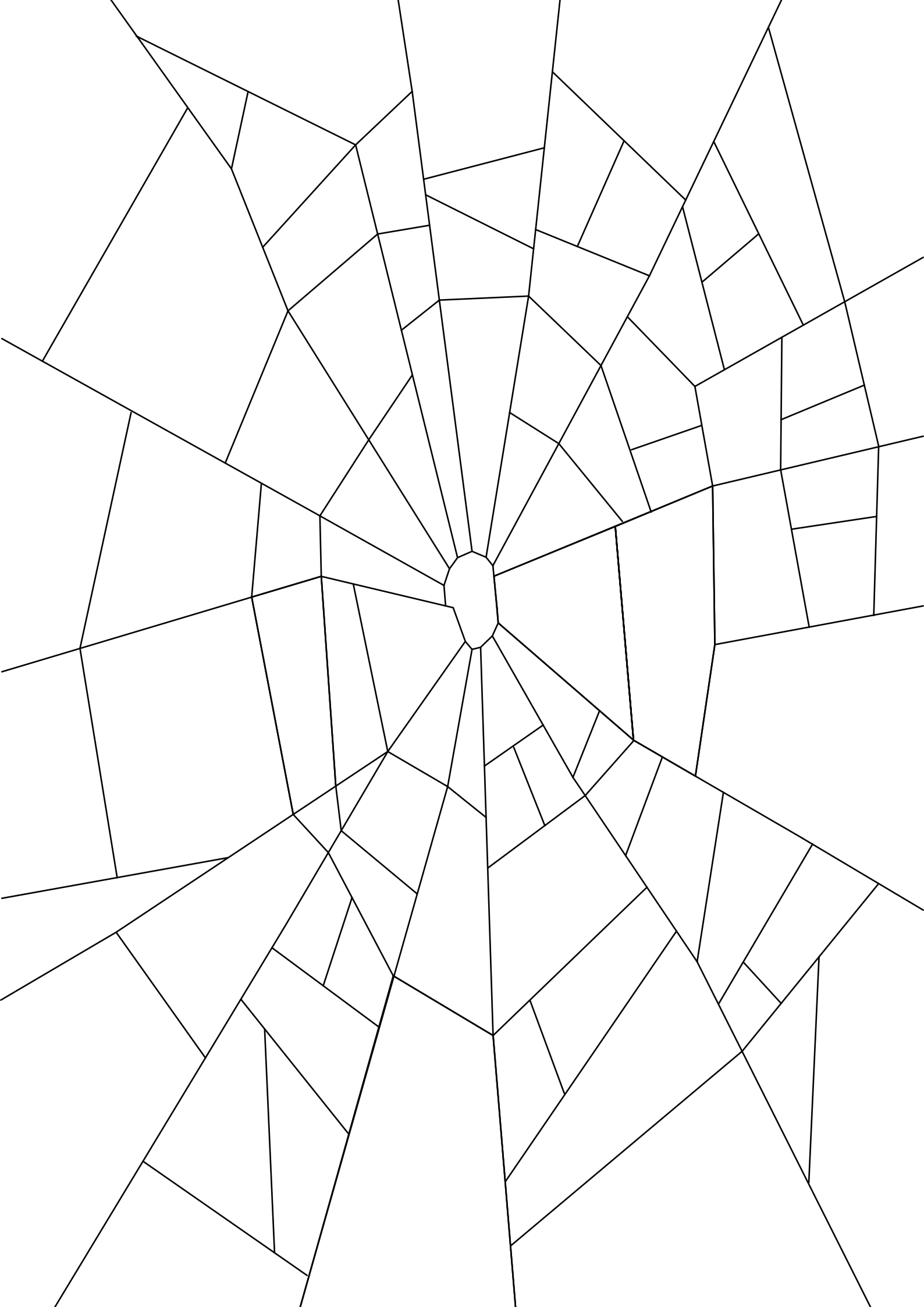


CENTERS IN PAIN

BY

JASPER SPICERO



EVERY STORM RUNS OUT OF RAIN

EXT. FLOWER COMPLEX

AERIAL SHOT a half-built housing complex. Flying away it becomes visible that the roads and cul-de-sacs form a simple flower shape. Like a child's drawing. At the center is a tower.

TITLE OVER:

CENTERS IN PAIN

EXT. COMPLEX XIV - MORNING

This house, like all the others, is plastic white with blue and grey details. Piles of old snow in the yard.

The front door has a hexagon window covered by black plastic from the inside. Someone opens it carefully. It is a boy five years old with grey eyes, wearing denim overalls.

EXT. COMPLEX XIV - BACKYARD

CLOSE UP:

A jacket lying on the ground with a badge sewn to the arm:
JUDITH 14. The boy's shoes enter the frame. He picks up the jacket.

MARTHA O.S.

(from inside the house)

Where is my little star?

Judith walks away from Martha's voice toward a modular storage unit.

EXT. WOODS

Half-melted snow with footprints. Trees tangled in dead vines. It is raining.

MOVING:

We follow Judith into the woods. He is now carrying an entry shotgun. Shoe laces dragging behind him.

LISA O.S.

If someone is there, please help
me.

Her clothes are distressed. She is wearing black earphones.

JUDITH

There is a road close by. You're
going to be alright.

Lisa staggers behind him exhausted. After awhile Judith
stops. Turns to her.

LISA O.S.

Judy?

She steps backwards and trips over a tree branch. A single
earphone falls out. We hear the faint sound of Shane's
Theme. Holds a hand up like shielding her eyes from
sunlight.

INT. COMPLEX XIV

Through a honeycomb shaped window on the second floor we see
Judith emerge from the woods wearing black earphones. His
jacket is missing. He kneels to tie his shoe laces.

YOUNG MAN V.O.

Wapato is a jail built 9 years ago.
After it's completion in 2004 it
was abandoned due to a lack of
operating funds. I'm one of three
maintenance workers at the
facility. We keep the plumbing from
rusting, preventing chronic issues,
and handle cosmetic needs. An iron
sculpture that looks like the
skeleton of an oil tanker is
sinking into the courtyard and
destroying the underground drainage
system that passes sewage to the
nearest waste reservoir.

CUT TO:

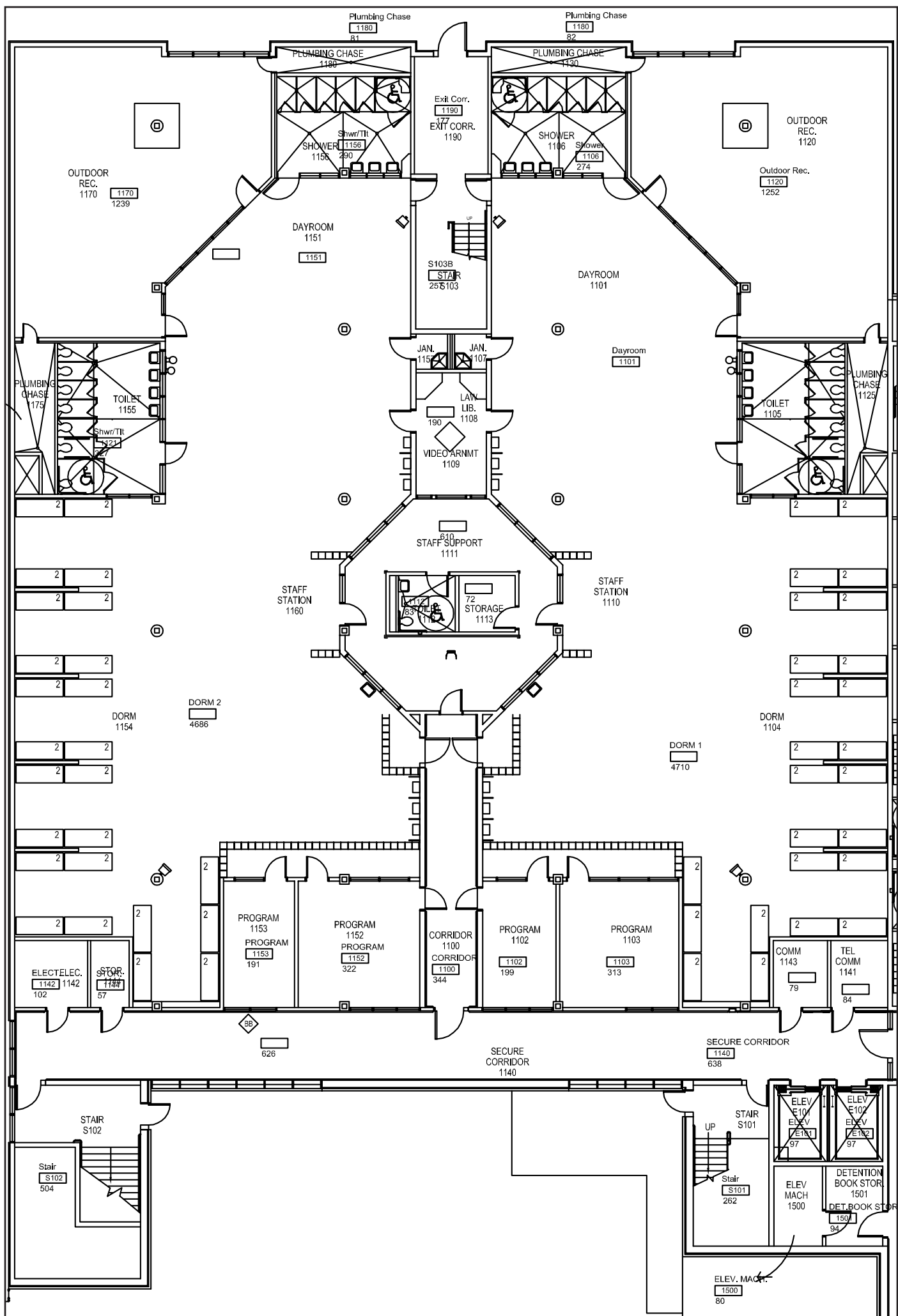
A DROP OF MEDICINE

INT. COMPLEX XIV - LIVING ROOM

On an aging designer sofa MARTHA stares into space. She is
mid-forties, blond hair, wearing a ragged shirt and blue
jeans.

CLOSE UP:

Hands in her lap with spots of pale light from an open
window nearby.



ON SCREEN:

10 DAYS AGO

Judith is stopped halfway down the living room staircase turned toward Martha. She is frozen in thought.

JUDITH

Have you seen Beatrice?

He descends the staircase and stands by her side.

JUDITH

Anyone home?

Grabs her leg and shakes it. Martha squints as though she just woke up. Shields her eyes from the pale light with a throw pillow.

MARTHA

What did you say little Saint
Judith?

Sets the pillow on the floor. Kneels to Judith's height. A foggy look on her face like a hospital patient's. Places a slender hand on his shoulder.

MARTHA

The world is sick Judy. Everyone is
a drop of medicine. Even you, a
tiny star.

We hear the sound of a faucet turning off and on in the next room.

INT. KITCHEN

CLOSE IN:

The kitchen sink sprays water than abruptly stops. Starts again. Stops. Above the sink is a window without glass. Snow is falling. A plane goes by.

CUT TO:

BLOOD IN THE SNOW

EXT. COMPLEX XII

A young man standing in the snowy driveway. This is SHANE.

VAGRANT O.S.

My family is at 43 on the other

side of the tower. We need food. I
have a son, Carl.

PAN FROM SHANE TO VAGRANT:

Lying on the ground. Blood dripping from his nose. One eye
swollen shut.

INT. COMPLEX XIV - JUDITH'S ROOM

Judith lying in his bed listening to a hand-held tape
recorder. We hear a voice through the speaker.

LISA V.O.

I was 11 when my real dad showed up
at our complex. We were eating with
my stepfather, Carl. When he
answered the door my dad dragged
him out into the snow. He started
hitting him in the face and
wouldn't stop. I'll always remember
the blood in the snow.

Judith stands out of bed. Passes by the bedside table with a
picture frame turned face down. Walks to his window to see
Shane towering over the vagrant.

EXT. COMPLEX XII

SHANE

You are weak. Like birds are weak.
You let Flower Complex change you.

VAGRANT

Don't do this.

Honey approaches Shane and places a hand on his shoulder.
She is tall with long brown hair in a pony tail.

HONEY

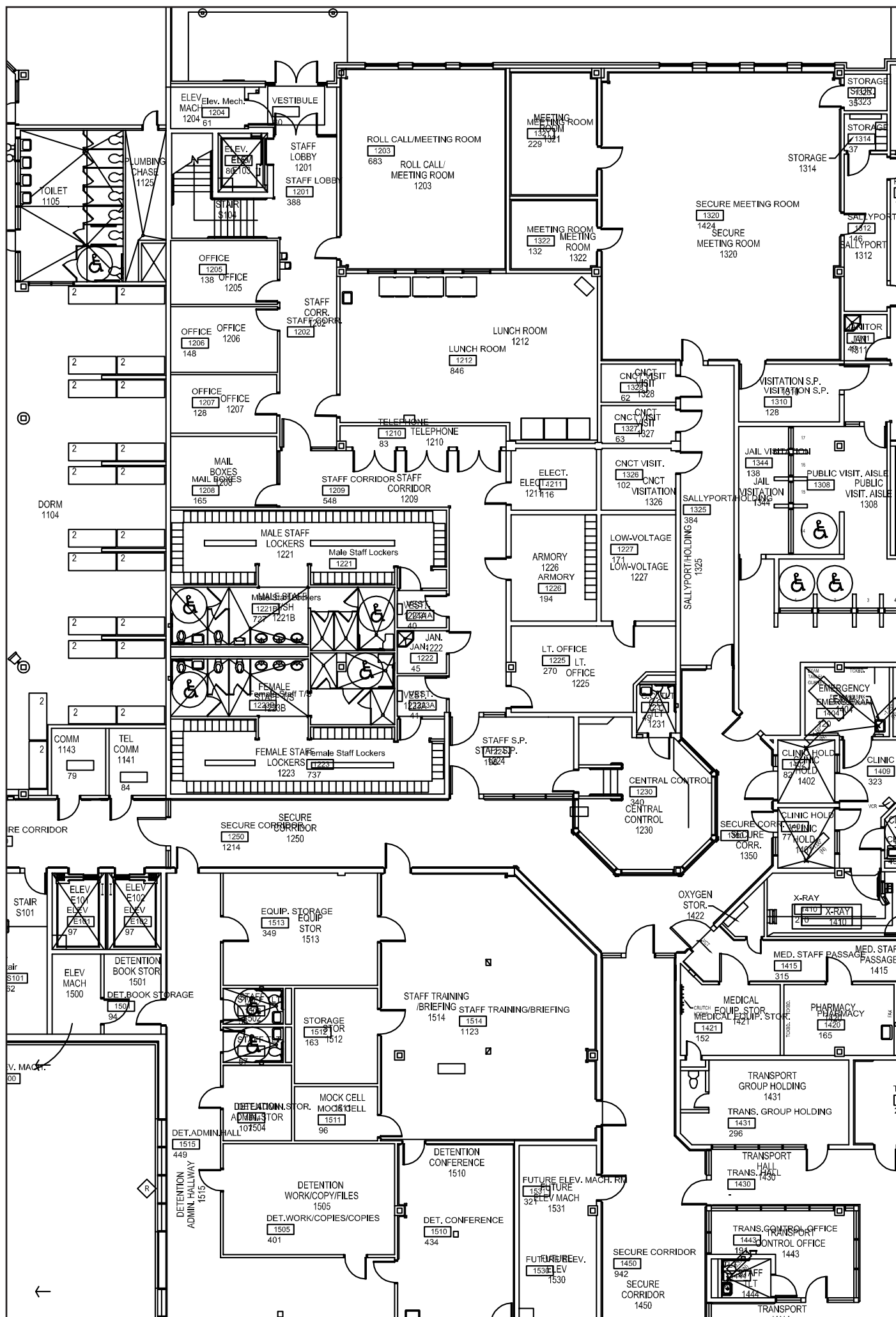
He doesn't want anything from us.

SHANE

If I let him go he will come back
to hurt you and Judy. He's
obviously lying. I wouldn't hurt
him if he needed food for a hungry
child.

Still image of Shane with Honey behind him. A number eight
tattoo on his shoulder. Eyes half open.

CUT TO:



10 DAYS AGO

INT. DETECTIVES CAR

Two men inside a moving black sedan with dark windows. Beige leather interior. The man in the passenger's seat turns to his partner.

DETECTIVE 2

You've been here before haven't you?

WINTERS stares straight ahead silently.

DETECTIVE 2

My sister used to go here when we were kids to stargaze from up on that tower.

EXT. COMPLEX XII

They pull into the driveway. License plate SG13 71U. Honey's face watching them through the hexagon window on the front door. They get out of their vehicle. DETECTIVE 2 lights a cigarette.

WINTERS

We aren't here to discuss the bloody snow in your driveway.

She opens the door slightly.

HONEY

Then why are you here?

WINTERS

A woman has gone missing. Her name is Lisa.

INT. COMPLEX XII - LIVING ROOM

Honey sits opposite the detectives. Winters is holding a cup of coffee.

DETECTIVE 2

Where is your brother today?

HONEY

Shane's probably at VIII.

DETECTIVE 2

Do you know what he does when he goes to Complex VIII?

Winters spills coffee on his tie.

CUT TO:

MARTHA

INT. MARTHA'S VAN - APF3915

Still image of Martha sitting in the backseat. She is wearing a black turtle neck underneath a spinal brace that looks like scaffolding.

MARTHA V.O.

I was a proctor at St. Jude for the better part of my life. One boy was especially bright. I can't remember his name which is strange. I usually remember the names of my patients.

EXT. CENTER TOWER - BASE

Construction workers wandering around with rolled up plans. Martha looks up to the top of the tower.

AERIAL SHOT A crane placing windows into Center Tower. A pick-up truck towing a housing module.

CUT TO:

REMEMBER LISA (OMITTED)
BLUE STARS (OMITTED)
PULLING THEM OUT OF THE SKY (OMITTED)

PROTECT ME

INT. COMPLEX XII

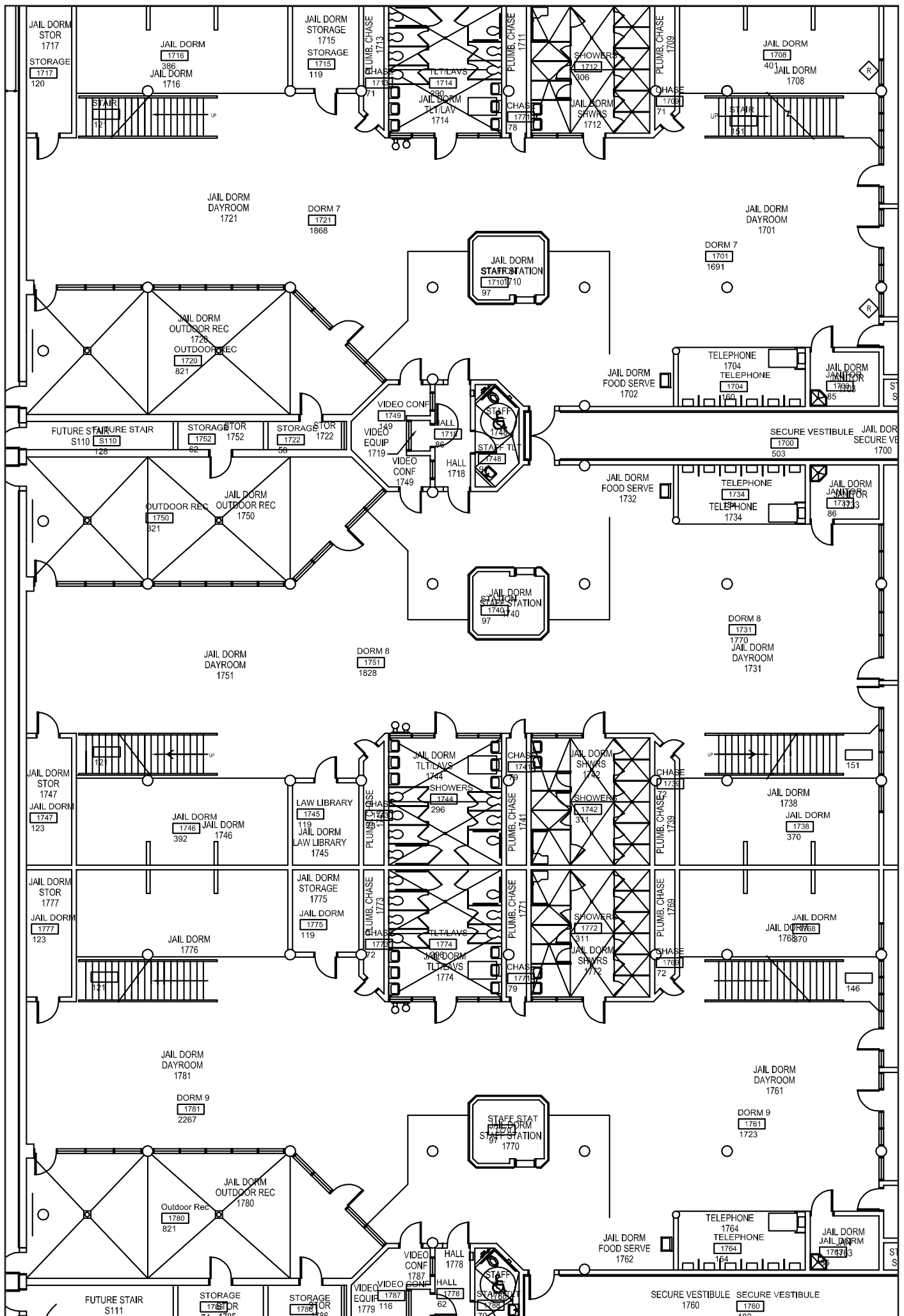
Shane is kneeling besides a slim rectangle table pushed against a wall near the front door.

CLOSE UP:

White, blue and grey answering machine.

LISA V.O.

Hi I'm not here right now and neither is anyone else apparently. Which is strange because we usually are here but not today. Anyway, leave a message and I promise that we will get back to you.



He grabs a tangle of cords from beneath the table and pulls them toward his chest.

Honey is watching from down the hall.

SHANE

At St. Jude's they told me that
every storm runs out of rain. I
have tried to be patient but the
clouds continue to turn us away.

CUT TO:

VIII

INT. COMPLEX VIII - ROOM

CLOSE UP:

A turtle crawling on the concrete floor. The room is mostly empty save a pile of distressed clothes in one corner. Judith picks up the turtle and looks into its eyes. In the background we see Honey enter.

HONEY

You shouldn't be here, Judy. It's
not safe. Think how Shane would
feel if he knew you were here
alone.

He sets the turtle down.

JUDITH

I wonder what Shane sees in that
turtle.

HONEY

He thinks it was theirs. His and
Lisa's. From when they were kids.

She looks down at Judith's untied shoe laces. The turtle is climbing onto them.

EXT. FLOWER COMPLEX - PATHWAY

A sidewalk that runs along the perimeter of Flower Complex. Judith is following it home. His hair and clothes are wet from rain.

WINTERS V.O.

Think back as far as you can
remember and start there.

YOUNG MAN V.O.

I remember a long car ride. It is unsettling because I don't know who is driving or where they are taking me. At St. Jude's they say your journey is a snowflake. It can't be taken or given.

He arrives at Complex XIV and walks through the front door.

CUT TO:

S.M.A.R.T. (OMITTED)

EYE ON THE DISEASE

EXT. WOODS

A bird flying from tree branch to tree branch. It lands on the ground and walks for awhile. The bird flutters and lands on Lisa's body lying face down.

Winters and his partner are examining the scene. Judith's jacket covers Lisa's face. DETECTIVE 2 lifts the jacket slightly to discover a tattoo on the back of her neck:
X/XXXI/MMXIV.

DETECTIVE 2

I've never seen anything like this.

Winters puts one hand on his partners shoulder.

WINTERS

Clear eyes, full heart. You're going to be alright.

AERIAL SHOT rising from the woods. In the distance we see an institutional building surrounded by fences.

CUT TO:

ST. JUDITH CHILDREN RESEARCH HOSPITAL

EXT. CENTER TOWER - ROOFTOP - MORNING

The sun is just beginning to rise. The light is blue through the rainy clouds. Martha is kneeling to Judith's height and has a hand on his shoulder.

MARTHA

Do you remember what I used to tell you?

JUDITH

That I'm your star. You pulled me
out of the sky.

Martha pinches the air.

MARTHA

All my little stars. Pulling them
out of the sky. That's how I said
it.

CUT TO:

THE FAMILY AFTERWARD

INT. COMPLEX XIV - JUDITH'S ROOM

CLOSE UP:

The picture frame on Judith's nightstand turned face down.

PAN TO a honeycomb shaped window. Looking out from the
second floor we see Judith pick up a jacket from the front
yard and walk towards the woods.

