

CALIBRATION

8-Episode Guide

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CONFIDENTIAL

EPISODE 1: "Modification"

Runtime: 58-62 min | **Timeframe:** 2001-2012 | **Novel Chapters:** 1-3

Logline: A geneticist modifies his unborn son's genome — and spends the next ten years teaching the child not to destroy everything he touches.

Synopsis: Abednego Danner injects his pregnant wife with a fourteen-gene CRISPR cascade while she sleeps. Hugo is born extraordinary — 11 lbs 4 oz, a grip that bruises. By five, he's broken a boy's arm with a casual touch. Abednego teaches Hugo calibration: the constant, conscious modulation of force. Hugo enters public school at ten, demolishes a bully's fort with his bare hands, and is filmed. The video goes viral. Abednego pulls Hugo from school. Hugo asks the question that will define his life: *What am I for?*

Key Scenes:

- The injection (cold open, no dialogue, 3 min)
- Tyler's broken arm (the first consequence)
- The calibration curriculum (eggs, glass, father's hand)
- Hugo alone in the woods: joy of full capability
- The fort demolition (filmed by a seventh grader)
- "Will I always have to pretend?" / "We'll figure it out."

Ends with: Hugo at eight, sitting on a boulder, asking the mountains what he's for.

EPISODE 2: "Calibration"

Runtime: 55-60 min | **Timeframe:** 2016-2021 | **Novel Chapters:** 4-6

Logline: Hugo discovers he's bulletproof, goes to college, plays elite football — and destroys a man's spine in three-tenths of a second.

Synopsis: Hugo at fifteen survives an accidental gunshot — the round flattens against his thigh. He reads his father's journal and confronts Abednego: "The science was magnificent. What you did to Mom was unforgivable." At CU Boulder, Hugo walks on to the football team, calibrating his performance to 60-65% — elite but not impossible. He makes his first friend (Marcus Webb) and has his first relationship (Elena Navarro). For eighteen months, it works. Then USC comes to Boulder, and Hugo's calibration slips during a tackle. Trey Kensington's spine breaks. Hugo runs 180 miles in four hours.

Key Scenes:

- The accidental gunshot: the bullet flattens, the hunter's disbelief
- Reading the journal: "You didn't even ask her"
- Walk-on tryout: calibrated numbers (4.31 forty, 42 reps at 225)
- Marcus as roommate ("You look like you could bench-press a car")
- The USC game: the hit, the pop, the silence of 53,750 people
- The midnight departure: notes to Marcus and Elena, running into the mountains

Ends with: Hugo on a ridgeline above Steamboat Springs, standing in snow, saying: "Never again."

EPISODE 3: "Drift"

Runtime: 50-55 min | **Timeframe:** 2021-2023 | **Novel Chapters:** 7-8

Logline: Hugo disappears into manual labor, fighting rings, and pearl diving — until a woman who knows his name sits down in a Tahiti bar.

Synopsis: Two years of exile. Hugo works oil rigs (Permian Basin), fishing boats (Kodiak), and construction (Dubai) under a false name, performing at 15% — the lowest calibration he's attempted. He fights in an underground ring in Dubai, discovering the transgressive pleasure of using what he is. In Tahiti, he finds peace as a pearl diver — underwater, his full capability has no consequences. He kills a bull shark with one punch. Then Catherine Lyle appears. She knows everything: his name, his modification, his father's research. She offers purpose. Hugo, hollowed out by two years of being no one, says yes.

Key Scenes:

- Permian Basin: 15% calibration, the best roughneck on the rig
- Dubai fighting ring: 20% punches, the crowd's silence, the mythology of "the American"
- Pearl diving: the freedom of the deep, the shark encounter
- Lyle's recruitment pitch: "You're looking for a context where what you are makes sense. I can provide that."
- Hugo's acceptance: not trust, but the exhaustion of isolation

Ends with: Hugo on a military transport, flying east. The mountains of Tahiti recede. The institutional world approaches.

EPISODE 4: "Weapon"

Runtime: 58-62 min | **Timeframe:** 2023-2024 | **Novel Chapters:** 9-12

Logline: Hugo becomes the most effective soldier in American history — while a program to replicate him takes shape behind the scenes.

Synopsis: Fort Bragg training. Cadena becomes Hugo's handler — the first institutional figure who treats him with genuine respect. Syria deployment: Hugo single-handedly neutralizes fortified positions, absorbing gunfire that would kill any normal operator. Twelve kills. The moral weight accumulates. Hugo visits Estes Park for the first time in years. Anna is dead — pancreatic cancer, August 2023. Abednego is gaunt, trembling, guilty. He reveals that the DIA subpoenaed his journal. Hugo realizes: "Someone is trying to do it again." Lyle's message confirms it.

Key Scenes:

- Training: Hugo at 30% in combat exercises, still dominant

- Cadena: "Strength without judgment is a natural disaster"
- Syria: the first compound breach, the physical ease of killing
- Anna's death revealed (the intercepted letter: "She asked for you at the end")
- Abednego's confession: the gaps in the journal, the built-in fail-safes
- Lyle's text: "Your father's research has been subpoenaed. Don't worry — I'm handling it."

Ends with: Hugo in the sedan, driving away from Estes Park. He understands: Lyle has the journal. She has his samples. Catherine Lyle isn't just studying him. She's trying to make another one.

EPISODE 5: "Prometheus"

Runtime: 58-62 min | **Timeframe:** 2024-2025 | **Novel Chapters:** 13-16

Logline: Hugo falls in love with a woman who is secretly feeding his data to the program that wants to copy him.

Synopsis: PROMETHEUS revealed: fourteen researchers, \$183 million, Building 568 at Fort Detrick. Dr. Martin Keyes explains the problem — individual edits work, the cascade doesn't. The difference between a musicologist and Mozart. Twelve embryos are modified with an incomplete protocol. Eight survive initial modification. Four survive to sixteen weeks, deteriorating. Dr. Raya Patel is assigned as Hugo's medical monitor. She falls in love with him. Hugo discovers intimacy — the most dangerous physical act of his life, guided by a woman who understands his physiology. The Cadena ambush in Syria — Hugo goes ballistic, saves the team, Cadena is injured. Hugo begins to suspect the medical monitoring is feeding something larger.

Key Scenes:

- Keyes and Lyle: "The problem isn't the individual edits. It's the art."
- The embryo lab: twelve artificial wombs, clinical horror
- Raya's first examination: "How does it feel?" / "It feels like being a guest."
- The love scene: trust as the most intimate act
- The Syria ambush: Hugo at full capacity, the SOF team's awe and terror
- Hugo's suspicion: why does Raya need so many blood samples?

Ends with: Lyle in the observation room, looking at the four surviving fetuses. "Get me the complete protocols." / "From Danner?" / "From his son."

EPISODE 6: "Protocols"

Runtime: 55-60 min | **Timeframe:** 2025 | **Novel Chapters:** 17-20

Logline: Hugo discovers the truth — and the woman he loves is complicit.

Synopsis: Hugo confronts Lyle about PROMETHEUS. She deflects. He finds the Fort Detrick facility independently — the artificial wombs, the dying fetuses, the data pipeline from his medical exams to

Keyes's research. Raya tries to leak the program to a journalist. The leak is intercepted. Hugo discovers Raya's dual role: she loves him AND she's been feeding his data to PROMETHEUS. The betrayal scene — Hugo's calibration holds, but barely. He could kill her with a careless gesture. Instead, he walks away. Hugo is confined to the Virginia facility. Lyle's mask drops: "He's a national security asset."

Key Scenes:

- Hugo at Fort Detrick: the observation window, the fetuses, the monitors
- "These are people. They didn't consent to this. Neither did I."
- Raya's attempted leak: the journalist call, the interception
- The betrayal: Hugo in Raya's quarters, the laptop open to PROMETHEUS files
- "You knew. From the beginning, you knew." / "I knew. And I stayed because I thought I could—" / "Could what? Fix it? Fix me?"
- Hugo confined: the cell, the institutional response to a man who refuses to be a resource

Ends with: Hugo alone in a reinforced cell, staring at the ceiling. The calibration metaphor made literal: he is contained. But the cell is designed for normal men.

EPISODE 7: "Escape"

Runtime: 58-62 min | **Timeframe:** 2025 | **Novel Chapters:** 21-24

Logline: Hugo breaks free, destroys PROMETHEUS, and shuts down the dying embryos — one at a time, with the gentleness that defines everything he touches.

Synopsis: Hugo tears through the cell door. He walks past the guards without violence. He drives to Estes Park for the last conversation with his father. Abednego gives Hugo the complete protocol — the four missing targets, the timing sequence, the vector design. Hugo drives to Fort Detrick at 3 AM. He tears through the fences, announces his intent to the MPs ("I'm not here to hurt anyone"), and systematically destroys Building 568: servers, samples, data. On the fourth floor, he finds Keyes beside the artificial wombs. The fetuses are dying — the incomplete cascade is consuming them. Hugo shuts down the wombs one at a time, pressing the termination controls with the same calibrated precision he uses for everything fragile. "No one will ever do this again."

Key Scenes:

- The cell door: Hugo tears it off its hinges, walks past armed guards
- The kitchen table: Abednego transfers the complete protocol to Hugo's memory
- Fort Detrick breach: chain-link fences torn open, MPs standing down
- The server room: three years of data crushed by hand
- The embryo facility: Keyes's exhaustion, Hugo's gentleness, four flatlines
- The drive west: "Home."

Ends with: Hugo at the kitchen table in Estes Park. His father is in custody. His mother is dead. The modification's bone growth is reaching his joints. He asks the question from age eight: *What am I for?*

And for the first time, he finds an answer: *Nothing. Men are not for things. Men simply are.*

EPISODE 8: "Threshold"

Runtime: 62-68 min | **Timeframe:** 2025-2031 | **Novel Chapters:** 25-30 + Epilogue

Logline: The world sends a thermobaric bomb for the man it can't contain — and a notebook survives the fire.

Synopsis: Hugo flees to the mountains. His father dies in federal custody. The bone growth reaches Hugo's spine — the modification consuming itself. Hugo spends his last day in the meadow at 9,200 feet, the gymnasium of his childhood. He thinks about everyone: Elena, Marcus, Raya, Cadena, his mother. He sees the pattern: self-sacrifice without reciprocity, the mechanism of his destruction. Two Black Hawks arrive. A SOF team deploys. A thermobaric bomb hovers. Hugo could fight. He could kill every operator in seconds. Instead, he stands still — because fighting would prove their thesis. His refusal is his first fully autonomous act. Lyle gives the order. The meadow becomes glass.

Coda (30 min): Three aftermath scenes. Lyle briefs the Senate, is promoted, keeps the file. Marcus publishes "The First Superhuman" in *The Atlantic*. A forest ranger finds a fireproof box in the ruins. Inside: Abednego's final notebook — the complete modification protocol. Five years later, a graduate student opens the box.

Key Scenes:

- Abednego's death in custody (off-screen, reported)
- Hugo on the mountain: the bone growth, the pain, the acceptance
- The self-sacrifice epiphany: every institution took from him and returned nothing
- "Catherine. I know you're watching."
- Hugo's choice not to fight: "I am more than what I can do"
- The thermobaric detonation: the meadow becomes glass
- Lyle's aftermath: intellectual understanding, moral failure, the file stays in the safe
- Marcus's article: eight million readers, a Polk Award, a note in a desk drawer
- The notebook: fireproof box, fused lock, composition book, complete protocols
- Maria Chen: the locksmith, the cipher, the geneticist who goes very quiet

Ends with: *The question was never what Hugo Danner could do. The question was whether the world had the right to decide what an extraordinary individual could be. The question is still open.*

EPISODE MAP

Ep	Title	Chapters	Timeframe	Hugo's Age	Core Conflict
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1	Modification	1-3	2001-2012	0-10	Can a child learn to not break the world?
2	Calibration	4-6	2016-2021	14-19	Can the exceptional pretend to be normal?
3	Drift	7-8	2021-2023	19-21	Can a man survive being no one?
4	Weapon	9-12	2023-2024	21-22	Can an institution earn loyalty without reciprocity?
5	Prometheus	13-16	2024-2025	22-23	Can a person love someone who is also studying them?
6	Protocols	17-20	2025	23	What happens when the asset discovers the program?
7	Escape	21-24	2025	23	What does autonomy cost when the institution won't let go?
8	Threshold	25-30+Epi	2025-2031	23-death	Can the world tolerate greatness it doesn't control?