA
Hey, don't blame me if you look
like shit tomorrow.

MEREDITH
Nobody cares what a girl in a
wheelchair looks like.

SASHA
That's not true. I'm sure plenty of
guys would be interested in... You
know... Doing it with you.

MEREDITH
That's not even remotely what or
who I was talking about.

SASHA
Oh. Okay, well, I gotta run to
rehearsal, I'll be home late. We'll
have to do a quick bath in the
morning before we head to my
showcase.

MEREDITH
(sarcastic)
Can't wait.

Sasha exits as Meredith logs into CDM. Meredith checks Samurabbi's profile: OFFLINE.

MEREDITH

Fuck.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Meredith's phone now reads: 1:04 AM

MEREDITH

Why is no one playing CDM tonight?
Where are these guys?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Do you think they're in cahoots?
Maybe they're all laying low.

MEREDITH

I dunno what's going on.

Lights sweep over the room. Sasha's home.

MEREDITH

Hey, I gotta pee.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Didn't you just go?

MEREDITH

These energy drinks are running
right through me, I guess.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Can I come?

MEREDITH

Uh, no. Not this time.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Okay. But, you take forever when
you pee! I don't know what's wrong
with you... Like if you've got a
bladder infection or a UTI or
whatever, but I'll keep watch until
you're back.

MEREDITH

Thank you, Batz.

Meredith logs out and puts her computer to sleep. She wheels over to her bed and quickly transfers her body onto it.

She can hear Sasha entering the house, putting his trumpet case down.

Using her arms, she puts her legs under the covers and then pulls them up to her chin...

We hear Sasha walking towards her bedroom...

Abruptly, Meredith scrambles -- takes off her glasses and places them on the bedside table. She lays back down and pretends to be asleep--

...Just as Sasha peeks his head in. He hangs for a moment and then leaves.

Meredith opens an eye.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Meredith is back on CDM.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Of all the games in all the world...

MEREDITH
(whisper)
You had to log in to mine.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
So what do we do now?

MEREDITH
(whisper)
I'm gonna stay up all night if I have to. One of these guys is bound to log in for at least a game or two.

SMASH CUT:

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A phone alarm is going off. Meredith, head on desk, sound asleep -- jolts awake.

The phone reads: *EMPTY BLADDER 6AM*

INT. BATHROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Meredith is washing her hands. Her phone buzzes.

ON SCREEN: *new message from user: HedgeLord*

She opens the message.

HEDGE LORD (TEXT): *you around now? i can play one game*

Meredith quickly types: *yes! had to pee but will be back soon*

She deletes this and sends: *sure... gimme a sec*

HEDGE LORD (TEXT): *just hurry. i gotta leave soon*

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rushing on the way back in, the cord leading to Tera's heat lamp gets caught up in her wheel.

MEREDITH

What the?

She tries to back out, but the cord is taken up further.

She presses forward and the cord wraps fully around the wheel.

MEREDITH

Fucking Christ.

The cord is a taught line from her wheel to the terrarium.

Her phone buzzes.

HEDGE LORD (TEXT): *u almost on? i don't even rly have time for this*

Meredith replies: *almost there*

She nudges the wheelchair forward, the cord tightens, and the terrarium JERKS towards the edge of the dresser.

She reaches down and tests how taught the cord is - it's taught.

She pulls it, but it doesn't budge.

Meredith looks at her computer -- *So close yet so far.*

She repositions her body at an angle and towards the edge of the chair -- *Maybe she can reach the keyboard?*

She's leaning all the way off the wheelchair now. Her fully extended arm can just barely touch the keyboard--

--Her phone buzzes.

HEDGE LORD (TEXT): *fuck it i'm out*

She resets her body. Types--

MEREDITH (TEXT): *no pls wait! i'm almost on!*

She takes a few breaths and...

...PROPELS her body towards the computer -- The wheelchair TIPS onto two wheels PULLING THE CORD and with it TERA'S TERRARIUM FLIPS onto its side SPILLING WATER off the dresser-- Tera SLIDES OUT and PLOPS onto the floor SKIDDING AND SPINNING off toward the closet...

BUT, Meredith manages to GRAB the keyboard and mouse just as her wheelchair TIPS BACK onto four wheels.

Hunched over the keyboard and mouse in her lap, she clicks on Hedgelord's name, then clicks INVITE TO GAME.

ON SCREEN: A ninja horse avatar with the handle "HEDGE LORD" hovering over its head materializes in a waiting area.

HEDGE LORD (V.O.)

Look lady, I really don't have time for this shit so I'll make it quick. I know what this is about. And I know who you are. I saw the announcement this morning and I recognized your names last night during the game. I know you're all streamers. I've watched some of your matches. I was def confused that Xavior was on my team and not yours, but once he started talking I got the gist of the shit that went down pretty quickly. I don't know if he called in the SWAT or shit like that. All I know is that the whole game he was poppin' off. Like real mad. I don't know who the other guy was, but neither him or me said much. It was mostly just Xavior yelling and cursing - up until that suicide vest team kill shit and then the game was over. That's all I know. Now, I really gotta go.

MEREDITH

Wait, did he say anything about SWATTING? Or DarkSparkle? Or me?

Sasha enters, SEES the knocked over terrarium, and Meredith in the middle of the room playing CDM.

SASHA
The fuck?

He ENTERS the room and SEES Tera crawling out of the closet. He bends down and picks her up.

SASHA
The fuck??

HEDGELORD (V.O.)
I mean, yeah, he said all kinds of shit about you two, but no. I mean, like I said, he said all kinds of shit, but like, I don't remember him saying anything specifically about, like, SWATTING and shit. It's hard to say.

Sasha uprights the terrarium and gently places Tera inside.

SASHA
The fuck is wrong with her?

HEDGELORD (V.O.)
I really gotta go to work now. Just get Xavior's recording. See that shit for yourself.

SASHA
Meredith.

MEREDITH
I thought he didn't stream the game.

SASHA
Meredith!

Meredith either doesn't hear him or ignores him.

HEDGELORD (V.O.)
He said some shit about how he was, like, recording it for his, like, personal collection or some shit--

SASHA
MEREDITH! Stop playing! What the fuck happened here?

HEDGE LORD (V.O.)
--Just get that shit. Aight... I
gotta go. Good luck or whatever.

Hedgelord's avatar disappears from the waiting area.

SASHA
Meredith! WHAT. THE. FUCK?

Sasha lunges towards her.

SASHA
(right overtop of her)
I said what the fuck!

MEREDITH
What the fuck, dude?

SASHA
You're asking me "What the fuck?"
You're the fucking what the fuck!
Look at you! This fucking game is
ruining your life!

He stares at her for a second.

SASHA
Alright, let's go.

He grabs the back of her chair and starts to pull.

MEREDITH
Get off!

Meredith locks the wheels.

In response, Sasha picks her up and puts her over his
shoulder. Meredith hits his back as he's lifting her.

MEREDITH
No! No! No!

SASHA
Ow stop it.

MEREDITH
Put me down!

SASHA
Stop.

MEREDITH
I said, put me down!

Sasha picks up the wheelchair -- sees that it's stuck -- and abandons it.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Sasha carries Meredith over one shoulder.

MEREDITH

I hate you!

SASHA

You need to start taking care of yourself! This gaming obsession has to stop!

INT. BATHROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Sasha puts her in the tub and turns the water on. Meredith begins to quietly cry.

SASHA

Oh, come on. You're being a baby.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Sasha flips through the hangers in Meredith's closet. He pulls two dresses out and holds them up.

SASHA

The blue or the yellow? I think the yellow is nice.

MEREDITH

Fuck you.

SASHA

Yeah, the yellow.

INT. S.U.V. - DRIVING - DAY

Sasha drives. Meredith is behind him in a middle row seat, looking at her phone. Neither speak.

ON SCREEN

Meredith composes a message to Xavior:

I know you recorded the game last night. If you don't send me the recording I'll tell the FBI everything. Maybe send them some hate speech videos I found.

If you're innocent you have no reason not to send me the recording.

She clicks SEND.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - DAY

Meredith stews, parked in a corner next to stacks of instrument cases. She looks like shit, even in the nice yellow dress. KIMBERLY, late 30's and hanging onto her looks for dear life, approaches.

KIMBERLY

Hi, are you Sasha's sister? I had a sneaking suspicion you were. I'm Kimberly. His gender studies professor? I'm sure he's told you about me. Well, anyway, it's so nice to finally meet you. How ARE you?

Meredith gives her A LOOK.

MEREDITH

Well, Kimberly, my dad left when we were too little to remember, my mom got cancer and after going into remission died in a car accident, then I broke my C4 and am now paralyzed because somebody wanted to keep sailing but didn't tie the mainsheet line properly and then I didn't go to college and didn't go pro and then my teammate in the only thing I'm good at got SWATTED by her ex-boyfriend! So, I'm fine, Kimberly. How are YOU?

Kimberly, taken aback, takes a moment.

KIMBERLY

Do you want me to get your brother?

MEREDITH

No, I don't want you to get my brother. You know what? I have to pee!

KIMBERLY

Oh. Okay. Do you need help?

MEREDITH

No, I don't need any fucking help!

Meredith pushes off in a huff.

INT. HALLWAY - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - LATER

Meredith aimlessly rolls along. She opens her phone and opens the CDM app.

ON SCREEN (TEXT): *New Message from user: Xavior.*

Meredith opens the message.

XAVIOR (TEXT): *Fine. Play me for it. 1x1. Any map. I'll be waiting.*

She plugs in her earbuds as she navigates to Batz5000. She clicks "REQUEST CHAT".

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Of all the games in all the world.

MEREDITH
You had to log in to mine. I just got a message from Xavior.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Woah.

MEREDITH
Yeah. Hedgelord said that even though he wasn't streaming he recorded his gameplay and Xavior now claims he'll send me a copy if I play him.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Sounds like a trap. What if he's trying to SWAT you?

MEREDITH
That's just it, he can't SWAT me here. Because I'm not home. And he doesn't know where here is. But once the game starts I'll make sure the world knows what he promised.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Hey, do you wanna video-chat?

MEREDITH
What? I... um. I mean...

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

I just realized we've never video-chatted. I guess I got so used to audio... It never dawned on me to ask.

MEREDITH

But, like, right now?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Yeah! Why not? You're in a bit of a situation. I think now's the perfect time for a little face to face.

MEREDITH

Yeah, um... I dunno. I gotta go. I'll talk to you later, okay?

Meredith ends the call.

INT. VARIOUS HALLWAYS - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - CONTINUOUS

Meredith wheels through hallways, peering into rooms. She turns a corner and sees a door that draws her in.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - CONTINUOUS

She peers in. Thirty computers glow with screen savers and not a soul around. Meredith looks left and right -- the coast is clear. She pushes into the lab.

At the nearest computer, she logs into to the CDM website.

An immediate ding. Meredith finds a shitty headset behind the computer. She puts them and accepts the chat request.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Of all the games in all the world...

MEREDITH

You had to log in to mine. Hey, sorry about that back there. I dunno why I got weird.

From the website, Meredith begins INSTALLING CDM onto the computer.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

No, it's okay. I'm sorry.

MEREDITH
Okay, we're both sorry.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

A CELLIST AND A VIOLINIST walk up to the front of the room.

Sasha, trumpet in hand, makes his way through the crowd to Kimberly.

SASHA
Hey, have you seen my sister? She's the one in the wheelchair.

KIMBERLY
I did.
(through a smile)
She's quite an interesting young woman. Very independent.

SASHA
You know where she went? I'm up next.

KIMBERLY
She said she had to pee. But, that was a while ago.

The Cellist and the Violinist begin performing *Maurice Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello II-trés*. The music scores the following scenes until they are done performing.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

The game finishes loading and Meredith logs in. She positions a freestanding webcam towards her and opens a live-stream.

INT. HALLWAY - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

Sasha, trumpet still in hand, walks at a ferocious clip.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

MEREDITH
For everyone watching, I don't know what's going on, but, I wanted the world to see what Xavior was up to in last night's game.
(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

He promised to send me a copy of his gameplay if I beat him in a one on one match. So, here goes.

Meredith navigates to Xavior's profile and clicks INVITE TO GAME. Under a drop down menu -- clicks: ONE ON ONE.

INT. HALLWAY - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

Sasha peeks into various rooms.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

Meredith is now gaming. Xavior's avatar, a military marmot, POPS OUT from up high, FIRING MISSILES at Meredith's avatar.

Colors splash across her face. Time dilates in a flurry of keystrokes and double clicks.

INT. BATHROOM - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

Sasha bursts in...

SASHA

Meredith!

...Empty stalls.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

ON SCREEN: Meredith's TAKES A TON OF DAMAGE...

...but JUKES around a corner and heals herself.

MEREDITH

Thought I was dead in the water!

She SPRINTS OUT and FIRES at Xavior who ROLLS into cover.

INT. HALLWAY - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

Sasha's feet pound linoleum.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SAME TIME

Again, colors and clicking.

ON SCREEN: Meredith is at the payload -- and it's moving.

Sasha BURSTS into the lab.

SASHA

Hey! What are you doing?

Meredith hears him -- and ignores him.

ON SCREEN: Xavior is on a roof top. Meredith switches to scope view and FIRES a shot -- It misses.

Sasha approaches...

SASHA

I'm up next! I'm up NOW probably.

ON SCREEN: Xavior JUMPS down to the street. Meredith LEANS OUT from behind the payload... FIRES at him -- HITS a limb and he takes a bit of damage... She FIRES again -- MISSES... Xavior ROLLS behind cover.

MEREDITH

Almost there.

SASHA

Are you out of your mind? Come on!

Sasha grabs Meredith's right arm -- restraining her mouse hand, which means SHE CAN'T SHOOT.

MEREDITH

Stop it! I'm about to win!

SASHA

It's just a game, come on!

Meredith tries to shake him off, but his grip is too strong.

MEREDITH

Let go!

SASHA

I'm gonna miss my slot!

Meredith struggles against Sasha's might, trying to deliver the payload with her keyboard movement controls only.

MEREDITH

Let go of me!

SASHA

No! We have to go!

ON SCREEN: Xavior's avatar approaches slowly, but doesn't shoot.

SASHA
(screaming)
Let's go!!

ON SCREEN: Meredith's avatar tries keep the payload between her and Xavior, but he walks up and SHOTS HER AVATAR IN THE HEAD, point blank.

MEREDITH
FUCKING NO!!

Sasha SWIPES Meredith's other arm off the keyboard, but doesn't get a good grip on it. Reflexively, Meredith swings back and hits him in the face.

ON SCREEN: Xavior's avatar teabags (squats up and down over) Meredith's dead avatar.

MEREDITH
Are you fucking kidding me, dude?!

Meredith turns around and sees Sasha's nose leaking BLOOD.

MEREDITH
Oh, fuck. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Sasha turns and storms off.

INT. HALLWAY - COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MOMENTS LATER

Meredith careens into the hallway chasing after Sasha.

MEREDITH
Sash, wait!

She almost catches up to him.

MEREDITH
Sasha, I'm sorry! It was an accident.

Sasha keeps walking as fast as he can.

SASHA
You ungrateful little bitch. I think you broke my fucking nose.

Sasha gets to the door. Meredith catches up to him.

MEREDITH
 You don't wanna clean that up
 first?

He pauses and looks at her.

SASHA
 Mom would have wanted me to play.

He pushes the door open. Meredith tears up.

MEREDITH
 Sash...

She reaches out, grabs his trumpet. He loses his grip and it
 CLANKS onto the floor. Sasha FILLS WITH RAGE turning to
 Meredith and GRABBING the arms of her wheelchair.

SASHA
 Ahhhhh!

He PUSHES HER BACKWARDS and she TIPS, SPILLING OUT onto the
 floor in a sad, pathetic mess. The string duet ends.

SASHA
 Fuck. No. Mer. I'm...

Nose bleeding, tears in his eyes, Sasha turns around to find
 the standing audience looking on with horrified expressions.

CUT TO:

INT. S.U.V. - DRIVING - DAY

Sasha drives, nose plugged with toilet paper. Meredith, in
 the back, looks at her phone.

ON SCREEN: *New Message from user: Xavior.*

She opens it.

XAVIOR (TEXT): *lol, i just wanted to beat you publicly. now
 that i had my fun, here's the recording. tell yer bro thanks
 for the assist*

Meredith clicks a hyperlink below the text. It opens an
 online video opens of Xavior playing.

Meredith scrubs through it forwards and backwards... HE NEVER
 GETS UP OUT OF HIS CHAIR, NEVER USES A PHONE, NEVER STOPS
 PLAYING...

She copies and sends the link to Batz5000.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Sasha clumsily picks up Meredith's computer, but it's tethered by cords in multiple directions.

MEREDITH
You can't do that!

SASHA
I can do anything I want.

MEREDITH
It's my machine. Stop touching it.

He sets it down to locate and disconnect the cords.

SASHA
You need to learn your lesson.

MEREDITH
You're overreacting. You're gonna break something.

He uses his might to rip the cords from the walls, the swinging lines sending empty cans clattering to the floor.

SASHA
Oh yeah? How's that for breaking something?

MEREDITH
Are you insane?

SASHA
I got you this stupid thing and I can take it away!

MEREDITH
Driving to fucking Best Buy isn't getting me something. The settlement money... *My money* bought this system.

A filthy tension boils between them.

MEREDITH
Starting now, I don't want to see you anymore. I'm taking my own baths and don't give me any of your Dr. Warren shit... And start looking for apartments because you're moving out. Go find somebody else's life to control.

(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
(making fun of Sasha)
OKEE-DOKEE??

Sasha clenches his jaw for a moment before storming out of the room with the computer.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sasha barrels down the hallway with Meredith in tow.

MEREDITH
Did you hear what I said? Sasha!

INT. LIVING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sasha carries the computer through to the patio doors. Meredith trails behind.

MEREDITH
You know what? It's fine. Take it.
I don't care what you do with it.
I'll just buy myself a new one. And
if you take that one... I'll buy
another one.

Sasha struggles with the doors, but gets one to open and pops through.

EXT. THE POOL - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Meredith follows him out.

MEREDITH
You don't have any power over me!
You're not the one in charge!

Sasha SWINGS THE COMPUTER up and over the POOL --

MEREDITH
What are you-- No!!!

-- But, hangs on to it.

SASHA
What'd you think, I was gonna throw
it in? I'm not a monster.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - DUSK

The lights are off; it's that time of day where it's gotten dark, but Meredith hasn't noticed yet. Her face glows from the light of the phone in her hand.

From another room, it sounds like Sasha is on the phone trying to do damage control with the community college.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
He can't do that.

MEREDITH
Well, he did.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Why didn't you stop him?

MEREDITH
He's bigger than me?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
I would have chased him down and tackled the fucker.

MEREDITH
And now with Xavier's alibi I'm out of leads.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Maybe you can find the people he played with even earlier in the night?

MEREDITH
Not with my rig locked in Sasha's closet.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Oh yeah, right. Hey, um... So, I don't want to weird you out, but, I kind of know where you live.

MEREDITH
What?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
I mean, like, we live near each other and you could totally use my computer. If you want.

MEREDITH
I.. uh..

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
I'm not like a stalker or anything.
I just... I.. I like to know who
I'm talking to, you know, in case
they're not who they say they are.
I'm a counter-stalker really.

Meredith lets out a small laugh.

MEREDITH
That was not a sign of approval.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Internet sleuthing is basically my
job. So, I kinda know a lot about
you... Meredith. And if I crossed a
line and you don't want to ever
talk to me again, well, I'd
understand.

MEREDITH
So you know about--

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
--Your accident? Yeah.

MEREDITH
I see.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
I want you to know that it doesn't
change anything. In fact, it's kind
of the reason I DM'd you in the
first place.

MEREDITH
Who are you?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
What do you mean?

MEREDITH
Like who are you really? I talk to
you every day, but I don't know
anything about you.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Hang on...

ON SCREEN: *VideoChat Request from user: Batz5000*

Meredith's finger hovers over the "ACCEPT" button for a moment of decision and then... She presses it.

ON SCREEN: A young woman smiles and waves. Brown hair, glasses, nondescript.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Of all the games in all the world.

MEREDITH
You had to log in to mine.
(she waves)
Hi.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Hi. So, um... Gosh, I didn't think I'd be so nervous. I, uh, I have something I want to get off my chest.

MEREDITH
You've got a captive audience.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
So, over the past year of talking to you I... I started developing feelings and I didn't know how to tell you. So, in a sense, we were both hiding a secret from each other. You, your... condition. And me: my feelings. And, well, this is the best way I could think of to tell you. So yeah, I... I would be really sad if this went away because... Because, I love you, Meredith.

Meredith is speechless.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
This is too much. This is too much, isn't it? I'm sorry. I've messed everything up. I knew this was a bad idea. I'm sorry.

MEREDITH
Hey... No, no. It's okay. I like you, too. But, this is a lot right now. This would be a lot anytime, but, especially right now. I honestly just don't think I have the bandwidth to process it.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
You're right. I'm sorry! Do you hate me?

MEREDITH

No, of course I don't hate you. I'm just... Honestly, I'm just really mad at my brother right now and scared about the whole Sparkle situation and everything and that's kind of all I'm thinking about.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Yeah, well--

MEREDITH

I know it was probably some fluke prank gone terribly, horribly wrong and we probably blew it out of proportion and saw clues where there weren't any, but, I'm still scared, you know?

Sasha enters. He's still got bloody tissues in his nostrils.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

You don't need to be scared.

SASHA

What are you doing sitting in the dark?

He flicks the lights on. Meredith shields her eyes.

MEREDITH

Ah, Jesus! I was just, I didn't realize it had gotten dark.

SASHA

Well, the lights are on now. I called the college. They're "reviewing the situation".

MEREDITH

Okay.

SASHA

I'm not looking for an apology.

Meredith shrugs.

SASHA

I'm putting you into rehab. For video game addiction.

MEREDITH

What? That's not--

SASHA
Shut up! Shut up! SHUT UP!!
(calming himself)
You're going to rehab.

Meredith, shaken, doesn't say anything.

SASHA
Okay, good talk.

Sasha turns to leave.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
Don't worry about your brother.

MEREDITH
What?

Sasha looks back at Meredith.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)
I'm not gonna let him put you into
a rehab. That's crazy.

MEREDITH
What are you talking about?

Sasha lunges towards Meredith.

SASHA
Are you talking to someone on the
game right now?

Sasha grabs her phone out of her hand.

MEREDITH
Hey!

SASHA
Are you fucking kidding me?

He yanks the phone -- pulling the earbuds out of her ears.

MEREDITH
Ow!

SASHA
Who the fuck is this? GOODBYE!

He POKES the END CALL button.

MEREDITH
Give it back! You're overreacting.

SASHA

No, it's too late for that. I've already checked with a place and they're accepting new patients as early as tomorrow morning. Now, I have to meet Kimberly because she's freaking out due to your antics and I'm taking your phone with me. Just... Please chill, okay? One night! No games, no phone... Just chill! And then tomorrow morning you'll go to rehab and get better. Okay? Okay? Say it! Okay?

MEREDITH

Okay.

SASHA

Okay.

EXT. BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Rain POURS. Thunder CRACKS. Lightning ILLUMINATES Sasha exiting the front door. He RUNS to the S.U.V.

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Meredith watches the S.U.V. back out of the driveway.

MEREDITH

Fucking rehab...

The S.U.V. is stopped in the road, reverse lights still on.

MEREDITH

Rehab. Oh my god. Batz. It was Batz.

She swings the door open.

MEREDITH

Sasha!! Wait!!

EXT. BAYSIDE HOUSE / INT. S.U.V. - DRIVING - SAME TIME

Classical music is blasting. Sasha turns his wipers on.

He neither sees nor hears Meredith in the doorway -- screaming and waving her arms.

He shifts into drive and gasses down the road.

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Meredith shuts the door. Thunder and lightning. She is alone.

We hear distant sirens. Meredith notices.

The sirens grow louder. And louder.

Red and blue lights SWIRL onto Meredith's face and around the room. The sirens are almost upon her.

And then...

A police cruiser SPEEDS down the road, past the bayside house, sirens FADING into the distance.

MEREDITH

(to herself)

No. She's not coming for me. She's coming for him. Oh my god. Sasha.

INT. GARAGE - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

A garage door opens, revealing Meredith, silhouetted in an interior doorway by the light of the kitchen.

She rolls down a ramp to the garage floor. She wheels around a mid 2000's hatchback sitting there collecting dust. A pile of fallen garage clutter blocks her path.

She approaches and moves the objects which are heavy and on the floor, making it a complicated feat of stretching to remove each impediment.

EXT. BAYSIDE ROAD - NIGHT

The stormy night is extremely dark, save for one tiny light in the distance. There are no other houses anywhere in sight.

Meredith SHOVES off against the rain in the direction of the light.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Meredith is breathing heavy as she makes her way into the neighbor's driveway.

The front door is on a landing above a few steps. Meredith shakes her head at this. She makes her way to a ground floor window that has a light on.

She BANGS on the window.

MEREDITH

Help! I need to use your phone!
Help!

The light TURNS OFF.

MEREDITH

Please! I need to call the police!
I don't have a phone!

She notices a woman PEEKING out of the window. The woman BACKS AWAY when she realizes that Meredith can see her.

MEREDITH

Oh, come on, you stupid bitch! I
need your help!! I have to warn
him. I have to warn him.

EXT. BAYSIDE ROAD - NIGHT

Through the rain, Meredith heads back the way she came.

INT. KITCHEN - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Soaked, Meredith shuts the door to the garage behind her.

As she exits the kitchen, she passes the magnetic knife strip...

We see that Sasha's chef knife IS MISSING.

INT. SASHA'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Meredith wheels up to Sasha's sliding door closet. A padlock hangs, unlocked -- *Why didn't he lock it?*

She SLIDES the door over revealing her COMPUTER stuffed up high on a top shelf -- *Oh, that's why he didn't lock it.*

She looks around for something, anything, to help her reach the system. Her eyes land on Sasha's TRUMPET. She grabs it.

Holding the trumpet out in one hand and pushing up from her wheelchair with the other, she inches the monitor off the shelf. It TIPS and CRASHES into her lap. She YELPS.

She takes the monitor and places it on the ground next to her.

She positions herself under the tower and reaches with the trumpet. There's not much to latch onto -- the horn keeps slipping...

But, finally the trumpet's lip CATCHES behind the computer tower... She pulls. Slowly.

The tower SLIDES off the shelf and CRASHES into Meredith's forehead--

She holds her head in her hands.

MEREDITH
Fucking fuck!

When she pulls her hands away they are wet with blood. A large gash oozes on her forehead.

INT. BATHROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

She RIFLES through drawers, but, can't see what she's searching for. She FLIPS the light switch. The radio BLASTS grainy classical music.

Enraged, SHE THROWS THE RADIO INTO THE STILL FULL BATHTUB. The radio EXPLODES and THE POWER CUTS shrouding her in darkness.

A primal YELL -- anger and frustration.

She goes back to searching and finds what she was looking for -- a first aid kit.

She frantically pours rubbing alcohol on her wound -- and screams.

She then wraps her head in a bandage.

INT. SASHA'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Sasha's bedroom is now shrouded in darkness. Meredith picks up and stacks the computer parts on her lap.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

One hand pushing her wheel, one hand holding the computer parts in place, she makes her way down the hallway towards her bedroom.

The monitor slips -- she's able to get it back on her lap.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Meredith finishes assembling the computer system. She plugs it in. Presses the power button...

Nothing happens, of course.

INT. BASEMENT STEPS - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Meredith is at the top of the steps holding her reacher-grabber. She looks down into the abyss. She **THROWS** the grabber down the stairs, listening to it **CLANK** a few times before **SKIDDING** to a stop on concrete.

Making up her mind, she **LOWERS** herself out of her chair. She begins to **ARMY CRAWL** down the wooden stairs to the basement. Her back legs succumb to gravity and **OVERTAKE HER**, pulling her entire body down the stairs in a thudding tumble.

INT. BASEMENT - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She comes to a painful stop on the concrete floor.

FREQUENT LIGHTNING illuminates the dark space.

She props herself up against some boxes. She sees the **FUSE BOX** on a far wall mounted five feet off the floor.

She crawls over to the fusebox, grabbing the reacher-grabber along the way. Once at the fusebox, she props herself up and uses the reacher-grabber to open the metal door. **DUST** and **SMALL DEBRIS** fall into her eyes and mouth. She **GAGS** and **COUGHS**. Then, **SPITS** and **WIPES** her eyes.

Holding the reacher-grabber with two hands and barely able to see the switches she needs to flip due to her backwards and upside down viewing angle and only being able to see when lightning strikes, she carefully orients the reacher-grabber hand under the flipped switch. She **PUSHES**... But, the reacher-grabber **SLIPS**. She gets the reacher-grabber hand back into position and **APPLIES PRESSURE**... It **SLIPS** again.

She looks around and notices a sticky mouse trap behind the furnace. She reacher-grabbers for it, but the furnace is **HOT**. She pushes her body up against the furnace for just a moment so she can reacher-grabber further. **HER SKIN SIZZLES**, as she just barely grabs the edge of the sticky trap. She pulls it towards herself. Her cheek and other hand have bright red burns on them.

Propping herself up once again under the fusebox, she takes her reacher-grabber and ATTACHES the sticky paper to one of the reacher-grabber appendages. She places the reacher-grabber hand under the flipped switch so that the sticky paper CATCHES it-- AND PUSHES.

THE SWITCH FLIPS and in the center of the basement... a single hanging lightbulb LIGHTS UP. She lets out a breath.

Leaving the reacher-grabber hanging from the fusebox, Meredith CRAWLS towards the stairs.

She PUSHES herself up the first step -- It's a grueling endeavor. She clearly doesn't have the arm strength to make it to the top.

Nevertheless, she PUSHES herself up another step.

And another.

And another.

Until she is on a landing a third of the way.

Her abandoned wheelchair, now illuminated by the hallway light behind it, is a straight shot from here... Just ten more steps. Slowly, step after step, she makes her way.

She's breathing heavily... Two steps away from the top... When her leg CATCHES on something -- She doesn't notice, so she PUSHES harder -- but, SHE'S STUCK.

She looks down and realizes a LARGE SPLINTERED SPIKE OF WOOD is digging into her leg -- BLOOD OOZES.

MEREDITH

Oh god.

She SLIDES herself down so she can reach the wood. She GRASPS the bent up blade of wood... but, she can't break it free. She SLIDES her body further down the steps so the shard SLIPS out -- BLOOD SPILLS.

She repositions a bit... Out of the wood spike's path.

With heavy exertion, she PUSHES herself up the last steps.

INT. HALLWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dirty, sweaty, and bloody... She COLLAPSES in a heap on the floor next to her wheelchair.

After catching her breath, she PUSHES herself up, grabbing her wheelchair. She PULLS herself up onto the chair facing forward... Then SPINS AROUND and PLOPS into the seat.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - LATER

Wearing her gaming headset, Meredith chews a corner of THE CARD Agent Park gave her as she waits for the computer to boot up.

The computer finishes the sequence and Meredith jumps into action -- she opens a CALL PHONE APPLICATION and enters the phone number from the card.

It rings... And rings...

While it does Meredith opens CDM.

...And goes to voicemail.

MEREDITH

Fuck...

AGENT MARIS (V.O.)

Hi, you've reached the work cell of Agent Susan Maris of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. If this is an emergency please hang up and dial nine-one-one.

Meredith logs into CDM, causing--

--Her webcam's green auto-stream light to TURN ON. She doesn't notice.

AGENT MARIS (V.O.)(CONT'D)

For all other matters, please leave a detailed message with your name, number, and reason for calling and I'll be sure to get back to you during normal business hours. Thank you and have a pleasant day.

BEEEEEP.

MEREDITH

Uh, hi. Miss... Agent Maris, this is Meredith from the other day... yesterday. I.. uh.. I think I know who the murderer is. It's that player Batz-five-thousand I was telling you about. The one who I thought would be my alibi.

(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

That's Batz with a "z" and the number five-thousand like five-zero-zero-zero. I think I told you how I've been talking to her for about a year now and we're friends and stuff, but, now I'm not so sure. I don't have much evidence yet, but, I'm pretty sure it's her. You have to trust me. She said she was going to take care of my brother or something and I'm worried that she's going to hurt him, but, I don't have my phone and I don't have his number memorized, so I'm just... I'm really scared and I don't know what to do. So, please help. Please help me. Please don't let her hurt my brother. Okay, I hope you get this message and can help. Okay. That's it. Thank you. Um... Bye.

She clicks END CALL.

DING. Meredith's eyes DART to the corner of her screen -- No.
...A chat request from Batz5000.

Meredith clicks DECLINE on the chat request.

DING.

She clicks DECLINE again.

DING.

Fine -- She clicks ACCEPT.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Of all the games in all the world.

MEREDITH

(maybe Batz5000 doesn't
know she knows)

You had to log in to mine. Heyyy,
what's up, Batz?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Oh, not much. Just watching this
streamer do something sooo
annoying.

MEREDITH

Oh, yeah? What's that? Which streamer?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

This streamer, this bitch really, just broadcast a total betrayal of her closest ally.

MEREDITH

Who was the streamer, Batz?

From Batz5000's end we hear another voice, much harder to make out:

VOICE (V.O.)

Nine-One-One. What's your emergency?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

(starts crying)

I just... I just shot my brother, so... I don't know what to do... He's dead now... I'm looking at him... I'm going to shoot someone else soon... Then I'm going to shoot myself.

MEREDITH

What's going on Batz?

VOICE (V.O.)

Where are you? What's your address?

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

Oh, my address? It's... It's seven-two-three... and a half... Bayside Drive.

MEREDITH

No! No! She's lying! It's a prank! Can you hear me? Don't listen to her.

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

I have a gun and there are hostages. I have to go now. Bye.

Batz5000 immediately stops crying.

BATZ5000

(to Meredith)

How'd I do? Pretty believable, don't you think?

(MORE)

BATZ5000 (CONT'D)

What I can't believe is that it's come to this, babe. Best friends... Soon to be lovers. But, betrayal is betrayal. And something I take very seriously.

MEREDITH

Lovers? Betrayal? You're psychotic!

BATZ5000 (V.O.)

No! I love you, Meredith! And to think that I honestly thought that after getting Sparkle out of the way for you, you'd finally see that! How could I have been so stupid? You're clearly far too dim and dull to see my true value. I should have cleaned up my mess before a dirty rat like you made it even messier. Well, shouldn't be too long now. In fact, is that sirens I hear?

The voice-chat cuts out.

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Meredith comes to a stop in the middle of the foyer. She cranes her head -- listening. And then...

There it is -- off in the distance -- SIRENS.

Red and blue lights FILL THE ROOM.

Someone is BANGING on the door.

VOICE (O.S.)

POLICE! OPEN UP!

MEREDITH

Please don't shoot! Please don't shoot me!

They're FUMBLING with the lock -- The doorknob TURNS...

The door SWINGS open.

Eyes closed tight, face buried in her shoulder -- Meredith raises her hands in the air--

MEREDITH

Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

AGENT MARIS
Meredith! Are you hurt?

Meredith slowly opens her eyes. Agent Maris stands over her, gun drawn. She motions for Agent Park to move forward. He covers her. Sasha stands in the doorway, taking his key out of the door.

MEREDITH
Agent Maris?

AGENT MARIS
We need to get you out of here.

MEREDITH
I know who the killer is.

AGENT MARIS
So do I. The nine-one-one call...
We traced it to this location.

SASHA
I knew they could just do that!

MEREDITH
No, it's not me.

AGENT MARIS
I know that, too. I'll explain, in time. Sasha, take your sister out the front door, please. The suspect might still be in the house.

Meredith pushes to the front door, wild-eyed. Sasha helps her down the steps.

Agent Maris and Agent Park use hand signals to enter the kitchen, guns trained on the darkness.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Through the windows, Meredith watches as the agents disappear into the living room beyond the kitchen.

SASHA
All this over a fucking video game.

Meredith SEES -- in an upstairs window -- a shadowy form emerge from behind the window curtain.

The form turns towards the driveway...

IT'S BATZ5000.

Batz5000 waves... And then glides deeper inside, out of view.

SASHA
What the fuck?!

MEREDITH
I have to warn the Agents!

SASHA
No. I'll go.

Sasha sprints towards the door, leaving Meredith alone.

She watches as Sasha makes his way into the kitchen.

EXT. SIDE PATH - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Meredith moves around the house, so she can follow Sasha's movement through the house's side windows. She loses him as he enters the living room, so she pushes further around the house until she is near:

EXT. THE POOL - BAYSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She's lost sight of Sasha. She spots the agents in her bedroom. And then, opening the living room door...

BATZ5000 -- holding TERA in one hand and Sasha's CHEF'S KNIFE in the other.

BATZ5000
Of all the games in all the world...

MEREDITH
Sasha! Agent Maris! She's here!

BATZ5000 sprints up to her and points the knife at her face.

BATZ5000
(yelling)
Well that wasn't very nice or fun, now was it?

Meredith slowly backs away from her.

BATZ5000
(sotto)
You're doing a great job, babe. Don't worry about the mix-up. I should have told you I was coming here, to surprise your brother.
(MORE)

BATZ5000 (CONT'D)

But, I thought it would be, well, a fun surprise!

MEREDITH

What do you want from me? What is the plan here?

BATZ5000

(sotto)

I don't know... We're making it up as we go along, aren't we? Isn't that how the best players play? One idea I did want to run by you--

Sasha comes HURTLING towards them.

Batz5000 barely gets a look at him before he TACKLES her into the disgusting pool-water.

Tera PLOPS into Meredith's lap.

Batz5000 SURFACES and CLIMBS out. With one knee up on the pool ledge, she YANKS the back of Meredith's chair, sending Meredith and Tera backwards into the murky water.

BATZ5000

Sorry, sorry, sorry!

Batz5000 scoops up TERA.

BATZ5000

(backing away)

I think I gotta go... Don't worry, I'll keep her safe. Bye for now, my love!

She takes off running.

Meredith treads water -- poorly -- her head bobbing under. Sasha scoops her up into a classic lifesaving side stroke.

SASHA

I got you. I got you.

INT. FOYER - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Agent Maris is at the door, about to leave. She speaks to Meredith (injuries now properly dressed and in dry clothes), Sasha (also in dry clothes), and Agent Park.

AGENT MARIS

Don't think of it so much as protection as... Well, no... Look at the guy. It's for protection. Don't leave his sight, okay?

MEREDITH

Thank you, Agent Maris. I don't want to think about what would have happened if you hadn't shown up when you did.

AGENT MARIS

That's the job.

Agent Maris opens the door, but looks back.

AGENT MARIS

And don't worry. I'll get your turtle back.

INT. DINING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Meredith, Sasha, and Agent Park play a board game on the dining room table. They eat a large pepperoni and pineapple pizza. Sasha offers Agent Park some soda, but, he declines.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

Meredith sleeps on the couch and Sasha sleeps in a large chair.

Agent Park sits with his eyes open.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Agent Park still sits with his eyes open, appearing not to have moved.

His cell phone rings, waking Meredith.

He puts it against his ear. Agent Maris can be heard on the other end, but we can't make out what she's saying.

Agent Park hangs up.

EXT. THE POOL - BAYSIDE HOUSE - MORNING

Sasha stands on the diving board, playing with a rope, tying and untying sailing knots around an old maritime anchor.

After some time he pauses and looks up.

SASHA

So, that's it then. They apprehended the suspect and we all go on with our normal lives like nothing ever happened. Well, something did change in me. Do you know what it was? I decided to forgive you.

Meredith looks at him.

SASHA

That's right. I forgive you. I understand now why you've been acting out and I want to work to reconnect. With that in mind, I've decided I'm putting you on a boat and we're going sailing. Just me and you - no phones, just the breeze and the open water. And maybe a few birds.

Sasha goes back to tying his knot, pleased with himself.

MEREDITH

Fine. When?

SASHA

I was thinking... today. I don't want to hear any objections. We're getting on a boat. In the water. Today.

MEREDITH

I don't know if that's such a good idea. What if Agent Maris has questions?

SASHA

Questions can wait.

MEREDITH

And rehab?

Sasha stands with his anchor.

SASHA
 There's plenty of time in life for
 rehab. What'll you miss? A group
 therapy session?

He begins swinging the anchor line.

SASHA
 "I couldn't beat a level, so I
 stayed up for three nights and now
 my kids are dead, boo hoo".
 We are going--

He throws the anchor into the air.

SASHA
 --sailing.

It crashes into the pool splashing gross water at Meredith.

EXT. SMALL SAILBOAT - THE BAY - MORNING

Meredith is parked in the stern of a small sailboat. Sasha
 squats on the bow taking it all in, smelling the air.

SASHA
 Fucking beautiful! Now, isn't this
 better than being at home playing
 video games?

Meredith stares off at the horizon.

SASHA
 You're impossible. I don't know
 what to do. I've tried everything.
 You can't honestly love sitting
 inside playing video games with
 people you've never met. You need
 to get out. You need purpose. You
 need friends. Real friends. Not
 fake internet friends.

MEREDITH
 That doesn't make them not real
 friends.

SASHA
 What?

MEREDITH
 They're my real friends.

SASHA

Real friends don't try to murder each other.

MEREDITH

I wasn't talking about her. Sparkle... Chloe was my real friend.

SASHA

This is exactly what's wrong with the world.

MEREDITH

You're constantly swiping for dates for fuck's sake!

SASHA

Yeah, but then I go on REAL dates. We do REAL things. You're turning into one of those Japanese kids who pisses in jars!

MEREDITH

Just because you've got some technophobic hangup doesn't invalidate my experience.

SASHA

Oh, sure. I'm the big bad luddite coming to take your phones away. I mean, I guess I did do that, but you know what I mean.

MEREDITH

I am so close to going pro. Do you even know what that means?

SASHA

You're living in a fantasy!

MEREDITH

It means people think I'm great at something, because I am. I am great at this "stupid game" and you know what? I like being great at it. It makes me feel good about myself for the first time since, well, since the accident, okay? And I'm sure as hell not going to let you get in the way of that.

SASHA

I'm not getting in the way of anything! I'm just saying, technology in the name of progress is weakening our society. And that is a fact.

MEREDITH

What about my wheelchair? Or the hand controls you though were such a great idea? Or the single use catheters without which I would have most certainly died from a bladder infection. Those are all technology!

SASHA

That's not the same thing.

MEREDITH

It is too!

SASHA

I'm talking about the internet and social media and video games and porn and shit like that. I don't want to see you ruin your life because of it.

MEREDITH

Maybe if you'd learned to tie a fucking knot right I would still have a life to be ruined!

Sasha stands.

SASHA

It was the winch! That's why I was exonerated!

MEREDITH

I would be at Yale or Stanford on a full ride if it wasn't for you.

SASHA

You can't know that. No one could know that.

MEREDITH

I was a world class sailor!

SASHA

No. You weren't. You were on a pretty good varsity sailing team.

(MORE)

SASHA (CONT'D)

You don't know what would have happened. No one can know that. This thing happened and that's the life that you have. End of story.

MEREDITH

Shut up.

SASHA

There never was and never will be a different life.

MEREDITH

I said, shut up!

SASHA

That is how life works!

MEREDITH

It doesn't have to be!

SASHA

Anyone's guess what that could mean.

(shifting gears)

Look, I'm sorry we're arguing. I really am. That's not why I took you out here.

(taking a breath)

Okay. I'm putting up the white flag. A truce, okay? Agree to disagree. This is... This is not the best timing, but, the real reason I brought you out here was because I have surprise for you. Okay?

Meredith looks at him like: *You gotta be kidding me.*

SASHA

It's below deck. I'll be right back.

(a joke)

Don't go anywhere.

He scurries down below deck.

MEREDITH

(to herself)

Fuckin' prick.

The boat rocks against the water. Meredith turns her head to look at some birds flying with them.

SASHA
Oh, fuck! No!

--We hear a CRASH from below deck...
--Sasha STUMBLES up the ladder...
--The CHEF'S KNIFE is JAMMED in his GUT...
--He COLLAPSES next to the door.

BATZ5000 (O.S.)
Of all the boats in all the
world...

BATZ5000 GINGERLY CLIMBS OUT FROM BELOW DECK --
She is HOLDING Tera.

BATZ5000
And then you say "you had to stow
aboard mine" or something nautical.
What's wrong? You're normally very
good at this!

Sasha tries to swat at Batz5000 with his nearest arm, but
he's too weakened for it to matter.

Meredith is terrified.

BATZ5000
It's okay, babe! You don't need to
be scared anymore. He's out of the
picture. Just like you wanted. We
did it! Our team won!

Meredith looks around -- there isn't a person or a boat in
sight. Just the birds overhead.

BATZ5000
I honestly can't believe the plan
worked. We're free! By the way,
that shoelace trick you sent me
turned out to be super helpful.

She holds up her wrists, which each have zip-ties around them
-- their connection point severed.

She slowly walks towards Meredith.

BATZ5000
You did a great job feeding that
whole psycho-killer narrative to
those FBI agents.
(MORE)

BATZ5000 (CONT'D)

Putting them onto me for a bit.
Loved it! Oh! And it was so great
when we pretended to play cat and
mouse in the house. Brilliant!

Batz5000 DUCKS DOWN UNDER THE BOOM and then STANDS BACK UP,
continuing her approach. Meredith gets an idea.

BATZ5000

Now there's no one left to hold us
back or get in our way. We can move
in together and go pro... Well,
you'll probably go pro first, but,
I'm not too far behind!

With her eyes, Meredith follows the boom towards the stern of
the boat, where she's sitting, and down to the mainsheet line
tied nearby.

BATZ5000

And then we'll travel the world
together to all the different
tournaments, winning prize after
prize. Maybe we can even sail to
them? Did you know I've never been
on a boat before? It's really nice.

Meredith slowly moves her hand towards the mainsheet line.

BATZ5000

Maybe we could sail to those fancy
hotels with boat parking lots? And
then stay in big fancy rooms with
big fancy bathtubs -- You know, the
ones with all those jets? Can't you
just picture it? It's just like we
always talked about!

Batz5000 is now STANDING OVER Meredith.

She doesn't notice as Meredith WRAPS her fingers around the
mainsheet line...

BATZ5000

What's wrong? Aren't you happy?

MEREDITH

Yes, Batz. I am happy.

...Meredith PULLS the line down HARD -- DUCKING as the boom
SWIVELS over her head.

The boom SLAMS into Batz5000 -- KNOCKING her overboard.

Tera POPS out of her hand and FLIES towards Meredith, again landing safely in her lap.

The mainsail CATCHES the wind and the boat LURCHES forward.

Batz5000 SURFACES and TREADS water next to the boat.

BATZ5000

Holy shit! It's okay! I'm okay!

Meredith leans back and adjusts the tiller, turning the boat.

BATZ5000

Hey! What are you doing? Throw me a lifejacket or something!

She puts a bit of distance between her and Batz5000.

BATZ5000

Hey! Where are you going?! Don't leave me out here! Meredith! I love you! This isn't fair!! Please come back! MER-E-DITH!

With eyes on the horizon and wind flowing through her hair Meredith confidently navigates towards the shore.

MEREDITH

Sasha, how you doin'? Sasha! Can you hear me?

Sasha wakes up.

SASHA

Yeah, I hear you. Where's the crazy-

MEREDITH

She... She fell overboard. Stay with me, okay? I'm gonna get you to a hospital.

SASHA

(wincing)

Prolly a good idea.

MEREDITH

Hey, um... You remember that time Mom dropped us off at Disneyland for the whole day? And you spent all your money on soda. I don't know how many sodas you had... It must have been... Seven? Ten? It was a lot, that's for sure.

(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

And then, when we had to leave and we couldn't find a bathroom cause all the bathrooms had lines, but, you had to pee so bad, so we were, like, running all over the park with you clutching your crotch--
 (starting to laugh)
 --and you kept saying "a little bit slipped out... A little more slipped out."

Sasha laughs and winces.

MEREDITH

And then, I don't know for the life of me why we thought this was a good idea, but, we decided to get our picture in a photo-booth? Do you remember that? And so we put the last of our money in and were trying to figure out the directions and I just remember laughing and laughing and then I pressed the "take photo" button and right as the flash went off you lost control and peed your pants and the face in that picture... I'll never forget it, total release...

(laughter morphing into crying)

All the struggle your little body had been carrying for hours, gone in an instant. That's my favorite memory, Sasha. Just me and you, laughing. But also, now that I've shared it I'm worried you'll take it the wrong way, given the situation. Just hang on a little longer okay? It's not time for the picture yet. Sasha?

SASHA

(barely hanging on)

No shame in having to pee.

Meredith smiles, sadly.

MEREDITH

Sasha?

SASHA

(slurred)

Yeah?

MEREDITH
What was the surprise?

Sasha slumps over, passed out.

EXT. DOCK - THE BAY - DAY

Meredith navigates the boat up against the dock. She throws a line and notices -- on top of a pile of Sasha's things are -- SASHA'S KEYS.

MEREDITH
Sasha, I'm gonna have to leave you here and go get help.

She grabs the keys and looks at them... Then looks at Sasha.

MEREDITH
You promise me you'll hang on till I get back.

Meredith places Tera on the deck.

MEREDITH
I'm leaving Tera here with you.
(to Tera)
Go. Go to him.

Tera starts to crawl -- possibly in Sasha's direction.

Meredith looks over the boat at the gap between the dock and hull -- *It's a sizable gap.*

MEREDITH
Take care of her while I'm gone.

She transfers out of her wheelchair to the edge of the boat. She grabs her wheelchair to lift -- But, it's too heavy.

MEREDITH
You're in charge, Sasha.

She transfers back down closer to the chair and disassembles it into the left wheel, the right wheel, and the chassis.

MEREDITH
You hear me Sasha? I need you to take good care of her.

She **THROWS** the left wheel over the boat. It lands on the dock, near the edge.

MEREDITH

Because she's just a little turtle
who's been through a lot the last
couple days--

She THROWS the right wheel over the boat. It lands on the
dock, pushing the left wheel TEETERING over the edge.

MEREDITH

--and she needs some to know that
someone loves her and is there for
her.

She THROWS the chassis over the boat and it KNOCKS THE WHEEL
OFF THE EDGE -- But, it catches on a piece of old wood.

MEREDITH

Can you do that for me, Sasha?

She places her legs and body as far to the edge as she can
without falling.

MEREDITH

Promise you'll take good care of
Tera while I'm gone. Okay? Okay.

She pushes off and FALLS to the dock.

Grimacing, she rebuilds the chair. CLIMBS up into her
chair... One of the wheels is right on the edge of the dock.

It starts to move -- *will it slip off the edge?* -- It does.

But just slightly -- Meredith gets into her seat and SPINS
the wheels--

She RACES down the dock.

EXT. PARKING AREA - THE BAY - DAY

She gets to the S.U.V. and opens the door. She PULLS herself
up into the driver's seat.

She GRABS her wheelchair, but again-- It's too heavy. She
let's go.

She REACHES for the hand controls in the backseat. She
FASTENS them to the pedals as best she can...

She TURNS the ignition key and SHUTS the driver side door.

She REVERSES and TURNS the wheel. Then, SHIFTS into drive
and...

SLAMS on the gas, PEELING OUT of the parking lot.

INT. S.U.V. - RURAL BAY ROAD - MOVING - DAY

Meredith SPEEDS down the rural bay road, trees flying past, but she's finding it hard to nail those curves with only one hand to steer. To make matters worse, the hand controls aren't fastened to the pedals as securely as when Sasha did it, making switching from gas to brake challenging.

Up ahead -- A sedan followed by a caravan of police cruisers with LIGHTS FLASHING and SIRENS BLARING -- drive towards her.

As the sedan passes her, she SEES -- Agent Maris and Agent Park inside.

She STOPS the S.U.V... Does a three point turn in the middle of the road... And SCREECHES off after the F.B.I. agents.

EXT. PARKING AREA - THE BAY - DAY

Agent Maris and Agent Park are getting out of their car as Meredith in the S.U.V. PULLS UP and SKIDS to a stop.

Police draw their weapons.

When the dust settles, Agent Park puts his hand on top of the nearest officer's gun. The officer lowers it.

Meredith leans out the window.

MEREDITH

Sasha! He's on the boat! He's been stabbed!

Agent Park takes off running towards the boat. Agent Maris approaches Meredith.

AGENT MARIS

What about Batz? Where is she?

MEREDITH

She stabbed him. I... I didn't have a choice. She was... I... I.

AGENT MARIS

It's okay. It's okay.

Agent Maris turns to look at the bay.

PRE-LAP: Water pours out of a bathtub faucet.

INT. BATHROOM - BAYSIDE HOUSE - EVENING

Meredith turns the water off.

She's taking a bath -- alone. It's calm.

She looks down to the tile floor -- Tera crawls toward her.

Meredith begins humming a lilting tune.

A gentle knock at the door. She looks up.

SASHA (O.S.)

Hey, um... So, me and Kimberly were wondering if we could maybe take you out for a 'good luck' dinner of sorts before the big game?

Meredith thinks for a moment.

MEREDITH

Yeah. I'd like that. I'd like that a lot.

She goes back to bathing.

THE END.