

EX AMERICA

Episode 1 (first 2 acts of 4)

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ACT ONE

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Faces, flicking by at breakneck speed... hundreds of them, staring dead ahead, passport photos, ID cards, mug shots, slamming to a halt on:
- B) A woman. A haunted look. Intense eyes. Mid 40s, perhaps. And then the screen is filled by a computer progress bar, which says: *DELETING*. And the picture's gone.
- C) More faces, strobing past, too many to catch, a mess of eyes, hair, lips... until once more it snaps to a halt:
- D) The same woman as before. Hair different. Spectacles this time. Skin tone a bit darker. But definitely the same woman. And again, the image is deleted and gone.
- E) Raw code streams down the screen -
- F) A digital map of the world, random countries highlighted one by one, no discernible pattern -
- G) More rapid images flashing by, but this time the facades of hundreds of houses, city homes, estate agent pictures... before it stops dead on:

EXT. PILGRIM STREET - DAY

A large two-storey home. This is inner-city UK, a bit frayed round the edges but not the worst part of town.

The house needs work. Weeds around the front windows.

A 'SOLD' sign by the rusty gate.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Low winter sun spilling into the room. Unfurnished, bar one abandoned armchair. A bit dusty. Some damp on the walls. A woman's voice:

ESTATE AGENT (O.S.)
You're going to have fun. It's just
waiting for the right touch.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

White walls, greying. A bed frame - but no mattress. The bed is on its side. Wallpaper is peeling away in places.

ESTATE AGENT (O.S.)
Did you view it? Because I can't
remember showing you round. No?

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Overgrown. No flowers, just the odd crisp packet. A forlorn-looking barbecue filled to the brim with rain water.

A sizeable hole in the back fence. 5 or 6 slats completely missing: a through-route, the road behind clearly visible.

ESTATE AGENT (O.S.)
Well the first thing to say is: the
storms, recently? The bad storms. So
to be clear, quite a bit of the
fence? That was lost, that went.
That's the main thing. It's just,
you know... for security, you might
want to...

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The ESTATE AGENT is a small, cheerful young woman. She's handing a bunch of keys over to a much taller person -

ESTATE AGENT
But otherwise? Completely sound, to
my knowledge. Here's front door,
back door, garden door -- there's a
bit of a knack to that one you -
(mimes a key in lock)
- pull it a bit when you turn...
you'll pick it up. You're going to
have fun. It'll make a lovely home.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The door opens slowly and GLADSTONE walks in.

She's the woman from the photos. Different again, somehow: alterations in hairstyle, weight. But still that odd caution in her eyes. Tall, a little awkward with it. Smart clothes.

The first thing she does is look behind the door, into the corner of the room.

Then she heads across the room, up to a sliding glass door that leads to the garden.

Looks out at: the hole in the fence.

Looks at it for a while.

She doesn't like it.

Gladstone then turns back into the living room. She approaches the longest wall -- puts her hand up flat against it. Seems to wait for something.

She puts her ear to the wall.

Then she looks up, to all four corners of the ceiling. Each movement of her head measured, procedural, clean.

She then takes her hand from the wall and looks at the lonely armchair in the middle of the room.

She frowns at it. Paces around, eyes locked on it.

Stands and looks at it from the other side.

Suddenly -- she turns the armchair over.

She rips the fabric from its underside. She reaches into the armchair's guts. She pulls the stuffing out -

- and then takes off the cushions and rips them apart. This takes some effort, but she barely breaks a sweat.

In a few moments, the armchair has been mostly disassembled. She's found a screwdriver, and has pulled the springs away from their base, separating them.

She holds one of the springs up to the window.

She turns it in the morning light. Squints at the metal...

EXT. PILGRIM STREET - DAY

GLADSTONE opens the boot of a battered red Range Rover. She takes a large cardboard box from it. She's now in jeans, and has tied her hair up.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

GLADSTONE is on top of a ladder, power drill in one hand, plaster dust blasting into her face, barely blinking.

She's removing the light fitting. She rips it straight out of the ceiling with one hand.

The wires hang down into the room. Gladstone has a pocket magnifying glass, and is examining the cable up close.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The large cardboard box is on one of the work surfaces, on its side. From it spill hammers, saws, an electric screwdriver, and a small stack of books. Two takeaway coffee cups next to it all.

GLADSTONE enters, takes a swig from one of the cups, picks up a large mallet, and leaves the kitchen again -

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pretty much as soon as she enters the living room, GLADSTONE swings at the wall with the hammer. She knocks a massive football-sized hole in the plaster.

EXT. PILGRIM STREET - EVENING

The sun has gone down. Streetlights are on. A Punjabi family pass by the house, arguing. There are shapes behind the bedroom curtains - an odd oscillation...

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A bulb hangs from the deconstructed light fitting, swinging back and forth. GLADSTONE is ripping the wooden floorboards up with a crowbar, one by one.

The bed frame is in bits against the wall. Gladstone is humming a tune as she works.

EXT. PILGRIM STREET - NIGHT

The moon in the sky behind the house. At the bottom of the road: tipsy customers are leaving the local pub.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE slowly descends the stairs in the dark, looking intently at a small electronic device she holds in one hand.

The stairs have been dismantled as far as is safe. The cupboard beneath them has had its door removed -- and the bannister's been kicked off, by the looks of it.

The device lights up Gladstone's face; a blue LED glow. She's totally engrossed. Moving it up and down.

Halfway down the stairs, one step gives off a particularly profound creak. Gladstone stops. Steps on and off it once more. Then holds the device close to the offending step.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With only the streetlight through the window to guide her, GLADSTONE paces slowly about the perimeter of the room. It's been completely ripped apart:

The plaster has been scored away, giant cross-hatched scratches down to the brickwork. And the internal walls have been reduced to studs.

The device Gladstone is lifting up and down gives off a faint and slightly wavering high-pitched whine. Like a mosquito.

She moves in a slow up-and-down dance from the living room to the kitchen, all the time watching the readout. It shows shifting frequencies: numbers, and a waveform.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sun through the windows. GLADSTONE is asleep on a blow-up mattress on the floor, covered in an assortment of coats.

Next to her impromptu bed: the small stack of books from the cardboard box. They include a copy of *ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS* by Luo Guanzhong and *MICROELECTRICS CIRCUIT ANALYSIS AND DESIGN*.

There's the sound of a garbage truck reversing outside. Her eyes snap open.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

The sound of teeth being brushed. GLADSTONE's bare feet on a bathroom floor that has been pulled to bits. A mirrored cabinet lies open on its back, a few paces away.

Suddenly: the sound of brushing stops. Bare legs move cautiously away from the sink.

Gladstone approaches the frosted bathroom window, toothbrush dangling from her mouth. Eyes wide.

Through the frosted glass: a human shape, moving... across the back garden...

Gladstone's toothbrush drops to the ground.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

GLADSTONE skims across the room in bare feet, with frightening grace. She steps on nails and splintered wood and it doesn't slow her down for a second -

She reaches the pile of books and picks up the *ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS*. Opens it, and from the hollowed-out inside removes -

- a glock 9mm pistol, and silencer. She drops the book and fixes the silencer in place in one fluid movement -- and making no sound whatsoever, sprints along the wall towards the glass patio door -

- she pauses for one second at the edge of the frame, then LEAPS into full view of the garden, gun raised -

To see BIBI SANGARA. An 80-year-old Punjabi lady in full salwar, complete with headscarf -- standing in the middle of the garden. Scowling at her through the glass.

Gladstone is so taken aback she doesn't even lower her gun.

The old lady looks her up and down. Then she totters up to the window. Raises her hand...

Knocks on the glass.

BIBI
(Punjabi, subtitled)
IT'S RAINING NOW.

(NB: Bibi speaks no English at all whenever she appears; only Punjabi.)

She knocks on the glass again.

Gladstone really doesn't know what to do.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

There's a rattling as GLADSTONE unlocks and opens the sliding door. She stands there, wearing t-shirt and boxer shorts; but the gun has gone.

BIBI has decided to go and stare at the water-filled barbecue for some reason. She notices Gladstone and waves her away -

BIBI
(Punjabi throughout,
subtitled)
I'm not eating any more of your
burnt paratha. You can go away and
take it with you.

She then clomps across the damp grass and elbows past Gladstone on her way into the house -

BIBI
I don't know where you get the idea
you can leave me out in the rain.
I'll be dead soon and then you can
leave me out in the rain all you
want. I won't notice then, will I?

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

A grumpy BIBI has sat herself down at a set of plastic garden furniture in the middle of the dismantled back room.

GLADSTONE closes the garden door and leans in the archway through to the kitchen, arms folded.

Bibi regards her regally.

BIBI
Where's Jaspreet?

GLADSTONE
Maybe...
(Shakes head)
Sorry, do you -- can you speak English?

BIBI
Jaspreet has all my best shoes.

Bibi looks around. Through the dismantled walls she can see pretty much the entire ground floor. The devastation.

BIBI
You need to make this house nicer.
You won't keep a husband like this.
You'll get beaten. That's what they do.
You'll be crying and wailing, but I told you.
Remember that. You need to clean up more.

Gladstone sits down opposite Bibi, and looks directly at her. Gladstone's accent is odd: a bit cockney, a bit RP.

GLADSTONE
OK, I want to help you. But I've just moved in here so I don't know the place. I don't know... how this works. I don't know where you live. I need to know where your family are, so they can look after you properly. Maybe this happens a lot? Do you understand any of this? Is it returning to you?

Bibi narrows her eyes.

BIBI
(Still in Punjabi)
You're one of those people who looks very much like a horse.

Gladstone laughs involuntarily. Then immediately checks herself. Puts a hand to her eyes.

GLADSTONE

No, um...

Pause.

Gladstone lowers her hand. Considers Bibi very, very carefully...

GLADSTONE

Fuck it.

And suddenly speaks in perfect, fluent Punjabi:

GLADSTONE

(Punjabi throughout)

This isn't your house, Auntie. Where is it that you live?

Bibi scowls at her. The following entirely in Punjabi -

GLADSTONE

This is my house. You came in through a hole in the fence.

BIBI

And this is what I mean! It's shameful to have a hole in the fence! And the garden is horrible!

GLADSTONE

Yes, well I'll fix that as soon as I can. Where...

(snaps her fingers)

Fine. Let's try this. Where's Jaspreet?

BIBI

What?

GLADSTONE

Jaspreet? Where's Jaspreet? You want to know where Jaspreet is. When did you last see Jaspreet?

BIBI

In the shop of course.

Gladstone nods.

GLADSTONE

Of course.

EXT. THE HAGUE - DAY

A sedate view across the water, taking in the colonnade of the Mauritshuis art museum.

INT. MAURITSHUIS - CONTINUOUS

A small, hunched Frenchman called JERICHO, in a bunched-up coat, is standing in front of *The Anatomy Lesson* by Rembrandt.

A few tourists are dotted around the gallery. As Jericho continues to contemplate the painting, behind him: quietly, efficiently, all the tourists are being led out of the room by SECURITY MEN in suits and earpieces.

And then, two of the security men - who really, *really* don't look like they're employed by the museum - quietly take up places either side of him, hands folded.

Jericho looks at each one in turn. Suddenly there's a gentle hand on his shoulder.

AUGUST BROTHERS steps up next to him, gazing at the painting. He's American: young, handsome, charming, and his hair is almost supernaturally immaculate.

BROTHERS

Hello Jericho. Making good money in the old world?

Jericho looks around as if to contemplate escape routes. Gives up. Shrugs.

BROTHERS

I'm hoping you can help me. I'm not buying. This isn't your usual line. Actually, I'm looking for a face.

JERICHO

I don't do any 'face'. I'm on the wires.

BROTHERS

Well I know that, don't I? But a wire can carry a face. It can stop a face. It can change a face.

JERICHO

I mean you know, today's difficult. I'm supposed to be in Amsterdam. Actually if you really want to know, I'm on holiday.

BROTHERS

I won't take up too much of your time, I promise. One way or the other, it'll be quick.

Jericho turns and looks at him. Fear in his eyes for the first time. Brothers doesn't return the look, but winces.

BROTHERS

This one's important. Sorry, old man. I know we've always worked well together, but this one's very different.

(Looks at him directly)

You remember the fun we had in Turin? You remember the lady who was there, the one we called Annabelle?

JERICHO

(Astounded)

You are kidding.

BROTHERS

There's an old Inuit poem, Jericho. "I am old now, many winters have I seen. Three things I still do not understand. The shortness of the seasons, the minds of women, and why people have so many lice." Now... I understand why an Eskimo might have lice. And I understand why one perceives time to go by at pace, especially when one has a life of any kind to live. But the minds of women? There you go. Same the world over.

JERICHO

You've lost her?

BROTHERS

It's complicated.

He regards Jericho with interest.

BROTHERS

You're a friend, Jericho, and you've been of good service. In fact, you're so good, I can't imagine her turning up on anyone's doorstep but yours, were she in need of certain particular procedures. So here's how it works. I'm going to ask you three times, but only three times: have you seen Annabelle?

Jericho doesn't respond. Brothers looks at his watch.

BROTHERS

I'm not the only one looking. For old time's sake, I'd really like to be the one to find her.

(Pause)

Have you seen her?

The painting in front of them: the candlelit faces crowded around a dead body.

... the pale skin of the cadaver sliced open.

... the calm attitude of the anatomist, holding the splayed flesh wide.

BROTHERS

Have you seen her?

JERICHO

Yes.

BROTHERS

What we're going to do is get a coffee, have ourselves a jaw about old times. You'd like a coffee? I know a place about twenty miles away that does pretty good coffee.

JERICHO

Will she be alright?

Brothers thinks about this.

BROTHERS

I've always imagined that when I go, I'll do everything I can to go with dignity. In the end, old sport... when we're face to face... it'll be down to her.

END OF ACT 1

ACT TWO**INT. KARL'S LAIR - NIGHT**

A converted bedroom with electronics stacked to the ceiling in teetering, free-standing piles. There's no light except from the blinking LEDs of high grade tech.

It's a snooper's paradise. Flatscreen monitors dotted around show grids of CCTV footage from all over the UK. Hand-written labels on each one say: *NEWCASTLE. GLASGOW. BIRMINGHAM.*

BRASSNECK by The Wedding Present is playing on the hi-fi, very loud.

KARL is an ageing punk, lean and a bit jaundiced, and he's nodding in time with the music. He points at a screen on the desk in front of him -- shouts above the noise -

KARL
THERE! THAT'S HER. TELL ME THAT
ISN'T HER. DOESN'T EVEN LOOK THAT
DIFFERENT.

Behind him, two faces emerge from the darkness, half-lit: CLAUDIA and RENATA. Claudia's tall, fine-boned and somehow disconcerting. Renata is shorter, muscular, but just as inscrutable.

The two women talk without looking at each other, and seem to be able to converse without shouting -

CLAUDIA
(Italian, subtitled)
He's right.

RENATA
(Italian, subtitled
throughout)
I think so. Surprising.

Their POV: a freeze frame of a security camera feed from an average corner shop. It zooms in to the counter and clear as day: GLADSTONE, standing next to BIBI and talking to a teenage girl at the till.

KARL
WHY WOULD YOU LAND YOURSELF THERE?
WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT IT? WEIRD.

RENATA
I dunno -- access to the estuary?
Close to GCHQ? What do you think?

CLAUDIA
I think it's detail. More important,
has he sold this to anyone else?

If the Americans have it we might as well go home.

RENATA

No-one else has it.

(Looks around)

He's not networked out. Too risky. He hasn't worked for Homeland since 2003. I looked. He's been living on his savings and bank account hacks.

CLAUDIA

He went small.

The music breaks down to the guitar riff, repeated over and over.

And KARL, face still pressed up to the monitor, is looking worried. Under the desk, his hand begins to move upwards, towards a half-open drawer by his waist...

RENATA

Yep. He just got a lucky break.

CLAUDIA

Alright. That makes things easier.

... Renata looks at Karl's hand. Claudia looks at Renata. Renata returns her gaze for a second. Then -

Renata stands up, holds a handgun down on the top of Karl's head, and fires. Karl dies instantly, sat upright in his swivel chair. The music continues to build.

Claudia pulls a taser from the drawer he was reaching for.

CLAUDIA

Told you he understood Italian.

RENATA

Hmm.

Claudia looks under Karl's chair.

CLAUDIA

Hey -- that went straight through the floor.

Renata leans over to Karl's workstation and removes an SD card from a USB reader. The CCTV image of Gladstone on the screen vanishes.

RENATA

Yeah.

CLAUDIA

Maybe you killed someone downstairs.

RENATA

Just in case I didn't you should go
and clean that up, bitch.

Claudia vanishes from the room instantly.

The music continues to build, louder, louder. Renata leaves
the room and Karl's open-eyed corpse is left on the chair.

Then... petrol is being poured over him, and over the rest
of the room.

The music ticks away, more and more frantic...

INT. SHOP - DAY

A bog-standard security camera, hanging in one corner of the
corner store. The shop has unkempt walls and chipped floors,
but well stocked.

A Sikh teenager in t-shirt and jeans, sitting behind the
counter, shaking her head. This is VAANI SARGANA and as far
as she's concerned, she's just another city girl.

VAANI

I'm, like... seriously.

Across the counter: BIBI is scowling at her.

VAANI

This goes on like, 24-7 now. Where
was she?

She turns to look at GLADSTONE, who is gently holding onto
Bibi's hand.

GLADSTONE

In my garden.

VAANI

Is it.
(Top of her lungs)
MUUUUUUUMMMMM!

BRAHMLEEN KAUR SARGANA emerges from the stock room at the
back of the store, powering down the aisle, clipboard in
hand. She's blustery, formidable; wearing the same kind of
salwar as Bibi, and completely in charge.

BRAHMLEEN

I've got meat all over the place so
this better be quick.

VAANI

Bibi's been away on business again.

Brahmleen looks up, from Bibi... to Gladstone.

GLADSTONE
She was at my house.

BRAHMLEEN
Oh I am SO sorry -

She takes Bibi by the arm -

BRAHMLEEN
- I didn't even know she'd gone -

VAANI
- I told you she totally knows where
the keys are now -

BIBI
(Punjabi)
Fetch me a mars bar.

GLADSTONE
Um... she said she was looking for
Jaspreet, and I th-

BRAHMLEEN
Jaspreet? Yes. Her sister, you see.
(To Bibi, in English)
Bibi, you'll see Jaspreet VERY soon
now, don't you WORRY, very VERY
soon.
(To Gladstone)
Jaspreet died ten years ago.
(To Bibi)
VERY SOON.

EXT. A-ROAD - NIGHT

A dual carriageway in the middle of nowhere, and a
nondescript hire car pulled up at a lay-by.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

CLAUDIA and RENATA are hunched together in the front seats
of the hire car, looking at an iPad. In subtitled Italian
throughout:

RENATA
Do they know each other? They look
like they're known to each other.

She scrubs a finger around the screen. It zooms in on the
CCTV image of GLADSTONE holding hands with BIBI, with
BRAHMLEEN and VAANI just about in frame -

RENATA
Holding hands. What does that mean?

CLAUDIA
The only question is whether
anyone's going to miss her.

INT. SHOP - DAY

BRAHMLEEN
(To Gladstone)
We have two houses, because it's
such a big family, and you know,
Bibi's in the shop house here above
the shop now and has been a bit
unhappy, such is life -

BIBI
(Punjabi)
This lady speaks good Punjabi.

Vaani looks at Gladstone. Gladstone smiles back.

BRAHMLEEN
Of course she does, Bibi.
(To Gladstone)
I'm sorry -- what's your name?

GLADSTONE
Gladstone.

BRAHMLEEN
... Gladstone. Your first name is
Gladstone?

GLADSTONE
No.

Pause.

BRAHMLEEN
Well thank you for bringing her all
the way back. Where is it you live
again?

GLADSTONE
She was in my garden.

BRAHMLEEN nods, smiles, and begins to lead BIBI away. VAANI
watches Gladstone quietly.

BRAHMLEEN
Well, thank you. And please, you
know -- have anything you want from
here. Please. Any one item that you
want. Vaani -- let Miss Gladstone
choose any one item she might
like...

INT. CAR - NIGHT

RENATA
 - but she's still there and talking
 to the girl. OK, what sort of
 protocol is this?

CLAUDIA shakes her head.

RENATA
 Are they all deep cover?

CLAUDIA
 If that's deep cover it's so deep
 it's gone all the way down and then
 out the other side.

RENATA
 Do we call SPQR?

Claudia swipes the iPad away -

CLAUDIA
 We're not calling anybody. I don't
 want anyone knowing, not until this
 is done.

Renata starts up the car -

RENATA
 So this is a field decision?

CLAUDIA
 Yes. We get there, we finish it.
 Then we make a field decision.

EXT. A-ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car screeches off and down the road...

INT. SHOP - DAY

VAANI is watching GLADSTONE, who is making a show of
 browsing through the aisles.

VAANI
 Can have whatever, yeah?

GLADSTONE
 Thanks. Not sure I want anything.

VAANI
 You better. Otherwise Mum will come
 round your house with something you
 seriously do not want to eat.

Gladstone smiles.

VAANI
Where you from, though?

GLADSTONE
Just moved here from Ireland.

VAANI
Is it.

Gladstone looks up at the CCTV camera. Her quiet gaze in its lens... she looks at the monitor above the counter...

VAANI
Which island?

GLADSTONE
- Sorry?

Pause.

VAANI
Which island. Jokes.

GLADSTONE
OK. Right. If you took something,
what would you take?

VAANI
What, from this shop?

GLADSTONE
Yeah.

VAANI
I'd take the nearest exit.

Gladstone levels a careful gaze at her.

GLADSTONE
Jokes...?

VAANI
Nah.

INT. VAANI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Miley Cyrus' *Wrecking Ball*, mid-chorus.

To begin with, all we can see is a huge slice of text on a laptop screen. It reads:

FUKIN WHORE?

- and then: *VAANI YOUR A BITCH HA HA*

- and then: *U SHULD BE SCARED EVERYONE ONTO YOU*

- and then: *WHY DONT U JUST SLIT YRSELF U FUKIN WHORE?*

- and then, one huge word at a time: *VANI WHY AR U NOT DEAD WHY R U STILL LIKE ALL I JUST WORK AT A SHOP I AM THIS GOOD GIRL I AM NOT A SLUT WHY U DO THAT TO ANY FIRENDS U FUKING SLUT SKANKI SLUT U NEED A FUKIN SLAP WHY DONT U JUST DO IT DO IT*

Vaani's fingers, furiously typing on her laptop...

Close up on the screen, she writes: *idc tbh*

And she writes: *idk who u r idc*

And again: *idc tbh*

And then we see an entire screen of incredibly vitriolic abuse. A call-and-response social network similar to ask.fm.

We catch rape threats, death threats, scorn and vitriol in under 300 characters a time...

... and under each one is written *idc tbh* and nothing more.

Vaani's room is small, full of books, knick-knacks on dainty shelves, and pictures of pop stars. The back of her head is framed against the laptop glow, as she continues to type.

Then: her face, eyes barely leaving the screen, still typing away furiously. She's been crying for quite a while.

For one second, she breaks off to wipe the back of her hand over her face.

At the top of the page is her profile picture. A self-shot, smiling, radiant. *VAANI_HAHAHAHA*

She's typing, over and over: *idc tbh*

INT. VAANI'S ROOM - LATER

The room's dark and silent, but VAANI's not sleeping. She lies on her side, submerged in the duvet, eyes open.

The red LED of her alarm clock says *23:01*.

She climbs out of bed, defeated. Sits at her desk. Stares at the closed laptop.

Her hand goes to open it up, then:

Through the window behind her desk she can see over the road. The house opposite has its curtains open and the lights are on.

On the ground floor, GLADSTONE is sat cross legged in front of the fireplace, dropping bits of torn-up paper into a blazing fire.

Vaani pulls open the curtains a little more.

EXT. BACK STREET - CONTINUOUS

The service road running to the rear of Gladstone's house. Almost a dirt track. A line of garage doors.

CLAUDIA and RENATA creep towards the hole in Gladstone's fence, silenced handguns clasped in their hands.

CLAUDIA
(Whispers)
I don't like this.

RENATA
What?

Claudia taps the fence lightly with her silencer.

CLAUDIA
The hole. Convenient.

RENATA
Right.

CLAUDIA
I'm just saying.

Renata zips through the gap -

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The house has been tidied up, but is still a skeleton. Stud walls, scored cement. GLADSTONE is by the fire, gently lowering strips of shredded paper into the roaring flame.

Suddenly - a little handmade silver box plugged into one of the wall sockets starts beeping insistently -

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

A tiny motion detector, mounted under the eaves of the house. RENATA, skirting the fence, looks up at it.

INT. VAANI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vaani's POV, through her window, across the street: GLADSTONE is opening up a book and taking something from it.

VAANI sees what's inside the book. Puts a hand to her mouth -

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

RENATA smiles at the motion sensor.

RENATA
(English)
Good evening.

She raises her handgun towards the garden window -

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE just has time to assemble her gun -

- the garden window SHATTERS in three places and the glass tumbles into the room. Gladstone fires three times then drops to the floor, rolls away -

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CLAUDIA kicks in the front door and strides in, handgun leveling -

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE comes up on one knee and fires one more time into the garden. Looks to her right, stands up -

- and she KICKS the living room door out -

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

- the door bounces off its hinges and straight into CLAUDIA, smashing her against the wall, plaster dust everywhere -

CLAUDIA
- oww -

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RENATA strides out of the garden and into the room -

- GLADSTONE throws herself bodily to one side and STRAIGHT THROUGH THE WALL -

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE explodes into the hallway through the plasterboard wall just as CLAUDIA is getting to her feet -

- GLADSTONE chops CLAUDIA in the face with her elbow, immediately feeling the pain -

GLADSTONE
YOW! SHIT -

CLAUDIA
- GGGHHMmmmpph -

- and Claudia slumps against the wall, dropping to the floor, holding her neck, trying to raise her gun as -

- Gladstone stumbles over the fallen door and onto the stairs, leaping two steps, turning and raising her weapon -

- RENATA enters through the doorway, waving away the dust, looking up at Gladstone, gun leveled at her -

A tiny pause. They both look at each other through the dust. Gladstone has her gun trained on Claudia. Caught.

RENATA fires three times.

Bullet holes appear in the wall around Gladstone - one to the left of her head, the other two to the right.

RENATA
(Italian)
Very poor.

Gladstone turns and clears the final few steps. Renata fires once more. The bullet takes out some more wall where Gladstone was a split-second before. Renata sucks her teeth.

INT. VAANI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

VAANI's eyes are wider than the moon.

Her hand, where it was, about to open her laptop: shaking uncontrollably.

Her POV: she can see into the hallway, through the open door. CLAUDIA is crawling back to her feet, pulling coats off pegs on the wall as she does so. RENATA is very, very carefully moving forward, eyes on the ceiling -

- and Vaani can see GLADSTONE, upstairs, through the open curtains of the bedroom. She's also moving with extreme caution -

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE is turning to face a corner of the bare room, and slowly raising her gun.

She points it into the corner, and down. Aiming it into the floor a foot or two from the skirting board.

She moves the barrel up a tiny bit. Down a bit. Then a fraction to one side, with incredible attention -

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

RENATA lowers her gaze from the ceiling, and looks at CLAUDIA, who gives a slight shrug, and nods.

INT. VAANI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

VAANI can see the two Italians moving towards the stairs.

VAANI

...noooo...

She looks up at GLADSTONE again, in the bedroom -

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE grimaces and moves the gun a millimetre to the left...

And gently closes her eyes -

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

RENATA is climbing the stairs in complete silence, CLAUDIA about to follow, then -

Renata steps onto the squeaky step. It creaks once, loud.

Renata gives a tiny little sigh.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE fires her gun three times into the floor.

INT. VAANI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Through the hallway door, VAANI sees blood spatter down the stairs, and RENATA fall backwards, sliding down to CLAUDIA's feet, much of her head destroyed.

Vaani's hand has stopped shaking. Her face is frozen.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CLAUDIA looks at RENATA's body. Sad.

CLAUDIA

Ciao, Bella.

She heads for the door -

On the stairs, PHUT! A bullet hits one step -

Then the step below it -

Then another bullet splinters the step below -

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

GLADSTONE is squeezing off rounds whilst moving the gun very calmly across the floor.

After three more shots, she takes a breath, and stops.

Then, expressionless, she reaches for the bedroom light.

INT. VAANI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

VAANI watches GLADSTONE switch off the light and vanish into darkness.

Then she looks at the front door below to see: CLAUDIA, dead, face down, inches from the exit. A pool of blood.

She can't take her eyes off the dead bodies.

And then: the hallway lights go out.

Vaani looks at her mobile phone, sat next to her laptop on the desk. Then looks across at the house opposite again.

- and suddenly gasps.

Across the street, Gladstone is standing in the front doorway. Looking directly at Vaani. Unblinking. Eye to eye.

END OF ACT TWO