

INCARNATE

Pilot

by

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TEASER

OVER BLACK: The SOUNDS of a RED CARPET - LOUD CONVERSATION, PAPARAZZI YELLING, and RAPID-FIRE CAMERA SHUTTERS.

An OLD MAN speaks calmly over it all, voice rasping and frail.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

*When we are young, we rarely worry
about our own death.*

EXT. RED CARPET -- EVENING

LIMOUSINES let out ONE BEAUTIFUL COUPLE after ANOTHER. As each moves up the carpet, PAPARAZZI scramble to get the shot.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

After all, it's years away.

YELLS of "Tom!" and "Maria!" fill the air as --

TOM LAUGHLIN (33) - Hollywood's latest golden boy - emerges from a LIMOUSINE, closely followed by -

MARIA VARGAS (29) - his striking but very camera-shy fiancée. She balks at the CROWD OF PEOPLE and CAMERA FLASHES.

MARIA

Oh my God...

TOM

Let's go home.

MARIA

But we just got here!

TOM

I don't care.

Grinning, Tom kisses her as CAMERAS FLASH all around.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

*And we'll have accomplished so much
by then. We'll be... content.*

INT. AUSTIN KING'S MANSION HOME -- EVENING

KELLY FOX (40) - cool and efficient - walks from a MILLION-DOLLAR ENTRANCEWAY down an IMPOSING CORRIDOR. Priceless paintings and sculptures pass by on either side.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

*But as we age, we begin to realize.
No matter how much we do in this
life... we will always want more.*

INT. AUSTIN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The huge, antique-filled room is lit only by a huge plasma TV on which the Red Carpet event is being shown.

ON THE TV SCREEN: Tom signs autographs with his LEFT HAND.

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER (O.S.)
...star Tom Laughlin and new fiancée
Maria Vargas. The adorable couple
met when archaeologist Maria acted
as technical advisor on Tom's latest -

Someone MUTES the TV as Kelly approaches the bed.

AUSTIN (O.S.)
Is he here yet?

AUSTIN KING (70) sits propped up in bed. Body frail, only his wealthy home and fierce gaze betray the business Titan he once was. *His was the OLD MAN'S VOICE we heard before.*

KELLY
A few hours.

AUSTIN
And the other preparations?

Kelly's gaze flickers to Tom and Maria kissing on the TV.

KELLY
Underway.

Austin begins COUGHING VIOLENTLY. Kelly strides to the door -

KELLY (CONT'D)
Doctor? Doctor!

- then hurries back to Austin as he continues COUGHING.

KELLY (CONT'D)
We should have moved sooner.

AUSTIN
(between coughs)
Just... two... more... days.

Flipping on the BEDSIDE LIGHT, she undoes his pajama top and opens it, revealing a drainage tube in his side -

- And a TATTOO of a STYLIZED PHOENIX on his lower chest.

INT. BACK OF LIMOUSINE -- EVENING

Maria and Tom make out on the back seat. Tom's shirt is spread open, revealing his unblemished, sculpted chest.

MARIA

I can't believe Brad Pitt's so nice...

TOM

Will you stop talking about other men?

GIGGLING TIPSILY, Maria stops Tom as he goes to slide her dress strap off her shoulder.

MARIA

Not in the limo!

TOM

No fair. You got to see *me* topless.

MARIA

That's different. You're a guy.

TOM

Oh, you noticed that then?

Maria LAUGHS, but glances at the DIVIDER blocking the driver.

MARIA

He can't hear us, can he?

TOM

Only if you scream *really* loud.

With a wicked grin, Tom pounces. Maria SHRIEKS with LAUGHTER.

UP IN A TOP CORNER OF THE LIMO:

A tiny black CAMERA is nearly invisible as it films them.

INT. FRONT OF LIMOUSINE -- CONTINUOUS

MARTIN (40) - tough and taciturn, in a driver's uniform - sits behind the wheel, driving steadily through the night. He glances down at a small VIDEO SCREEN by his knee.

ON THE VIDEO SCREEN:

Maria and Tom writhe together on the back seat.

Showing no reaction, Martin returns his gaze forward and continues to drive.

EXT. AUSTIN KING'S MANSION HOME, DRIVEWAY -- NIGHT

PHILIP KING (25) - jumpy and uncomfortable in clothes that hang on his thin frame - climbs out of a BLACK TOWNCAR.

Looking up at the huge mansion, he doesn't seem impressed or happy to be there. More like he'd rather be anywhere else.

The imposing FRONT DOOR opens to reveal a MAID.

MAID

Welcome home, Mr. Philip.

Philip reluctantly steps inside -

INT. AUSTIN KING'S MANSION, ENTRANCEWAY -- CONTINUOUS

- Then stands there as the Maid closes the door behind him. No escape now. Slowly, Philip makes his way up the STAIRS.

INT. AUSTIN KING'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Austin sits in an armchair facing the door, Kelly at his side. A lone chair faces them in the middle of the room.

As Philip enters --

AUSTIN

You're late.

Austin nods toward the chair. Philip reluctantly sits down.

PHILIP

I-I was in Switzerland when I got your message.

KELLY

Skiing?

PHILIP

Well I wasn't surfing there.

KELLY

Martin? Where was Philip?

Martin - *no longer dressed as a driver* - enters the room.

MARTIN

Amsterdam.

Philip flushes at being caught in a lie.

AUSTIN

Drugs again, I suppose.

PHILIP

I came, didn't I? I always come
when you call.

(beat)

So what am I doing here? Another
lecture on how I'm wasting my life?

AUSTIN

No more lectures. I've finally come
to a decision that's years overdue.

Behind Philip, FOUR BODYGUARDS silently enter the room.

PHILIP

Let me guess: clean up my act, or
I'm out of your will?

AUSTIN

(ignoring his question)

It was either you or one of your
siblings. I'm sorry, Philip... but
I had to consider the legacy I'll
leave behind.

PHILIP

Is this about the company? Because
I don't want it. The others can
fight it out.

Philip stands up and turns to leave -

- But the Four Bodyguards block his path to the door.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I'd really like to go now.

AUSTIN

And what would you do if I let you?
Waste more years with wild parties,
drugs and prostitutes? Endless stays
in rehab and prison?

PHILIP

Is this an intervention? Dad, you're
doing it all wrong.

The Bodyguards move steadily toward Philip.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Okay, your goons are freaking me out -

AUSTIN

Even without me, you'd be dead soon.

The Bodyguards grab Philip, dragging him back to the chair.

PHILIP
Hey! Let me go!

AUSTIN
Don't fight them, Philip.

PHILIP
Let me GO!!

AUSTIN
This doesn't have to hurt.

The Bodyguards pin the struggling Philip into the chair.

PHILIP
Please, you don't need to do this!
I'll go into rehab! I'll go straight!

Martin puts an arm around his neck. Philip still struggles -

PHILIP (CONT'D)
(wheezing)
Dad! P-p-please!!

- But Martin cuts off his blood supply until he passes out.

With difficulty, Austin gets to his feet and approaches his STILL-BREATHING son. Tears fall as he strokes Philip's hair.

AUSTIN
I will never forget your sacrifice.
I loved you, my son.

Kelly presses an ANTIQUE SILVER BOWL tight against Philip's chest, then hands Austin a LARGE SILVER KNIFE --

And in one swift motion, Austin slashes his son's throat.

PHILIP'S BLOOD pours into the waiting bowl - *RED DROPLETS splashing onto the STYLIZED PHOENIX SYMBOL on its side.*

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. HILLSIDE HOME -- NIGHT

The PHOENIX SYMBOL is visible in the moonlight, tattooed on the SHOULDER of a WOMAN entering a DIMLY LIT home.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The Woman moves through a Living Room filled with bookshelves. Many of the books have "RICHARD HARPER" on the spine.

PHOTOS of a MAN and WOMAN around 30 reveal far-flung travel; living the good life. Their WEDDING PHOTO dominates a wall.

AHEAD OF HER: a HALLWAY and SHORT FLIGHT OF STAIRS lead to -

INT. RICK'S STUDY -- CONTINUOUS

A large dog - ZEV - snoozes by the fire, while a MAN sits at a desk, staring at a BLANK DOCUMENT on his laptop.

Suddenly, Zev looks up and emits a short, sharp BARK.

RICK HARPER (30) - *the man in the photos* - looks up from the laptop. More stocky than muscled, shoulder-length wavy hair frames his intelligent but slightly plump face.

RICK
What is it, Zev?

Zev BARKS again and gets up, GROWLING toward the stairs.

Rick tenses, reaching down toward a BOTTOM DESK DRAWER --

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Zev, it's only me!

JENNIFER HARPER (27) - *the woman in the photos* - descends the stairs, a smile on her face. She's gorgeous in a halter-top dress the perfect shade for her glowing, deep red hair.

Rick stands up and pulls her into a bone-crushing hug.

JENNIFER
Rick? Are you okay?

RICK
I didn't hear you come in. Guess
I'm a little... jumpy these days.

JENNIFER
Maybe I shouldn't have gone...

RICK
I'm just glad you're back safe.

JENNIFER
Did you get any writing done?
(his silence says no)
Poor baby. You need a drink.

She kisses him lightly, then goes over to a drinks tray by the desk. Rick snuggles up behind her, soaking in the comfort of her warmth - but frowns down at the TATTOO on her shoulder.

RICK
I still can't believe you got this.

JENNIFER
Don't you like it?

RICK
I love everything about you, Jenn.

Rick kisses her shoulder and CLOSES HIS EYES in bliss.....

OVER BLACK, LOUD CLANGING RENTS THE AIR AS --

INT. PRISON CELL -- DAY

The CELL DOOR opens to show a PRISON GUARD on the other side. He addresses an INMATE lying on one of the bunks.

PRISON GUARD
It's time.

The inmate is **Rick (now 35)**. His long hair is now a buzz cut that shows some gray. A vest reveals lean, muscled arms. His face is all angular lines, a fading scar down one cheek.

After a moment, Rick sits up and reaches for a SMALL NOTEPAD. Then without a word he gets up and heads for the door.

EXT. PRISON -- DAY

Nothing but desert and shrub grass surrounds the prison fence. A TAXI waits a dozen feet away from the small EXIT GATE.

Rick steps out through the gate in a crumpled suit, carrying a small duffel bag. He heads for the Taxi, then sees --

ACROSS THE PARKING LOT

LARRY HIGGS (35) - average looking, dressed like an accountant or lawyer - over by an SUV. Larry raises his arm uncertainly.

Rick hesitates, then walks to the Taxi. Larry drops his arm -

- But the Taxi pulls away without Rick. Larry looks relieved.

INT. LARRY'S SUV -- DAY

Rick stares out a window as Larry drives along a desert road.

LARRY

You, uh, you look good. Hell, you
look like you could take on a whole
football team!

Unseen by Larry, Rick rubs over the scar on his cheek.

LARRY (CONT'D)

So - Eva and I want you to stay with
us until you get back on your feet.

RICK

No.

LARRY

Look, I understand needing space,
but you don't wanna stay at a hotel.

RICK

I won't. I'm going home.

LARRY

But... after what happened...

RICK

Take me home, Larry, or let me out.

LARRY

Rick, I just don't think it'd be a -

Rick reaches for the door handle, opening it.

Larry SLAMS on the brakes, swerving off onto the desert scrub
roadside in a cloud of dust, and bringing the SUV to a halt.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Jesus! What the *hell*, Rick!?

EXT. DESERT ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

Rick climbs out of the SUV, pulling out his bag with him,
and starts walking. Larry sticks his head out, incredulous.

LARRY

Where the hell are you going?

Rick ignores him and keeps walking. He shuts his eyes feeling
the sun on his face, breeze on his skin. Enjoying the SILENCE -

- Until the SUV pulls back alongside him, keeping pace.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Come on, man. You can meet your
godson... we can talk about the movie.
I think you'll like the new script.
(finally angry)
Goddammit, I drove ninety miles to
pick you up, you ungrateful *dick*!

Rick just keeps on walking.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Okay *fine*! You win!

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS -- DAY

Larry's SUV pulls off a winding hillside road onto a gravel
driveway, leading to Rick's -

EXT. HILLSIDE HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

Rick grabs his bag from the back seat as Larry gets out too.

LARRY
I could stay for a while...

Rick digs out KEYS from his bag, and stares down at them.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Grab groceries, come straight back?
How about it: pizza and beer?

Rick doesn't look around as he lets himself in.

RICK
I'll be fine. Thanks for the ride.

INT. RICK'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Rick shuts - and locks - the door on a worried Larry.

LARRY (O.S.)
Hey, I have documents you need to
sign! Rick? *Rick*!

Ignoring him, Rick walks slowly across the room. Nothing's
changed... except for a thick layer of dust on every surface.

As a CAR DOOR SLAMS and ENGINE STARTS outside, Rick stares
at the WEDDING PHOTO of himself and Jennifer on the wall.

INT. RICK'S STUDY - FLASHBACK -- NIGHT

Jennifer turns around in Rick's arms and hands him a DRINK.