

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

RECORD OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN SIMON BERRY, INVESTIGATOR, OF THE  
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (ICAC) AND MS FADWA  
5 KEBBE AT [REDACTED] ON 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2016.

TIME COMMENCED: 11:04AM

PRESENT: PAUL GRAINGER, SENIOR INVESTIGATOR

10 BERRY: Alright, this is an electronically recorded interview. Today's date is the  
29<sup>th</sup> of November 2016. The time by my watch is 11:04am. For the  
record, my name is Simon Berry I'm an Investigations Officer with the  
Independent Commission Against Corruption. Seated directly to my right  
is Mr Paul Grainger who's Senior Investigations Officer with the  
15 Independent Commission Against Corruption. Also for the record, is Ms  
Fadwa Kebbe. Is that correct?

KEBBE: Yes Fadwa Kebbe.

BERRY: Is that how I pronounce it?

KEBBE: You pronounced, pronounced it very well.

20 BERRY: I apologise if I get it wrong.

KEBBE: No you have pronounced it well.

BERRY: We are currently at your home address. Is that correct?

KEBBE: Correct.

BERRY: And it is [REDACTED]. Is that correct?

25 KEBBE: Correct.

BERRY: And we're here as a result of a conversation I had with you yesterday on  
the telephone.

KEBBE: Yes.

30 BERRY: And you've invited us into your house to have this conversation with you.  
Is that correct?

KEBBE: That's correct.

BERRY: Apart from the three persons in this room here, do you agree there's no  
one else present in this room?

KEBBE: I agree.

BERRY: Alright. As I explained to you earlier, my name is Simon Berry. I'm an investigator with the Independent Commission Against Corruption and what I propose to do is offer you the opportunity to participate in an electronically recorded interview today. Do you understand that?

5 KEBBE: I do understand.

BERRY: Do you agree that I told you that this is a voluntary process, we're not coercing you to participate in today's interview. Do you agree with that?

KEBBE: I agree.

10 BERRY: Do you also agree that I told you, you're not obliged to say or do anything as anything you say or do will be recorded and may later be used in evidence.

KEBBE: I agree.

15 BERRY: Do you also agree that prior to the interview I went to some depth to explain what that means, in that anything you say or choose to answer today will be recorded and may later be used in either a Commission's enquiries or further enquiries in a criminal court. Do you understand that?

KEBBE: I do understand it.

- 5 BERRY: You should also be aware that pursuant to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, it's an offence to deliberately provide false or misleading information to an officer of the Commission exercising their functions under the Act. Any information you provide in this interview must be true and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief. Do you understand that?
- 10 KEBBE: I will swear on the bible if you wish it.
- BERRY: That's fine. So in plain words, Paul and I are both Commission officers so if you choose to answer anything today must be truthful, if you don't, you may be committing an offence.
- KEBBE: Absolutely.
- 15 BERRY: Okay. Once again, I express to you very clearly if you don't want to answer a question, you don't have to. Alright?
- KEBBE: I understand thank you.
- BERRY: Alright. Fadwa, do you mind if I call you Fadwa, is that fine?
- KEBBE: Not at all please by all means.
- 20 BERRY: Is that your full name? Do you have a middle name?
- KEBBE: Fadwa Kebbe.
- BERRY: That's your full name?
- KEBBE: Yes.
- BERRY: And your date of birth?
- 25 KEBBE: [REDACTED]—
- BERRY: Beg your pardon?
- KEBBE: [REDACTED]
- BERRY: [REDACTED]
- KEBBE: [REDACTED]
- 30 BERRY: Okay. Are you currently employed?

- KEBBE: At the moment no.
- BERRY: Okay. Can you outline to me your career or history of employment?
- KEBBE: Yes I had an absolute great employment 26 years it was the Department of Defence, Finance Manager. It was excellent credits. Resigned in 2004.
- 5 BERRY: When did you start with the Department of Defence?
- KEBBE: 1977.
- BERRY: And did you start as a Finance Manager in '77?
- KEBBE: I .....studied, worked my way up okay and I looking after 52 units.
- BERRY: I see.
- 10 KEBBE: Yeah.
- BERRY: And where was that located in Sydney or?
- KEBBE: Well I started in Leichhardt was the 21 supply battalion and then when I got all the upgrades and I went down to town to Liverpool Street at the time and then they bought a building in Pitt Street, and then I moved onto  
15 Moorebank onward as far as Orange.
- BERRY: So you had a number of locations over your period of your career?
- KEBBE: I did yes. I used to commute as far as Orange was my experience as the Finance Manager. I was looking after the force and teaching them how to use the finance system.
- 20 BERRY: I see alright. So prior to your retirement in 2004 you finishing up with the Department, can you indicate as the Finance Manager what your daily role or duties were?
- KEBBE: It was investigating all the payments in and out, and –
- BERRY: Yeah, it's working. Sorry
- 25 KEBBE: And scheduling on assets repayments out to the Defence and I used to also .....system –
- BERRY: Right.
- KEBBE: It's called .....and I loved my career. I used to work up to 14 hours a day but I had a lot of incentive. I travelled extensively with them and  
30 we've had a few fraud, you know, and everything was caught and dealt with, you know, and it was a wonderful career.
- BERRY: Were you in charge of procurement at any stage?

KEBBE: Yes I was, yeah.

BERRY: So you were well aware of how procurement went?

KEBBE: Yeah, I do. I was in charge of the whole –

BERRY: Did you have a budget?

5 KEBBE: We had unlimited, because we were dealing even with haviland..

BERRY: So how much were you in control of?

KEBBE: Millions and millions, billion dollar.

BERRY: Okay.

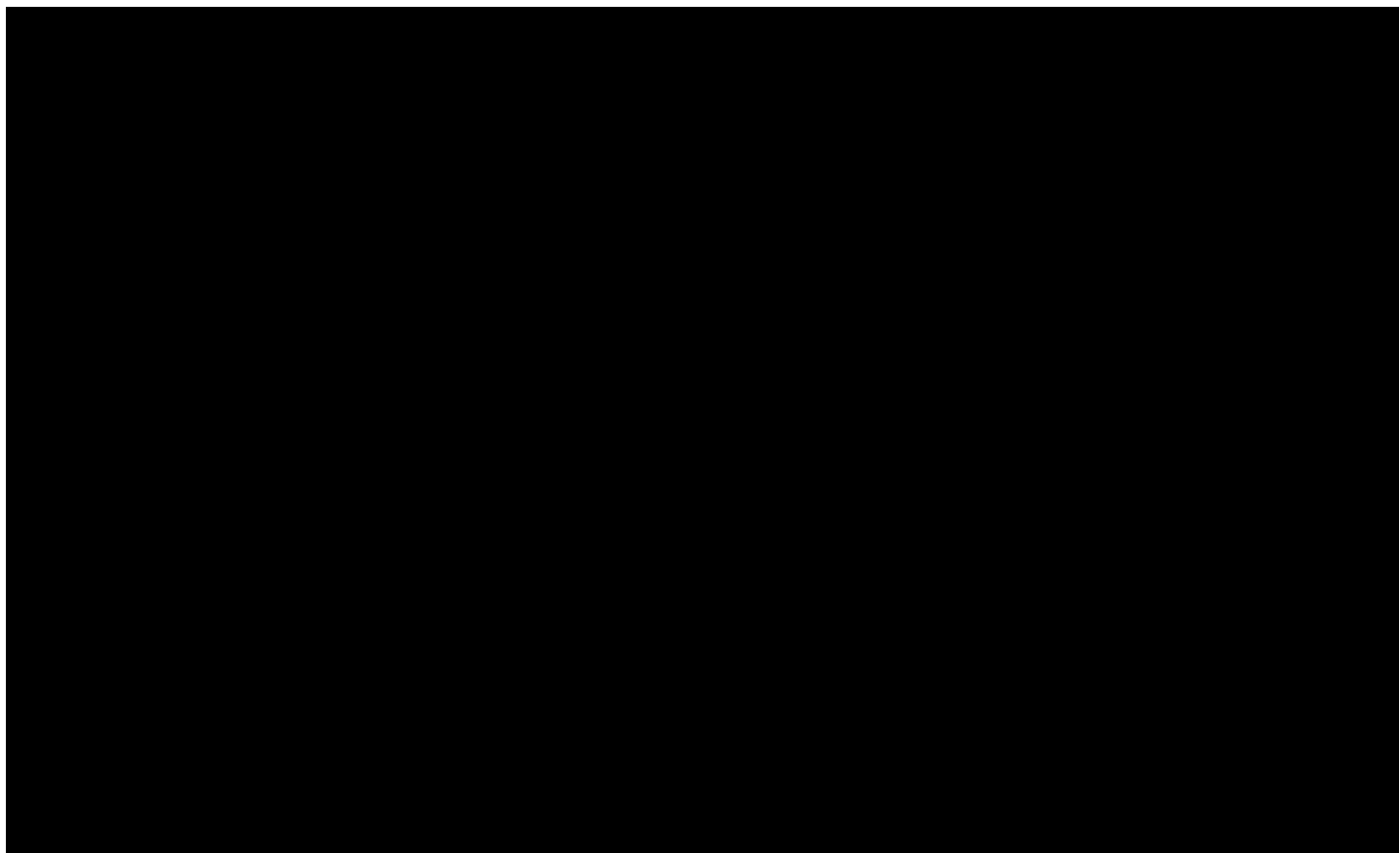
10 KEBBE: Yeah, because even housing also and paying haviland you know the big –  
at the early stages in the late seventies we used to deal with cash until in  
the early eighties came to, you know, creating the new system and paying  
with the electronic payment.

BERRY: I see alright. So what happened after 2004? What did you do then?

15 KEBBE: My father was very, very ill; because I was elected in 1999 I was  
approached to run. I've always been a hard worker. I've always been  
elected as though .....occupation health and safety officer and I was the  
union delegate. So I've always cared about the environment of the work  
and that, because I loved it, you know, you know if you like your work it's  
a different story.

20 BERRY: So you say you were approached in 1999 to run –

KEBBE: To run as a Councillor.



BERRY: And which area was this?

KEBBE: Canterbury.

BERRY: At Canterbury.

20 KEBBE: I've – we've lived in this house since '76 so we've been in this house for 40 years.

BERRY: Alright. Do you possess any formal qualifications?

KEBBE: Yes.

BERRY: Tertiary education and things –

KEBBE: Yeah, High School Certificate and College, yeah, I did power modelling.

25 BERRY: What's power modelling?

KEBBE: You have to carry yourself you know and it's related to fashion and design.

BERRY: Yes okay. Do you have any qualifications in Finance Management?

KEBBE: No it's all on the job.

30 BERRY: All on the job.

KEBBE: I did a lot of courses. I did a lot of TAFE courses.

- BERRY: So in 1999, what happened in so far as your –
- KEBBE: I was elected.
- BERRY: You were elected, okay.
- KEBBE: I was elected yes.
- 5 BERRY: And how long did you hold that position as a Councillor?
- KEBBE: Until 2016.
- BERRY: And until the amalgamation, is that correct?
- KEBBE: Until you got sacked on the day in May 22, I wasn't there.
- BERRY: And you say –
- 10 KEBBE: I was at a meeting, at the time.
- BERRY: I see. And you say a number of people approached you back in '99 to come on board?
- KEBBE: Yes.
- BERRY: And one of them was Mark Adler, is that correct?
- 15 KEBBE: Mark Adler. Mark Adler, [REDACTED] as I said, have to go and see [REDACTED] if she gives the go ahead –
- BERRY: I assume –
- KEBBE: - because there was not another female at the time except [REDACTED] was the only female out of ten.
- 20 BERRY: Okay. I assume over a period of time a number of Councillors came and left and whatever. What I'd like to do is explore your knowledge of some of those Councillors. In particular, Michael Hawatt. Do you know Michael Hawatt?
- KEBBE: I do, I do.
- 25 BERRY: When did you meet Michael Hawatt?
- KEBBE: When I first got on the Council.
- BERRY: Back in '99.
- KEBBE: 1999.
- BERRY: Was he a Councillor at that stage?

KEBBE: He was .....he was before me, yeah. He got in 1995.

BERRY: And what party does he belong to?

KEBBE: Liberal.

BERRY: Liberal. Do you also know a Pierre Azzi?

5 KEBBE: Pierre Azzi only recently.

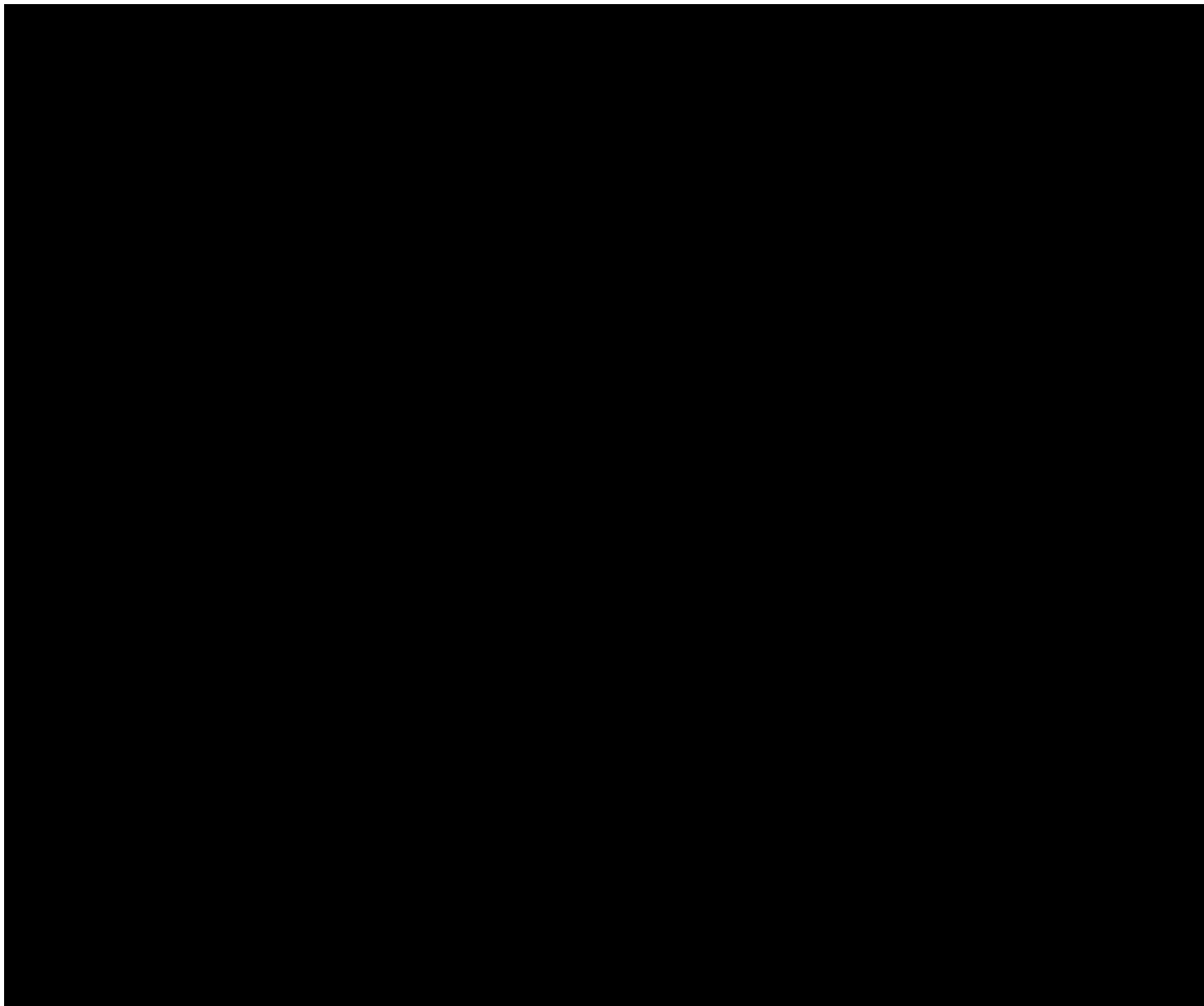
BERRY: When did he start?

KEBBE: Ah, 2012, but I didn't know him before.

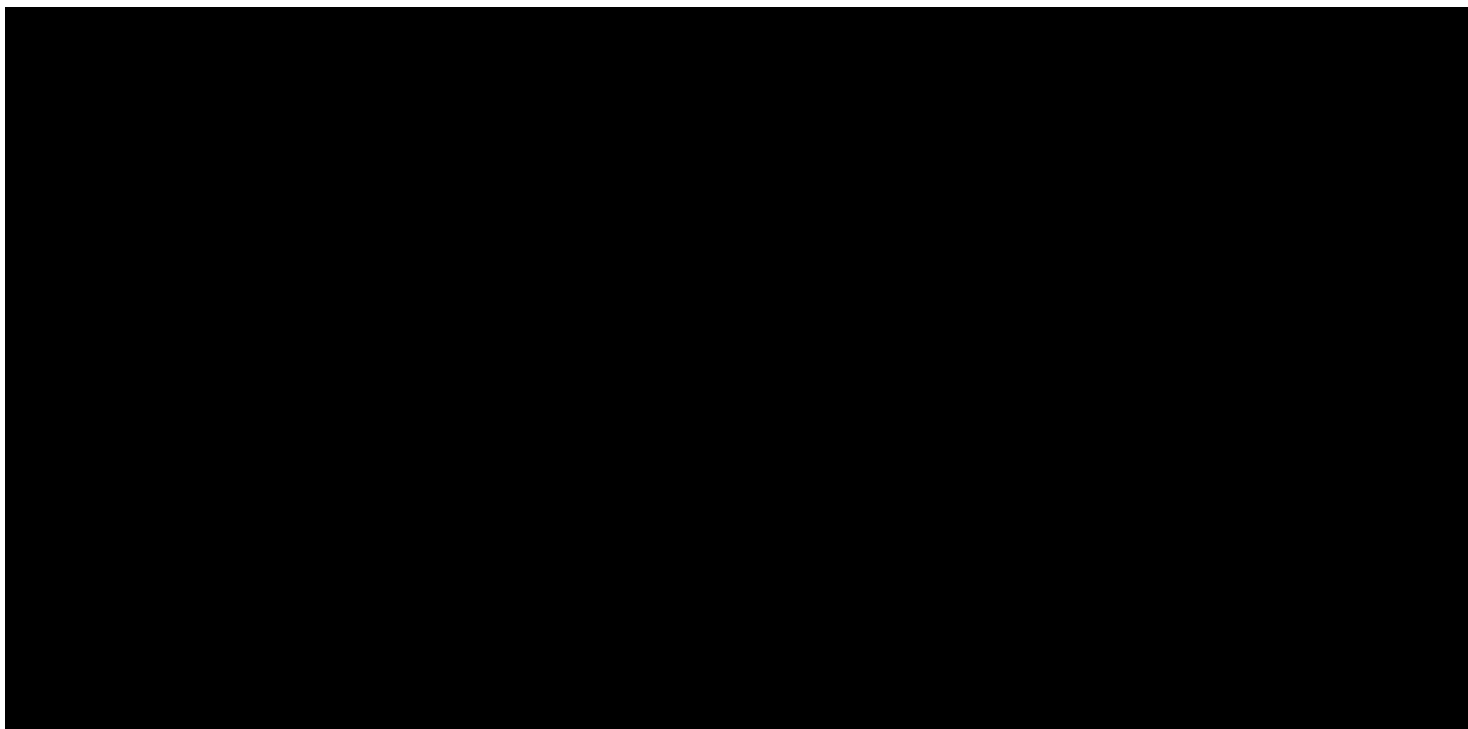
BERRY: I see and what party was he?

KEBBE: Labor.

10 BERRY: Labor okay.







BERRY: What I would like to do now is move onto your – I want to explore a little bit more of your relationship with some of the other Councillors, in particular, Michael Hawatt.

KEBBE: Sure.

15 BERRY: How would you describe your relationship with him?

KEBBE: Well he was the nice – like Mahmoud. Call him Mahmoud. I like him very, very much and we had a great friendship with his first wife, you know, when we used to conferences and everything and then went to his children's weddings. It was always – we've had a lot of fights also when he used to speak ill of the Labor Party and me, then we fight it out, and then when he remarried this loveliest lady from Morocco she speak Arabic and she speak French, and she's the nicest person that I've ever met, and had a baby girl [REDACTED] and we became even more friendly. See we've got – I've got a friendly relationship with his mother. I've known his mother and I bought a car from his mother.

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BERRY: Are they Lebanese as well?

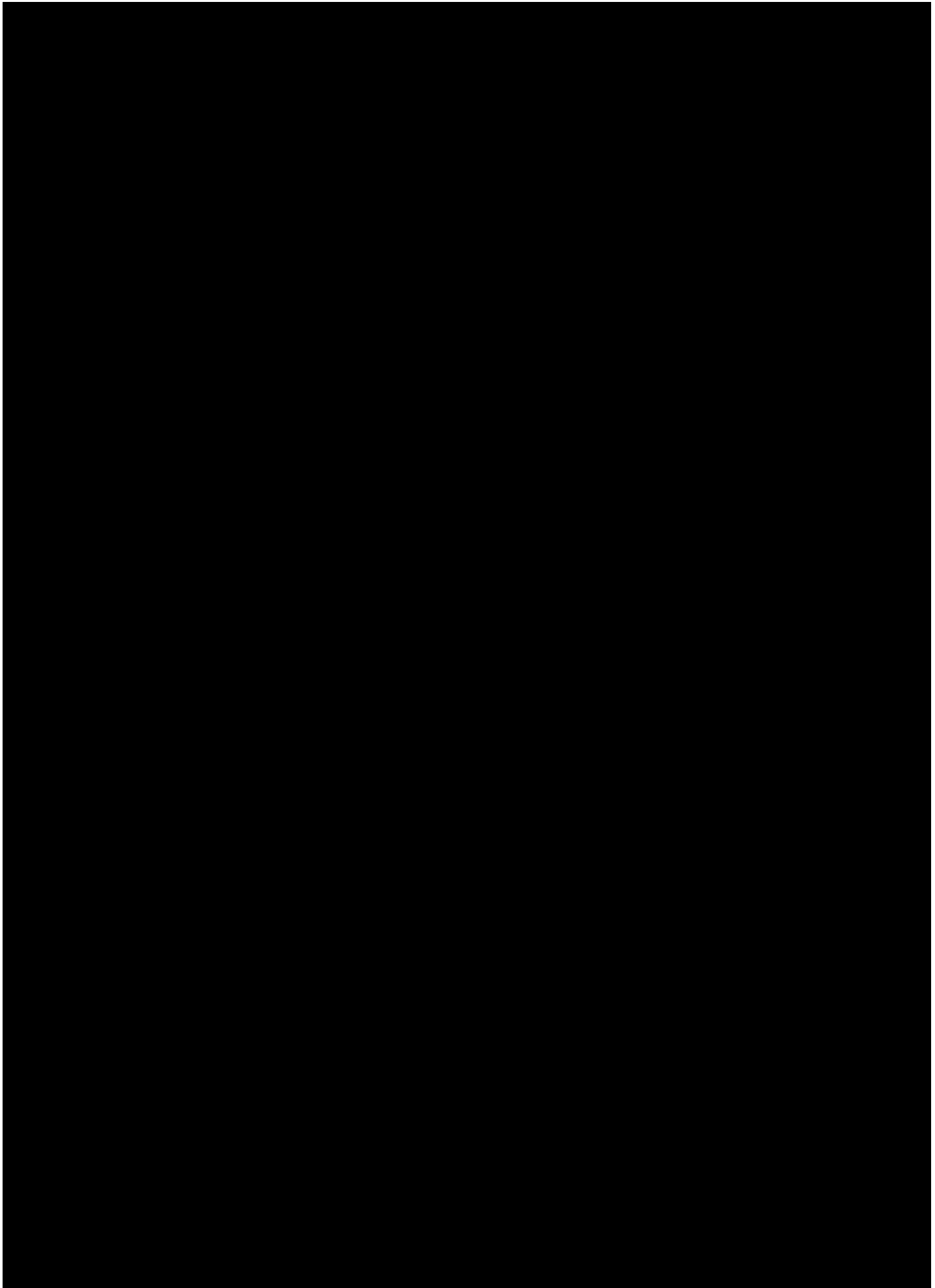
KEBBE: They're Lebanese but, ah –

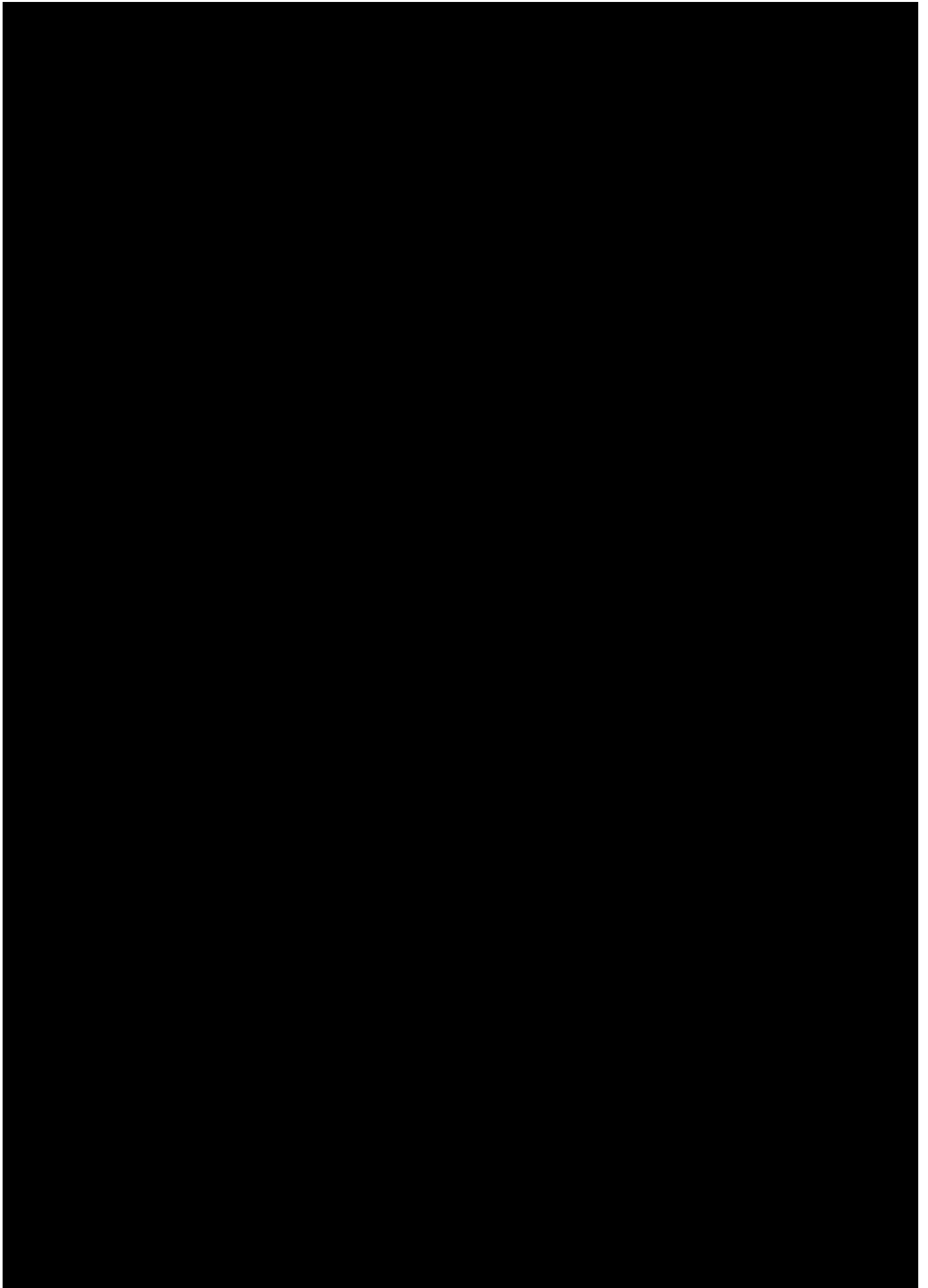
BERRY: Did you have some family connection back from Lebanon, or is it just as a result of being in Australia?

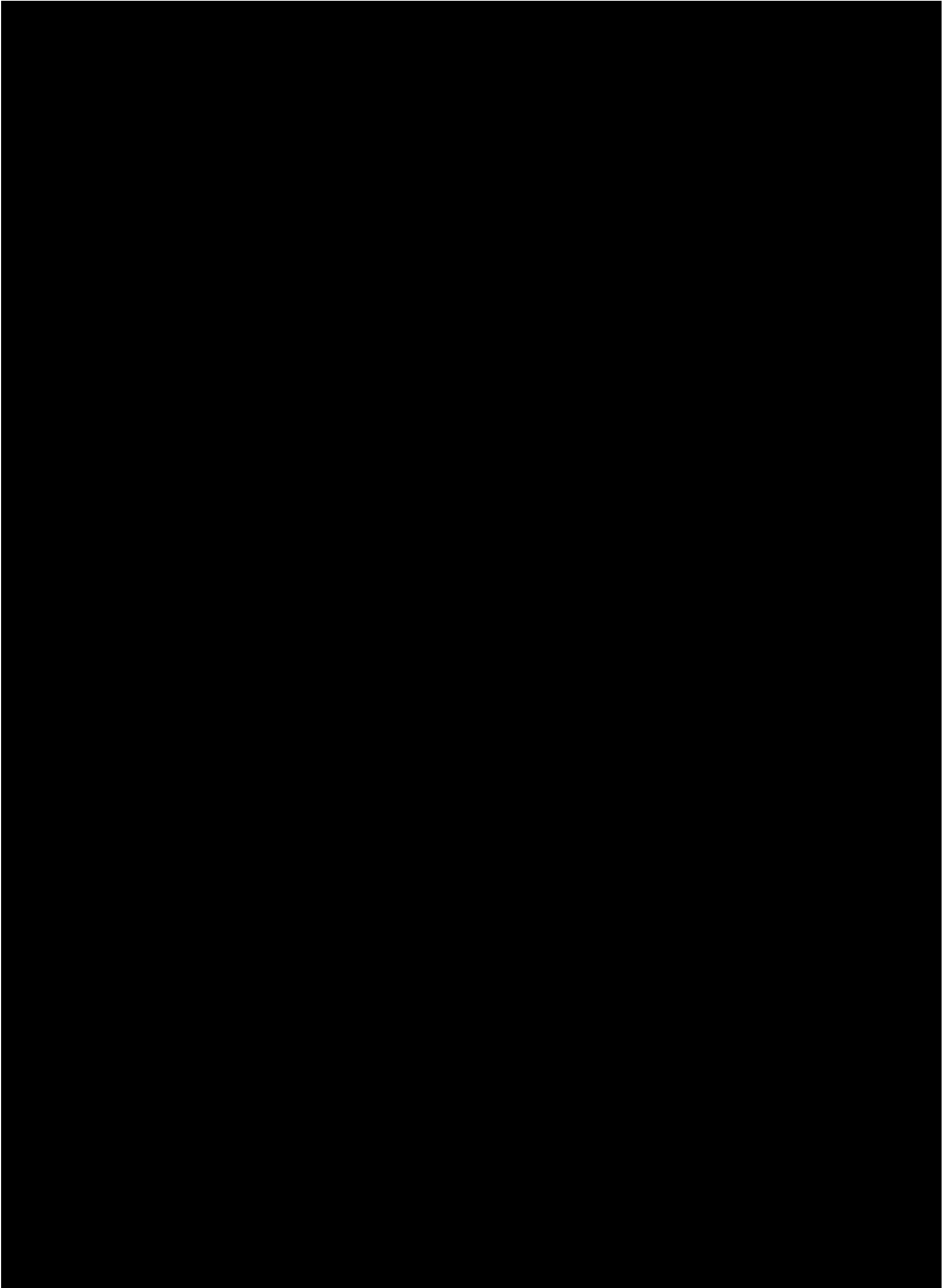
30 KEBBE: No they're Muslim family we're Christian so we're not related in any way.

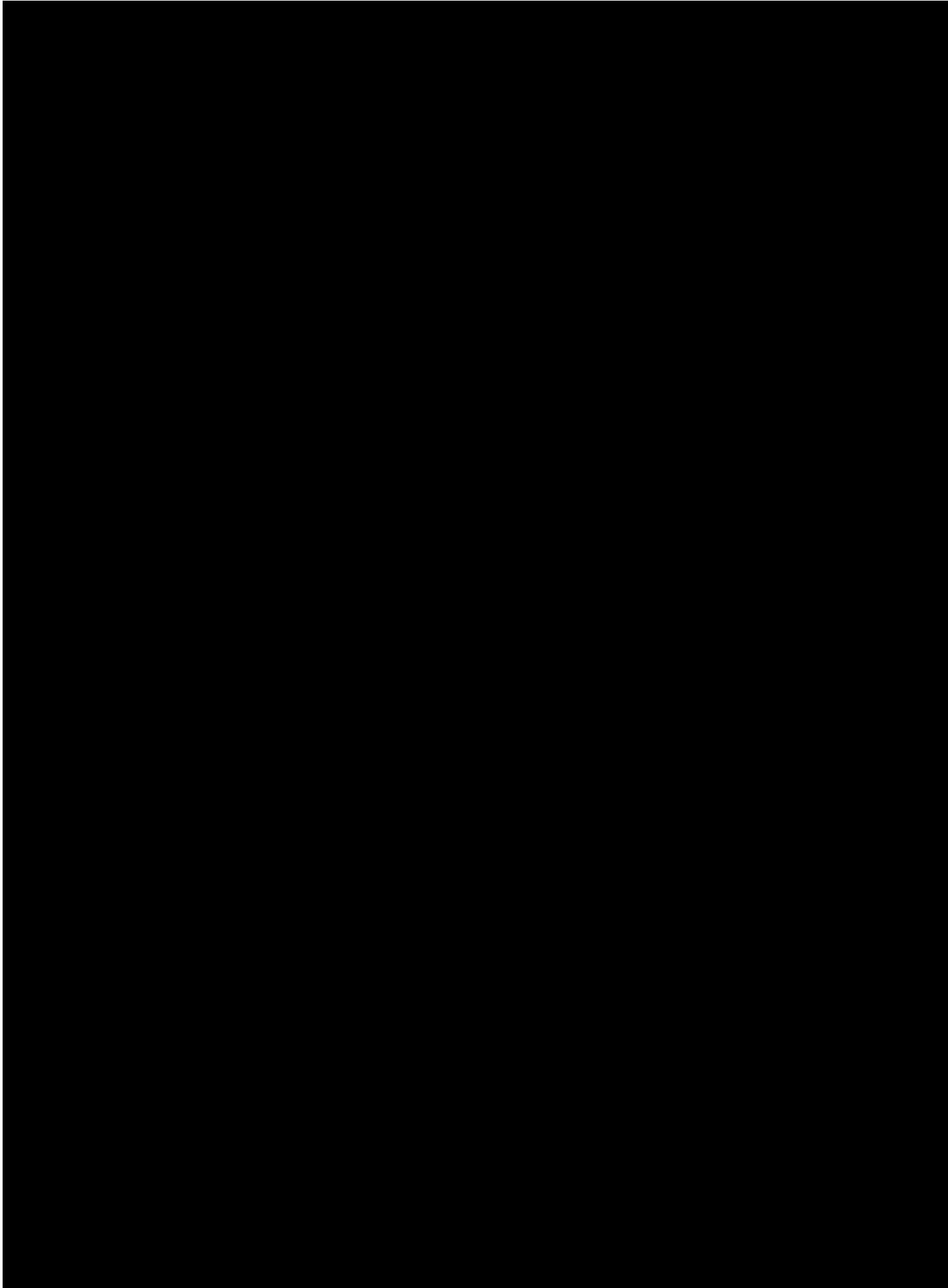
BERRY: Okay.

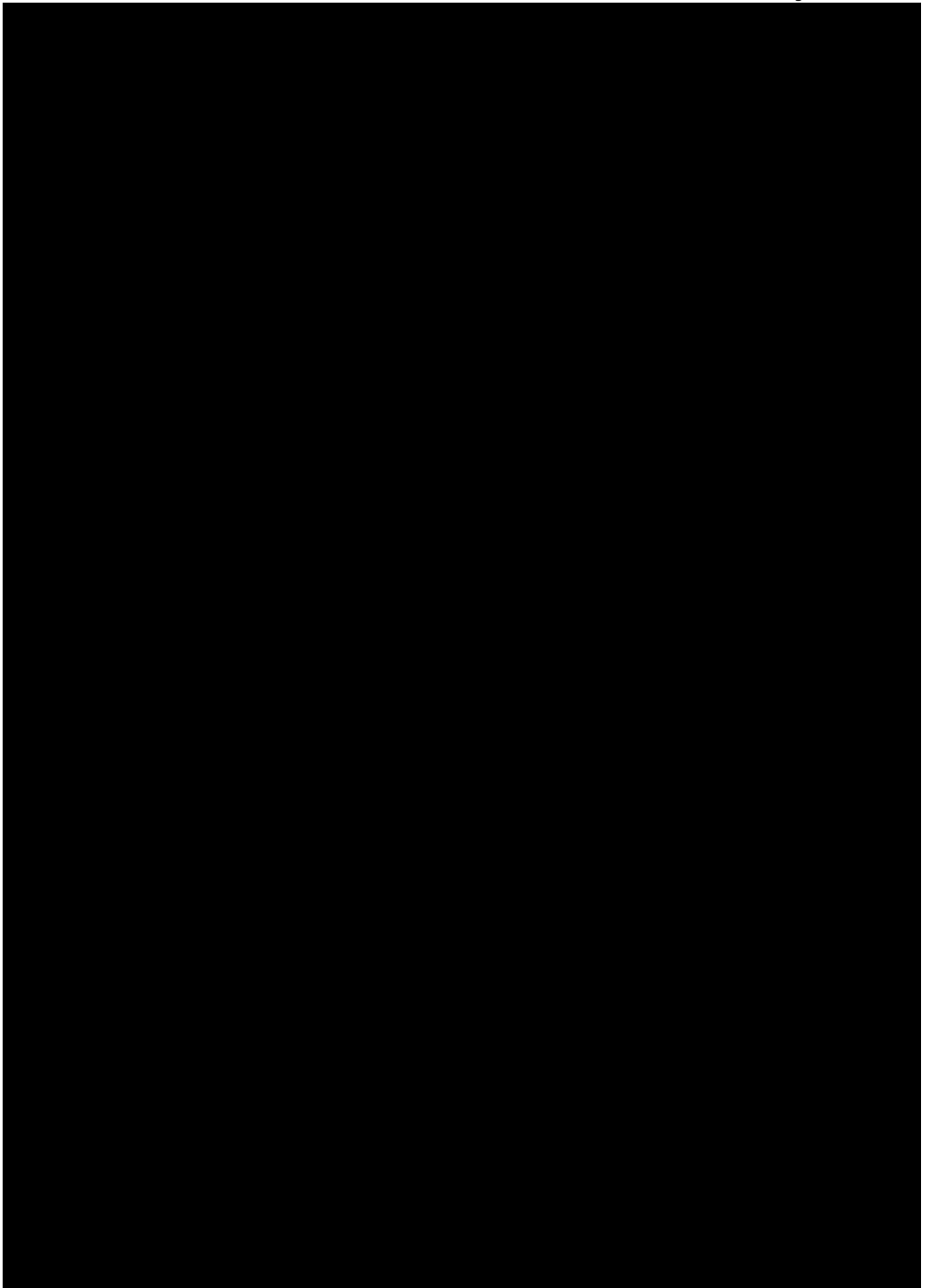
- 20 KEBBE: [REDACTED] We  
were really good family, you know, we respected each other, but – and  
then we got a new Mayor and war erupted. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- BERRY: Who is that you're referring to?
- 25 KEBBE: Brian Robson.
- BERRY: Who is the General Manager when this was all happening?
- KEBBE: GM. Jim Montague. You can't ask for a better or nicer person. He didn't  
play us against each other. He listened to all of us. We seeked advice I had  
a few issues and I always ran to him.

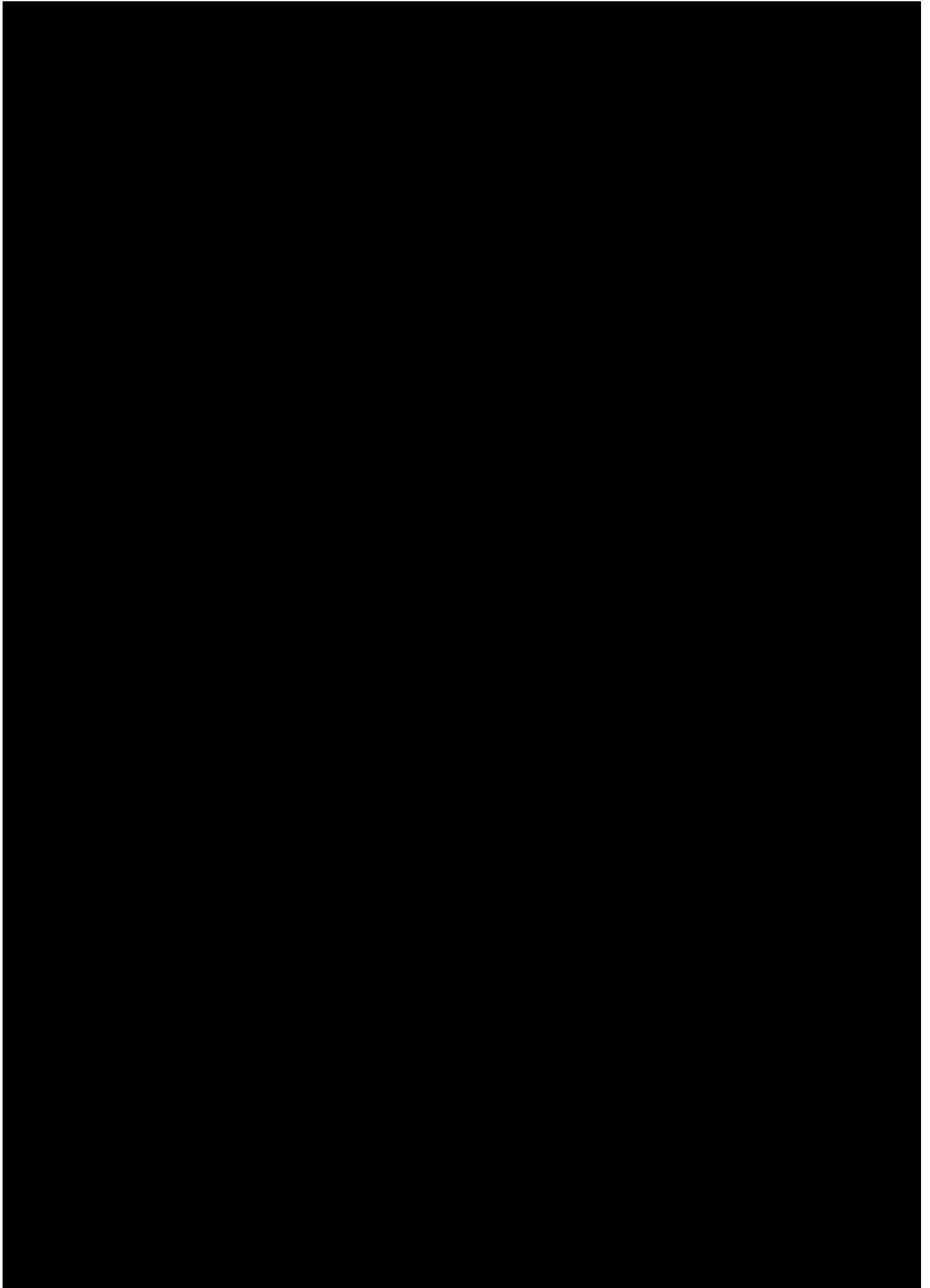




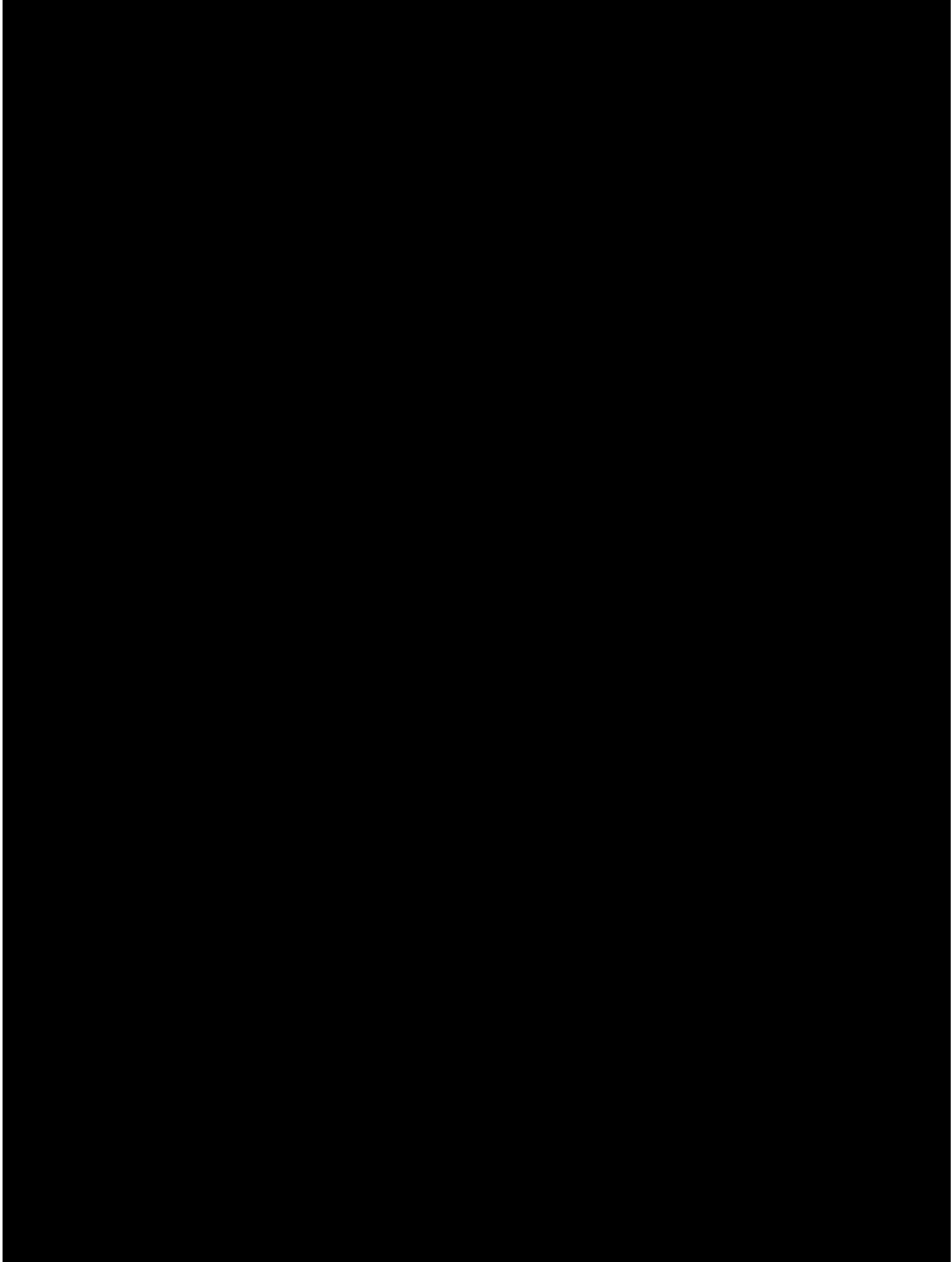


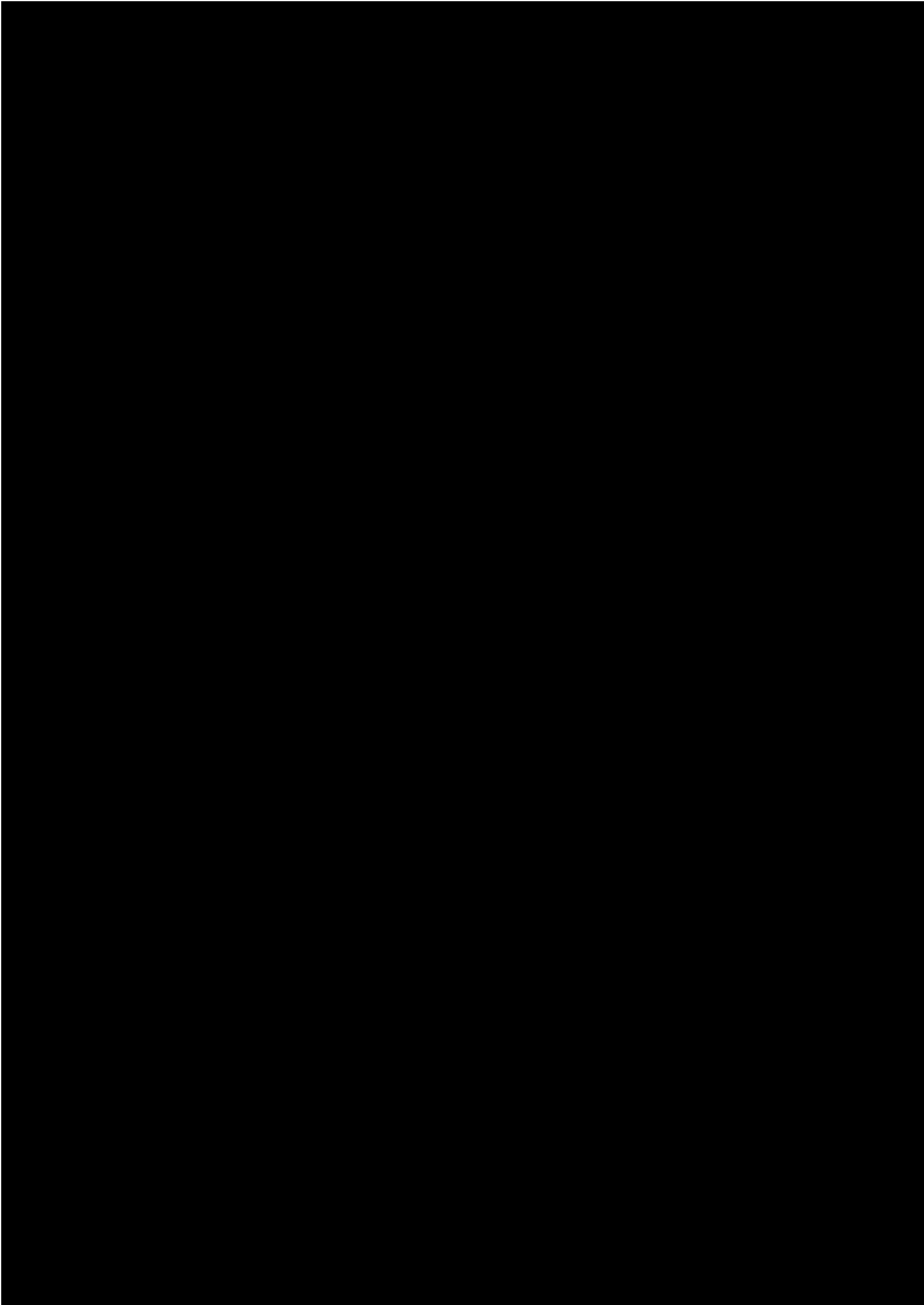


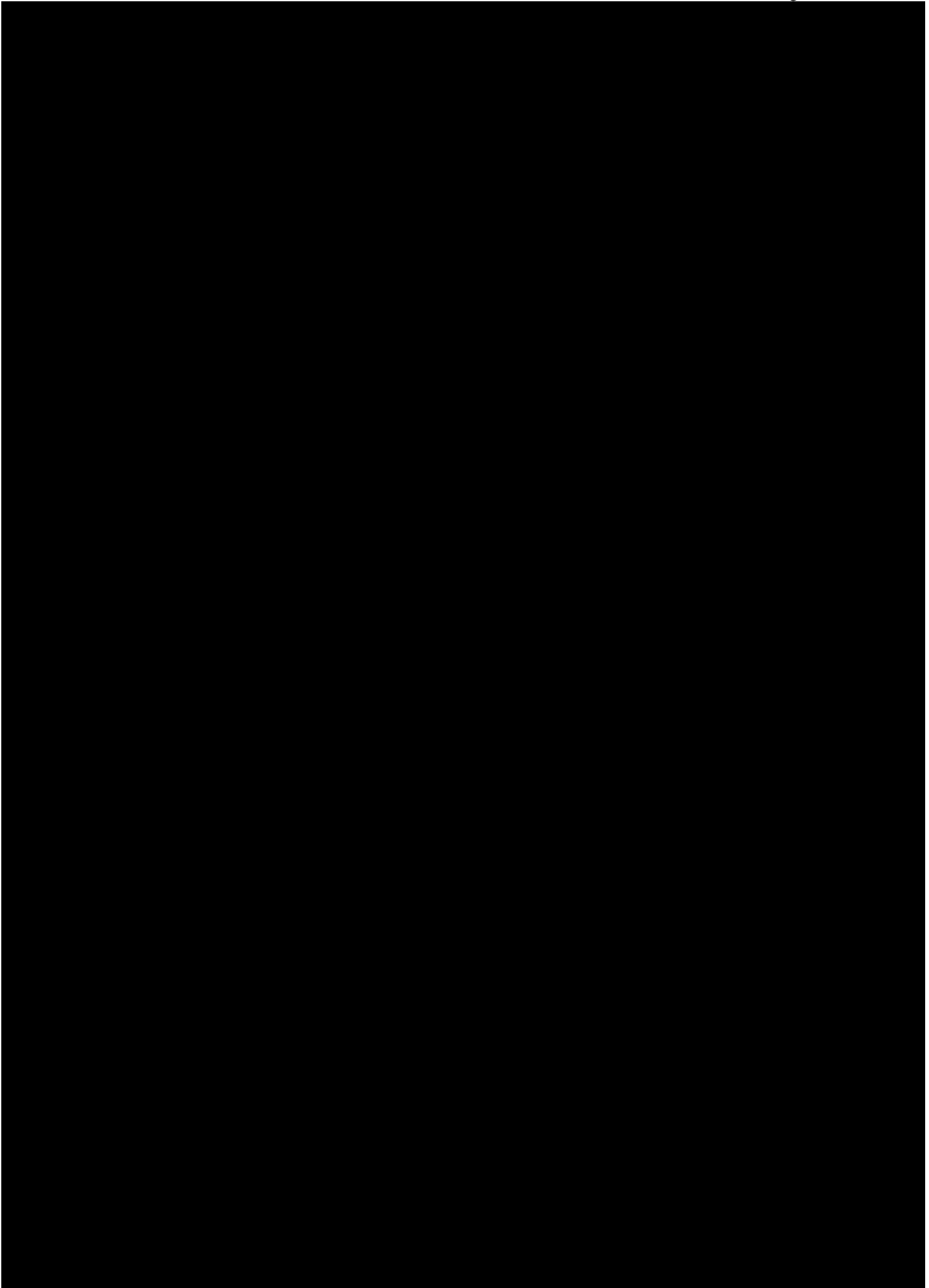


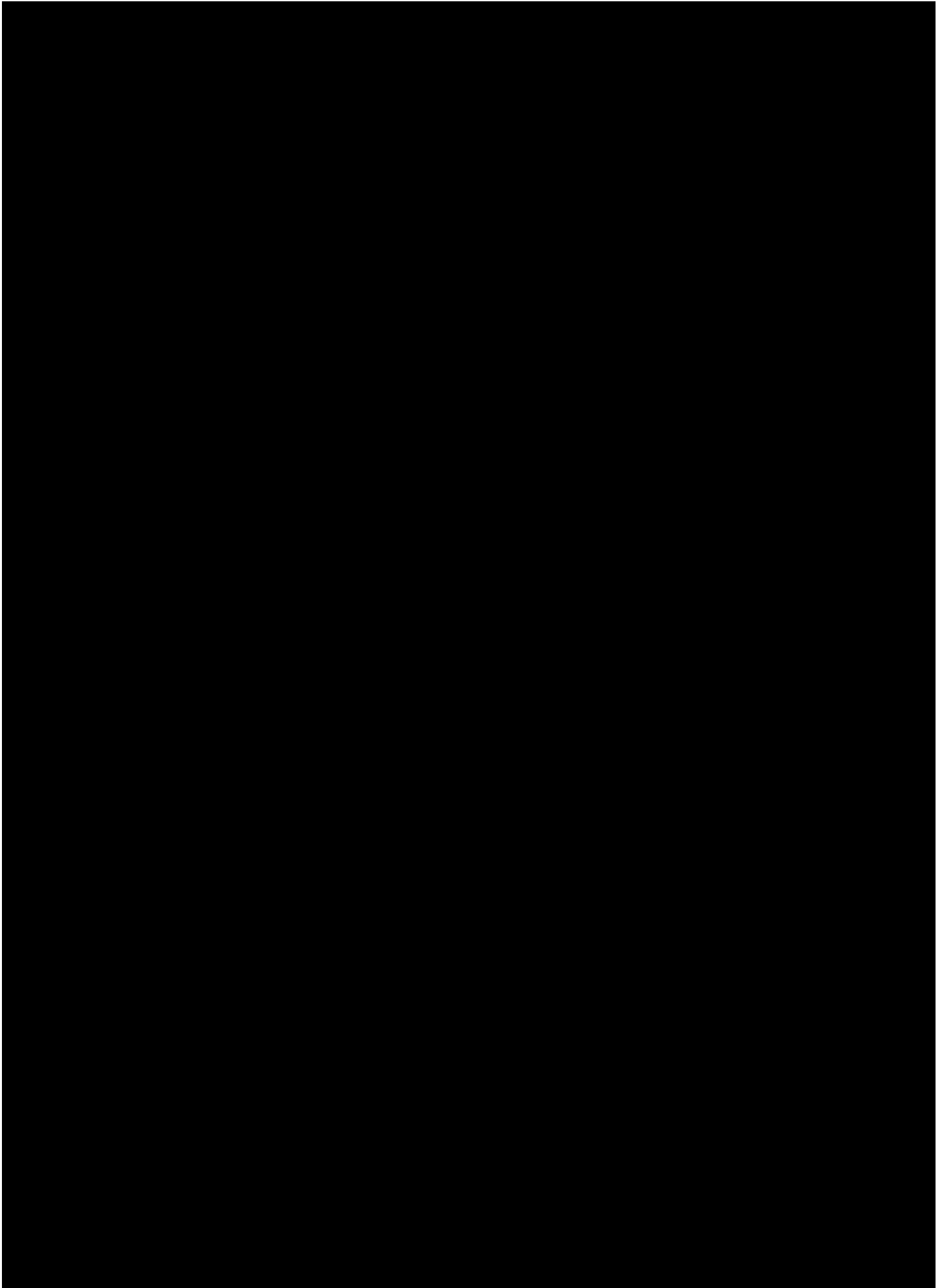


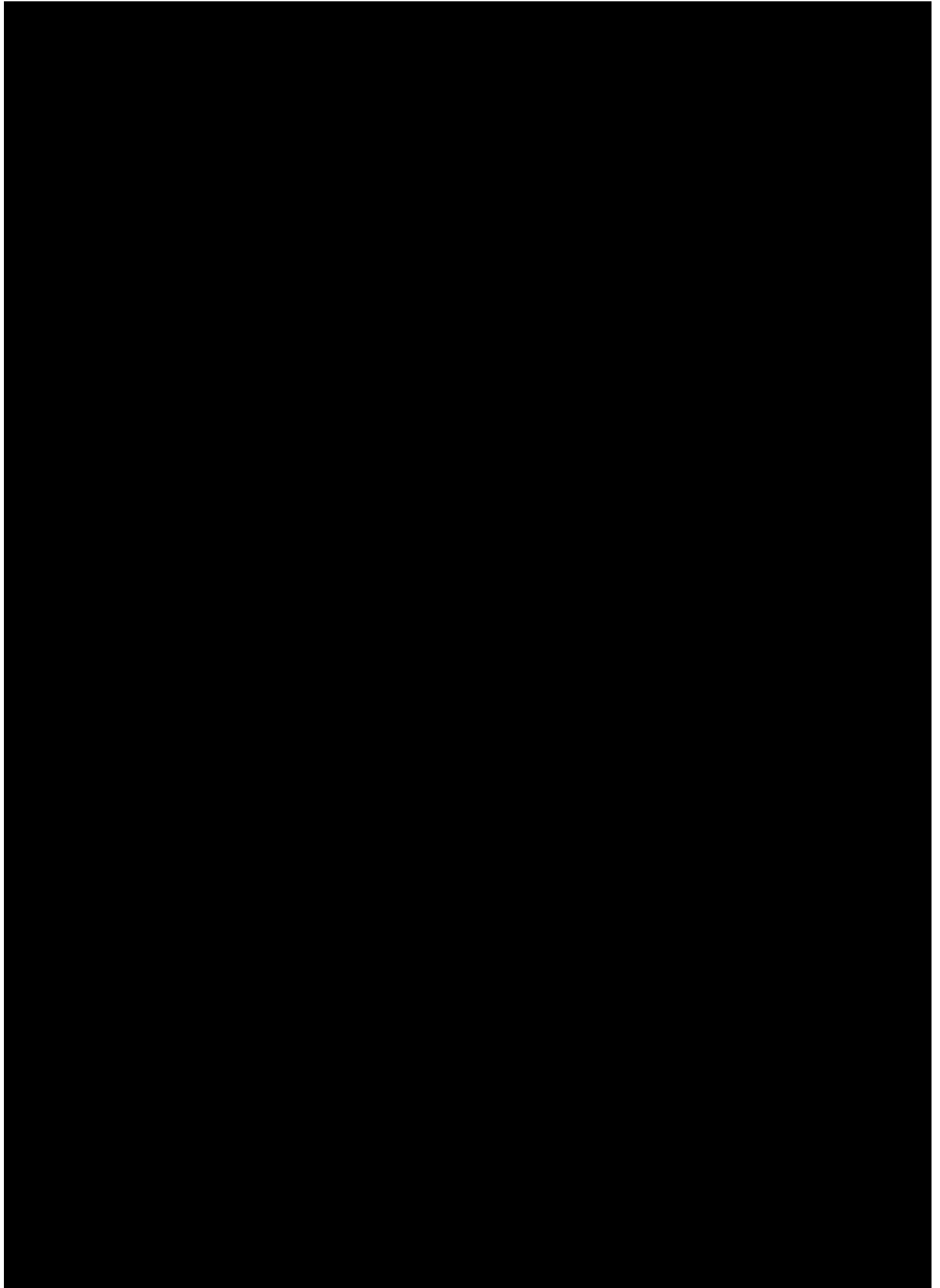


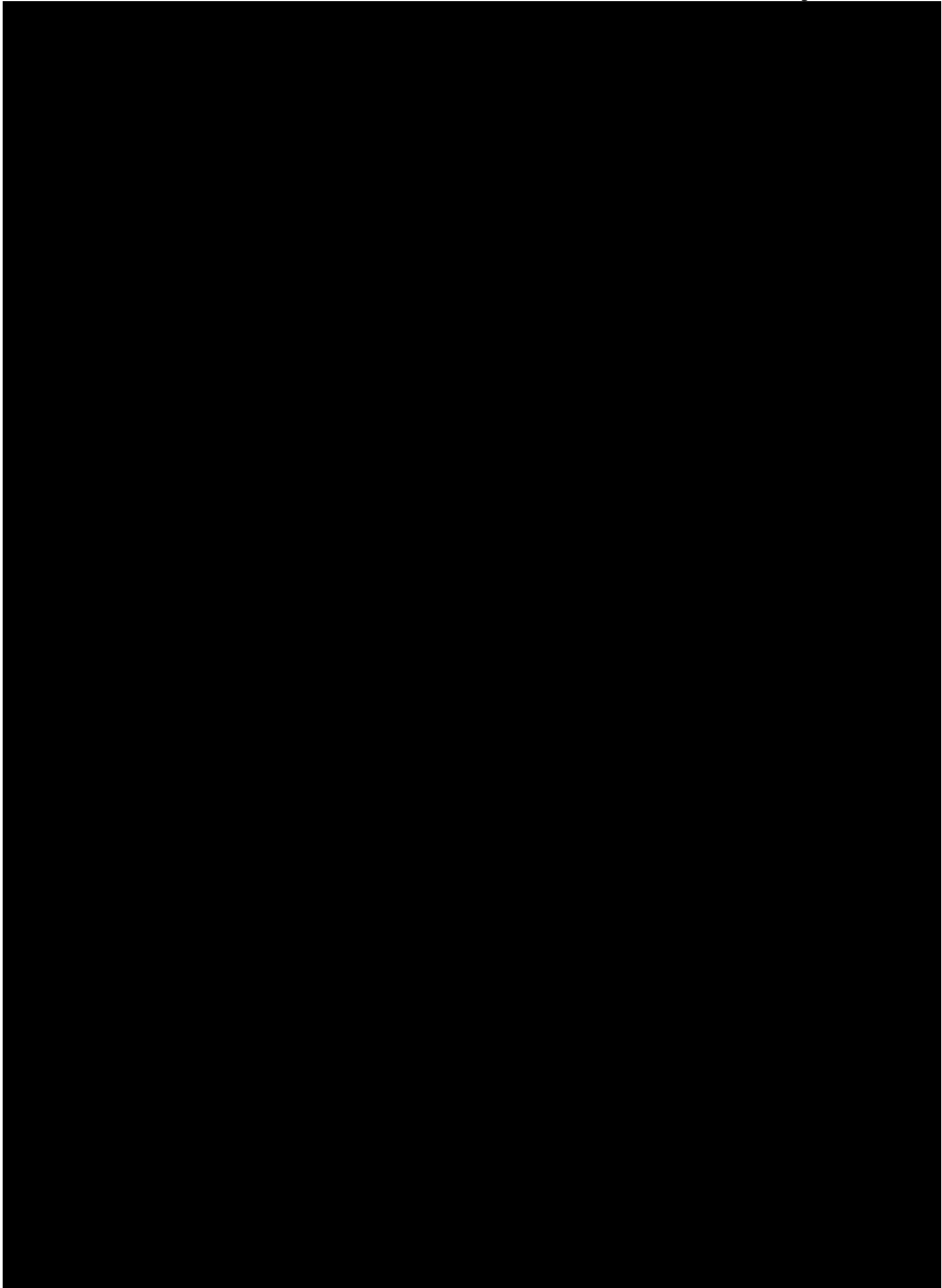


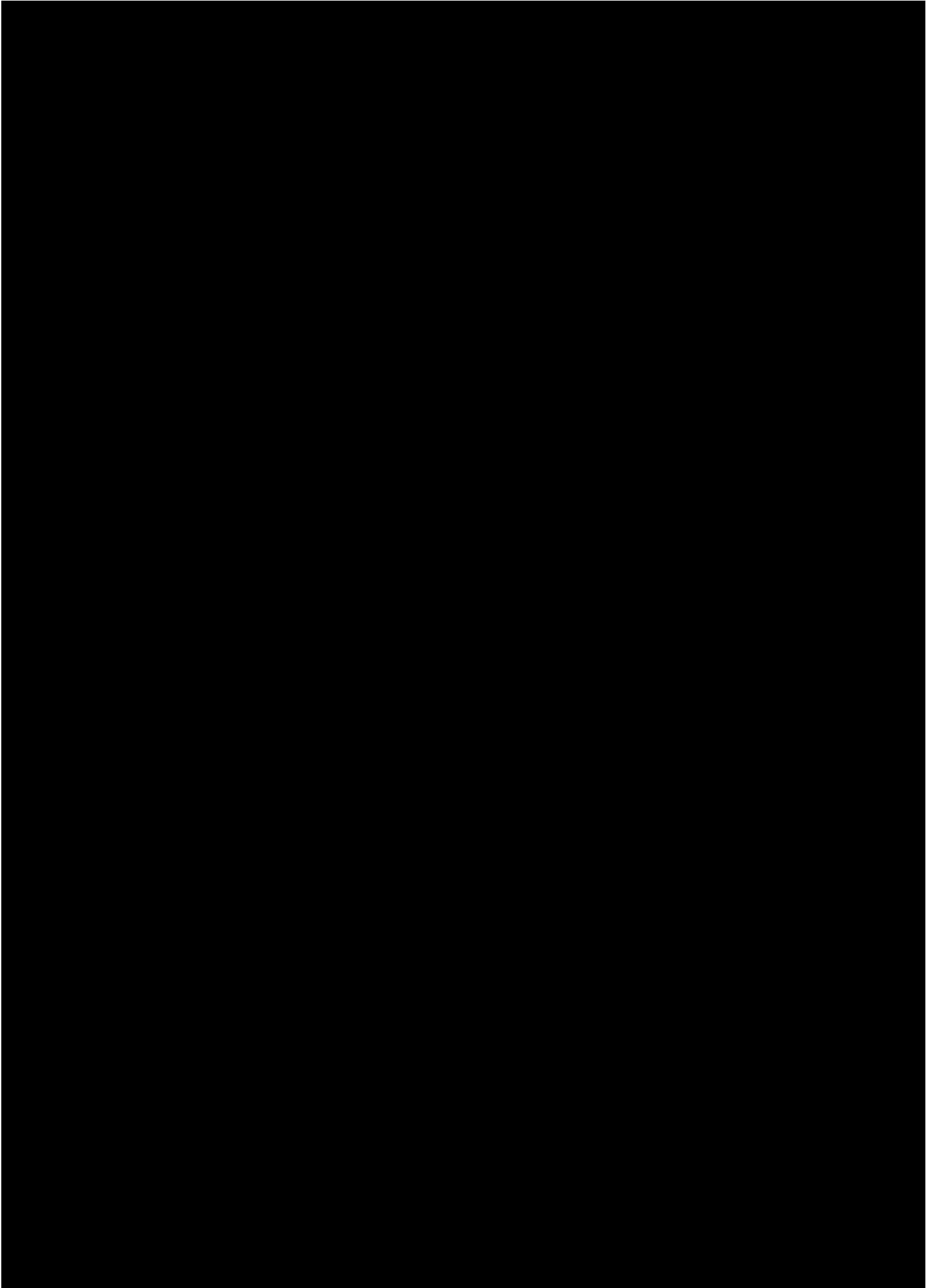


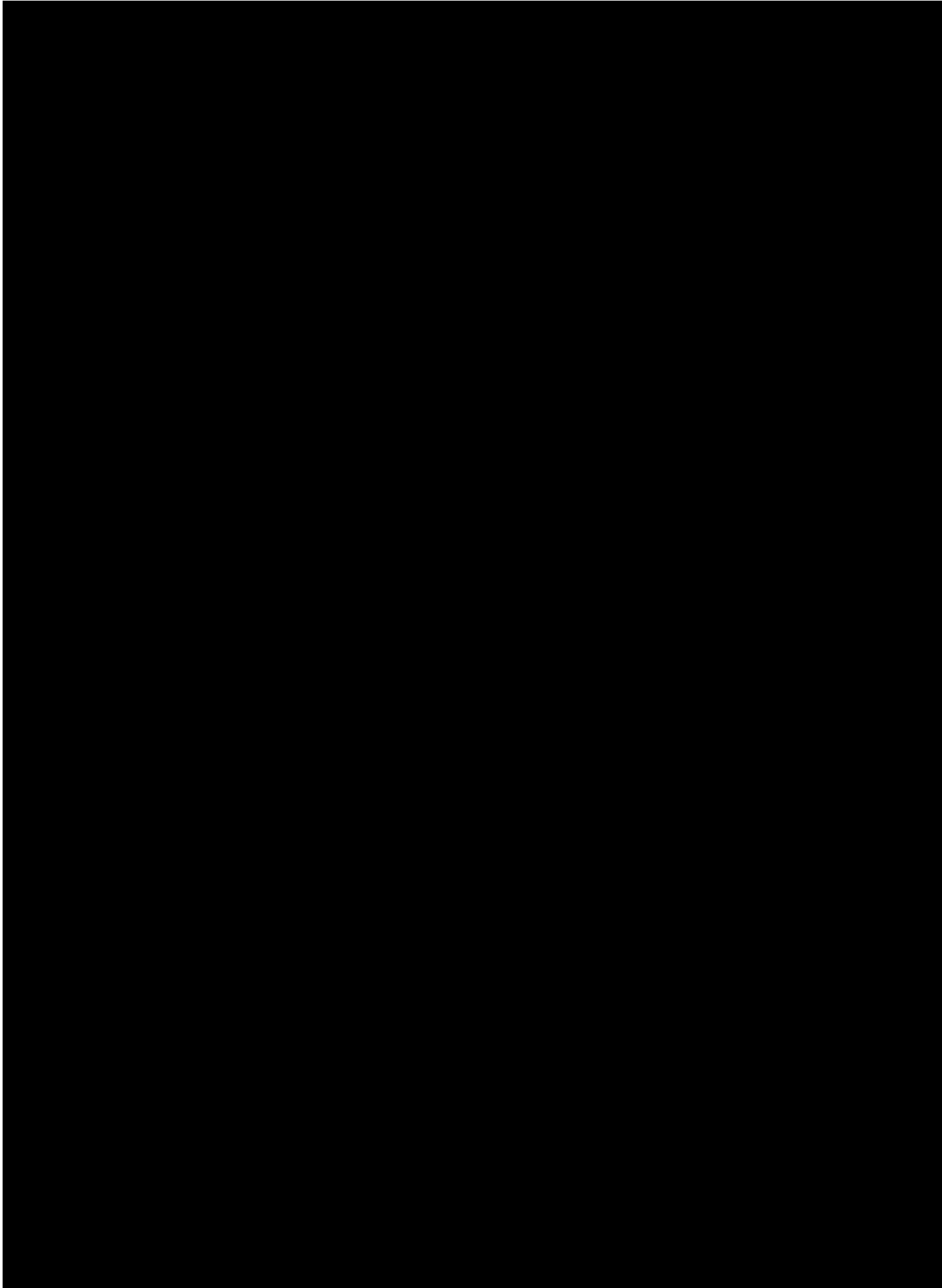




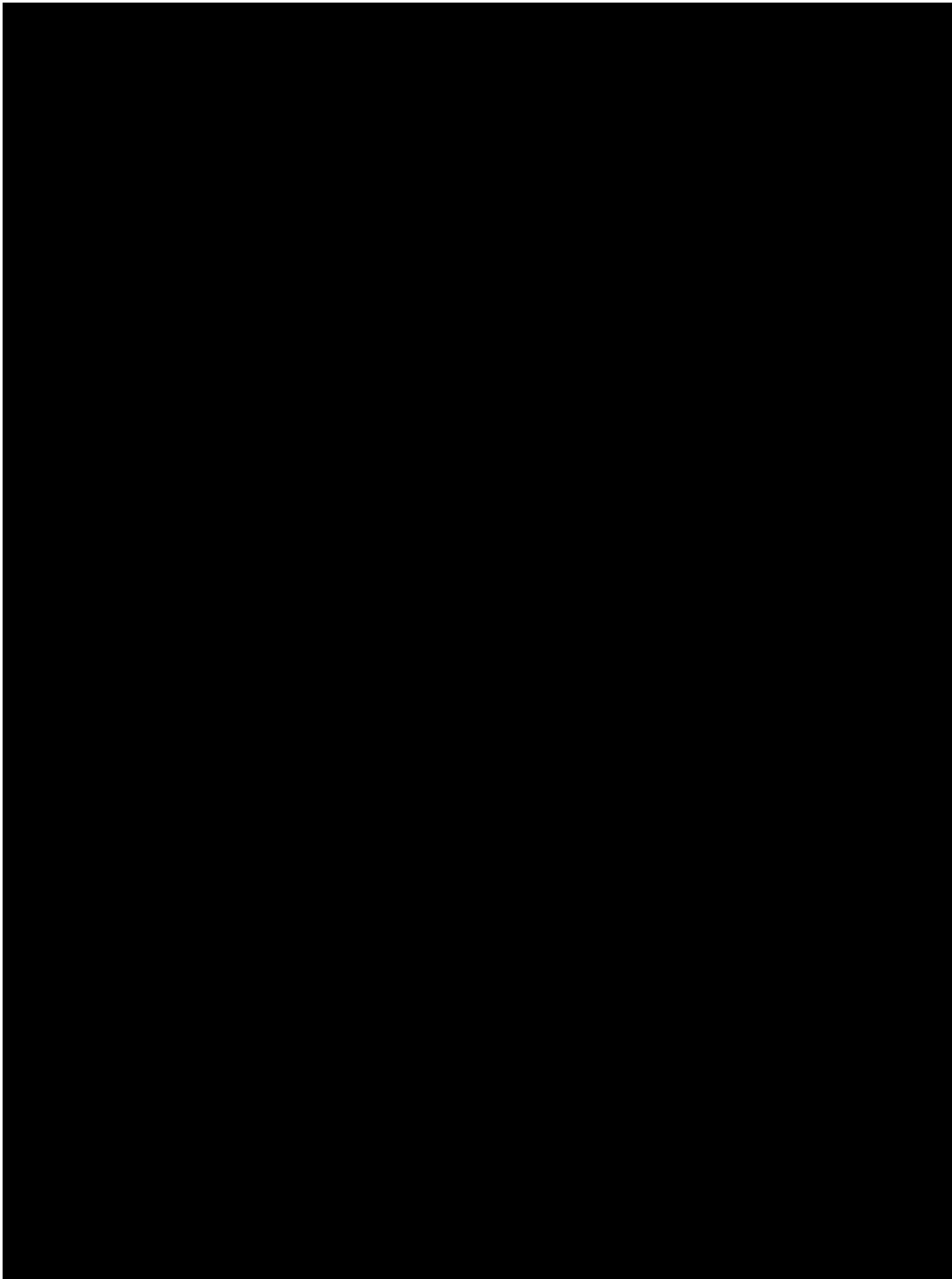


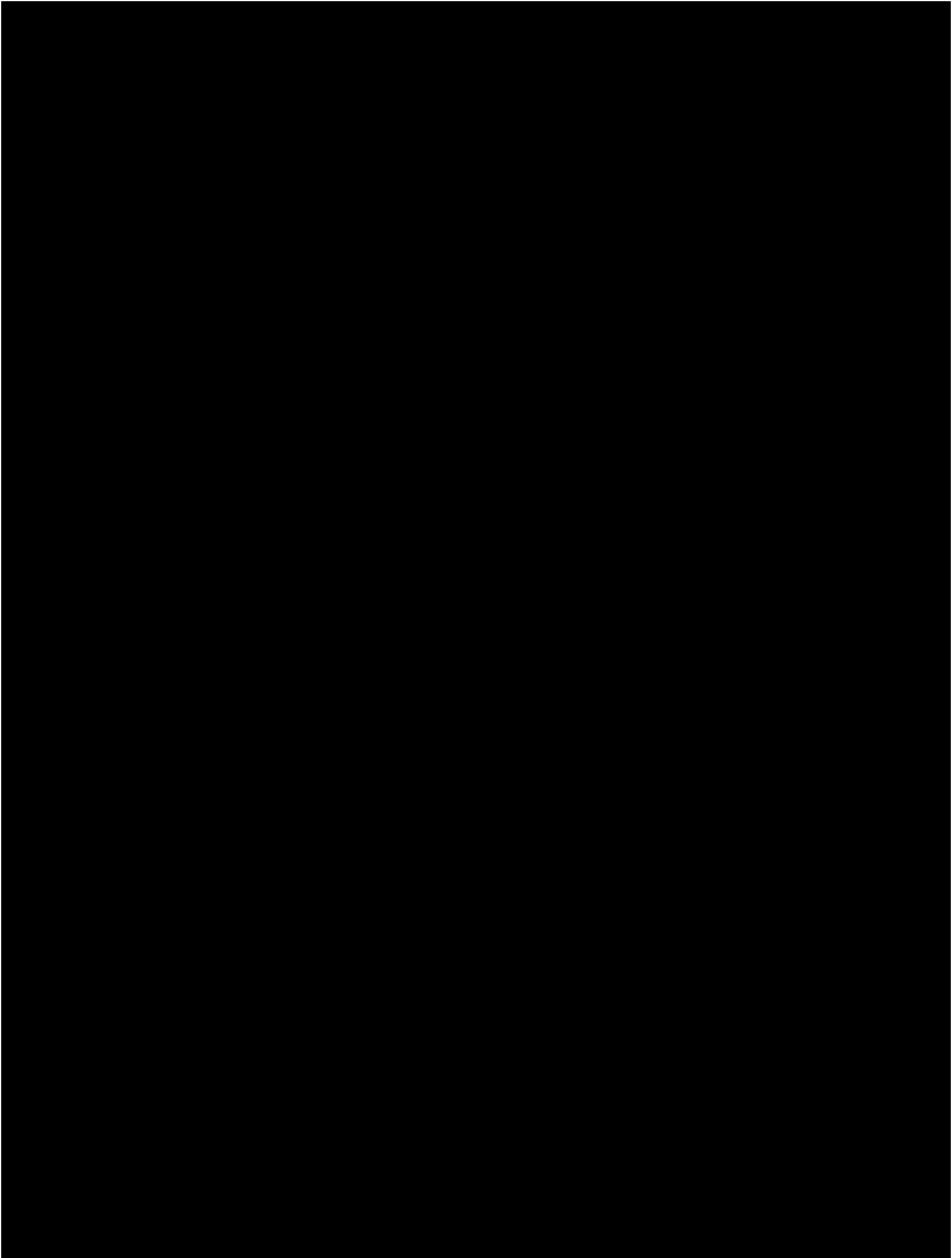


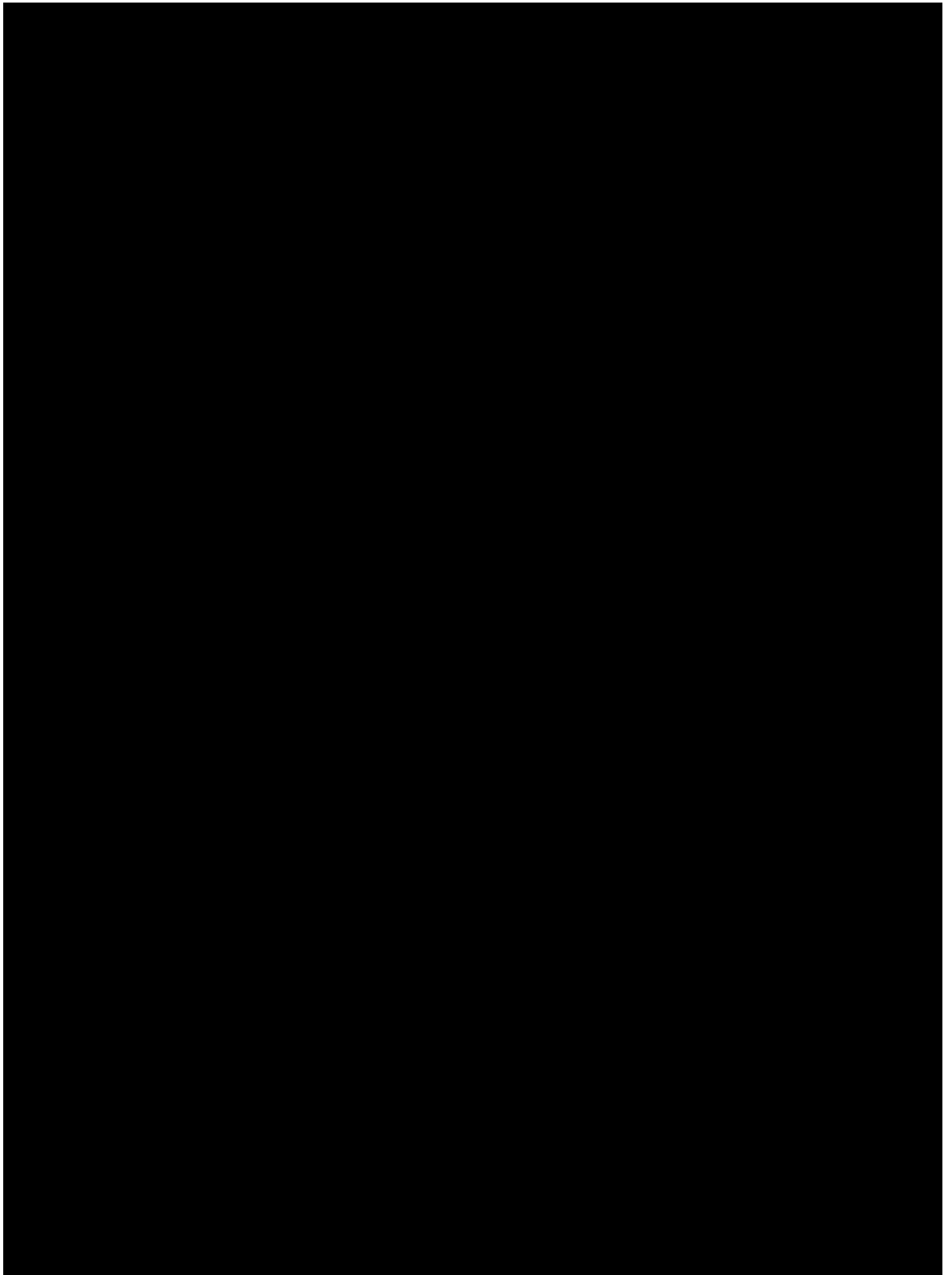


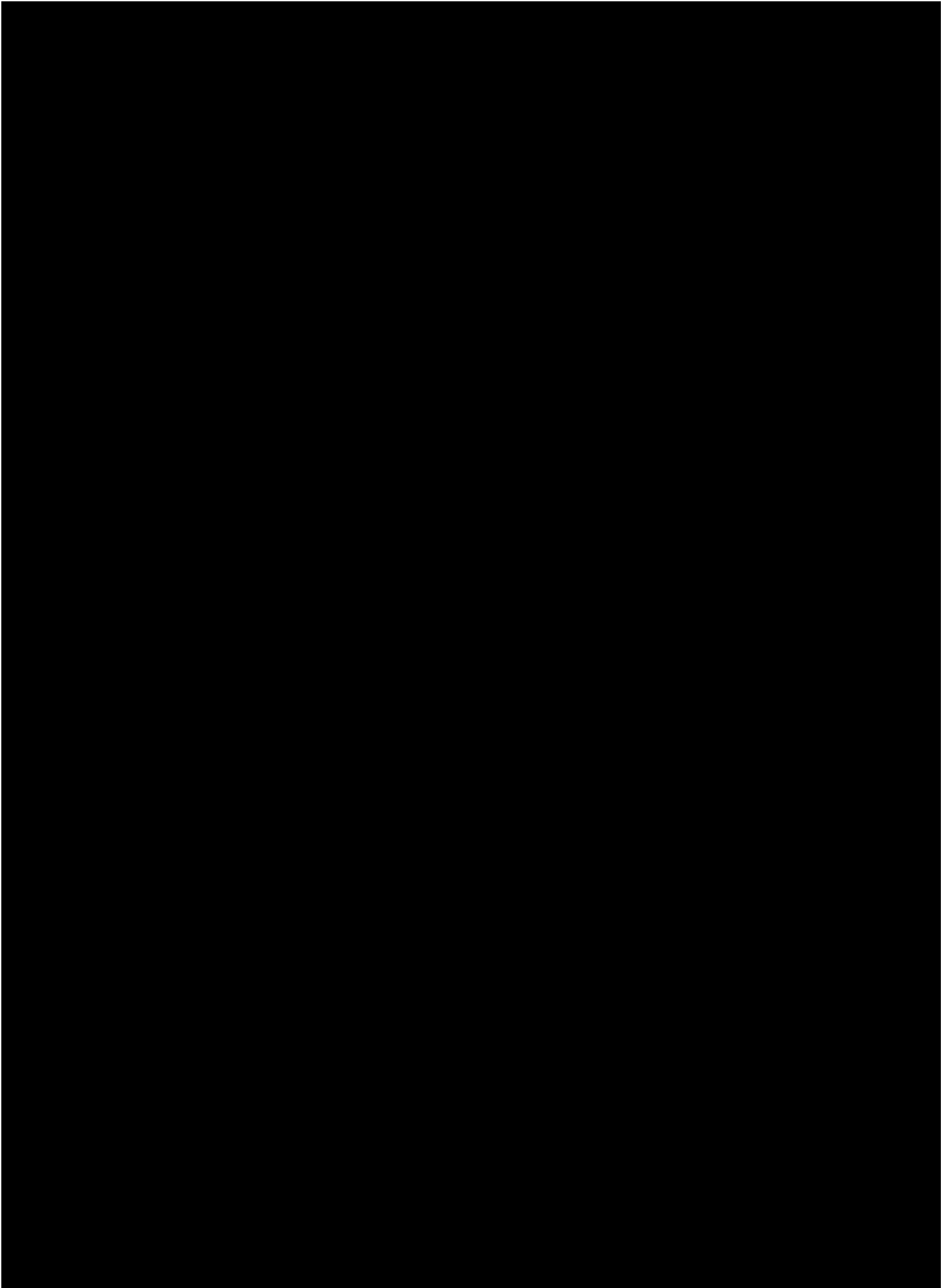


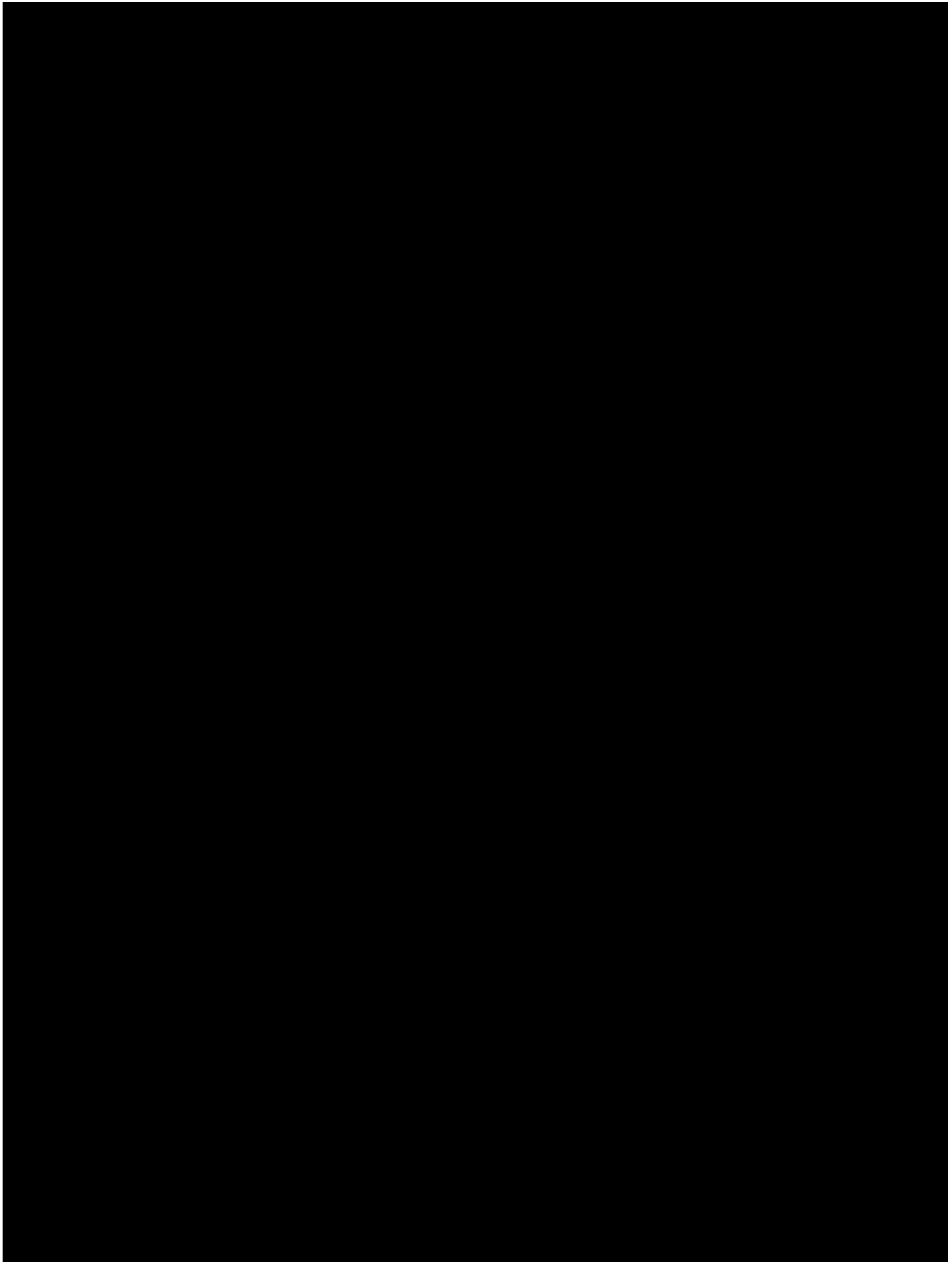


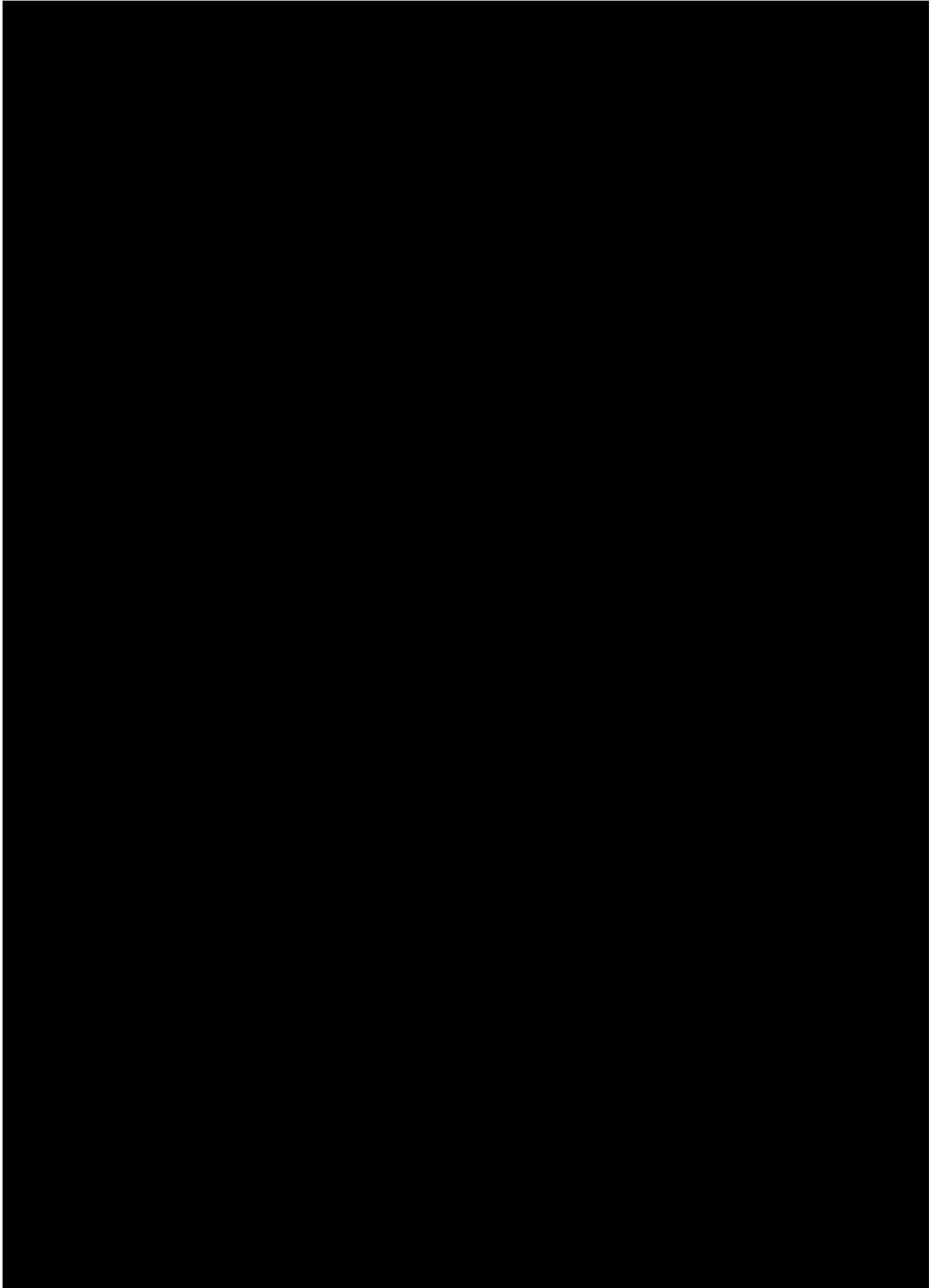


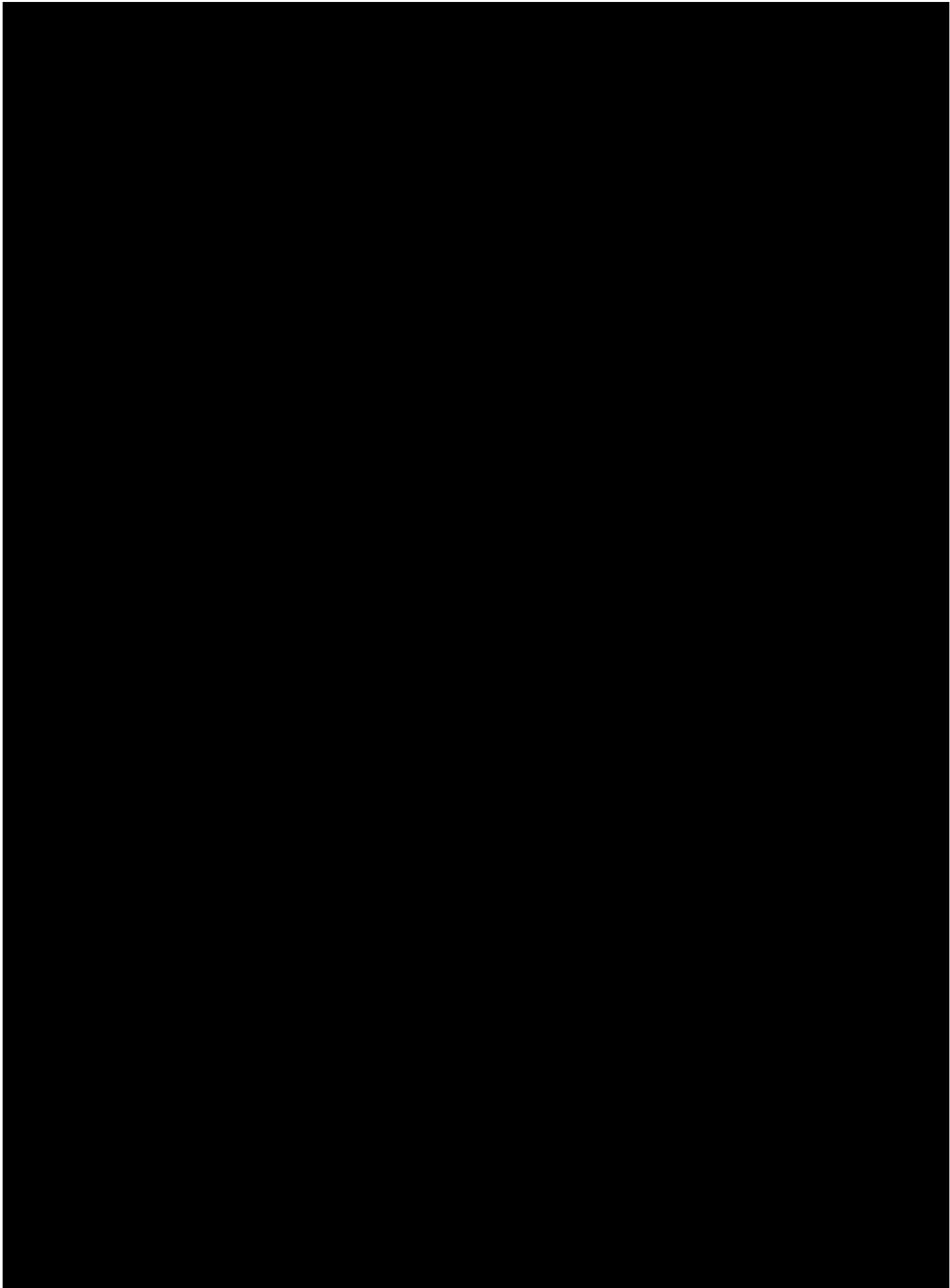


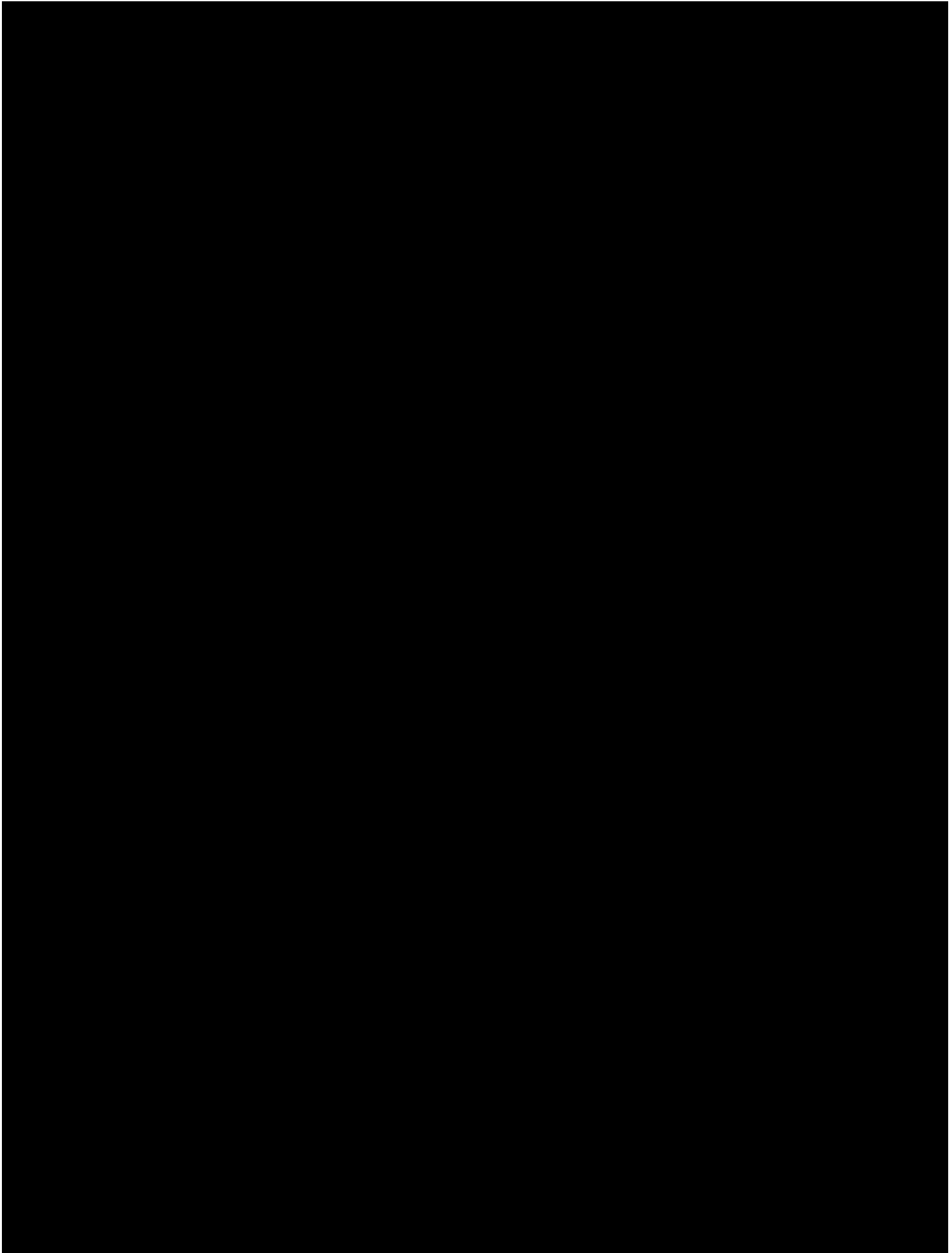




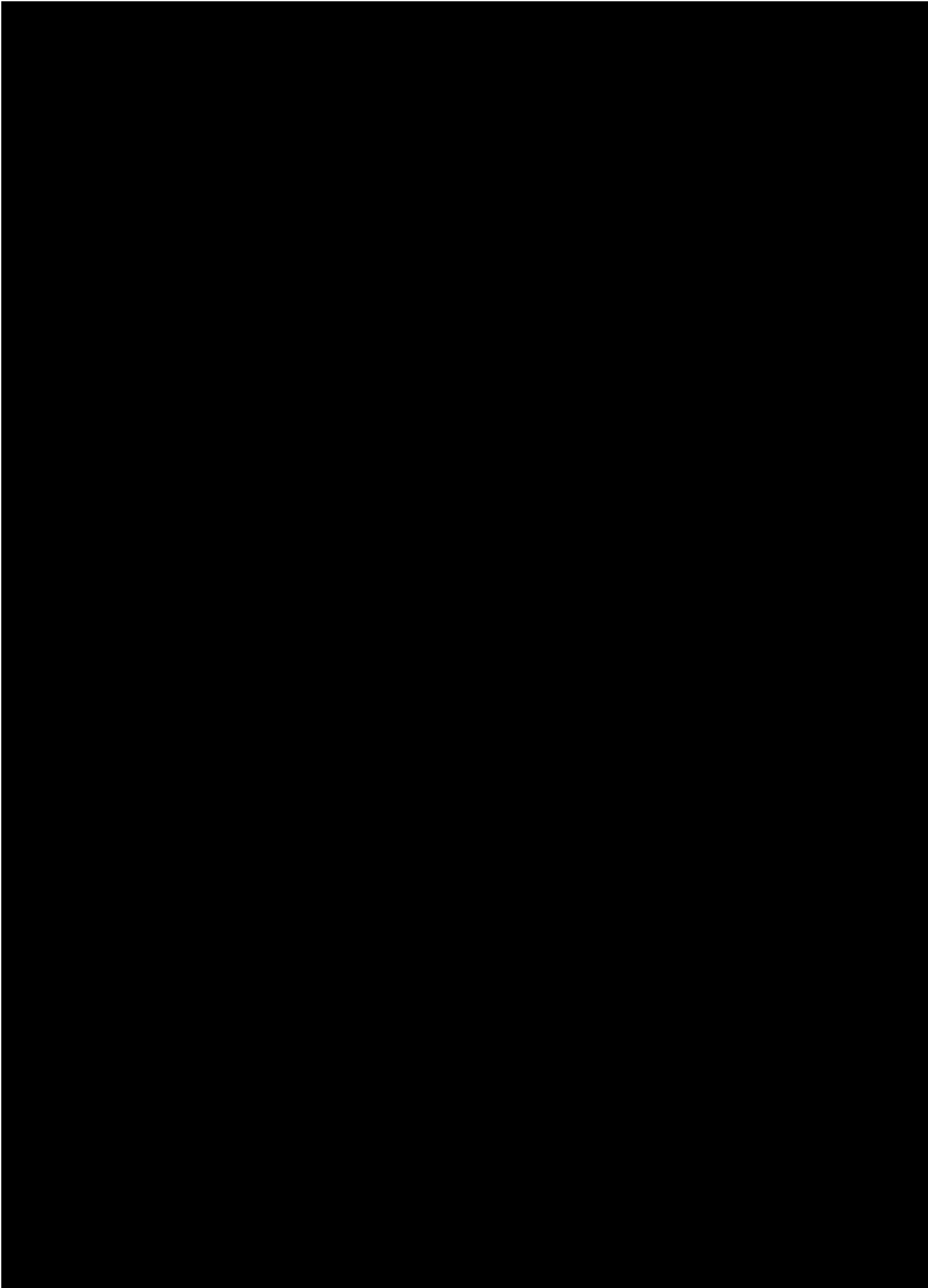


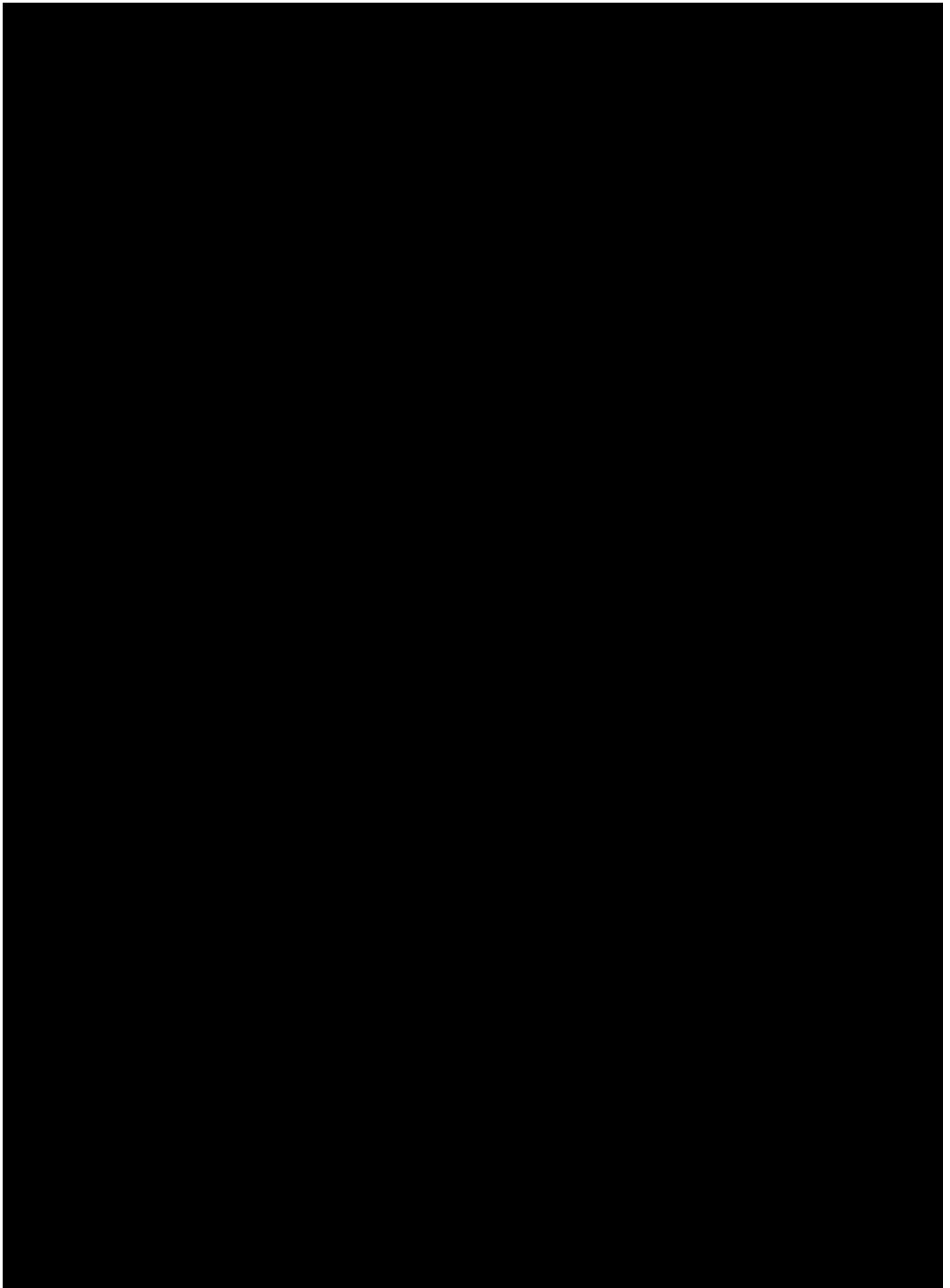


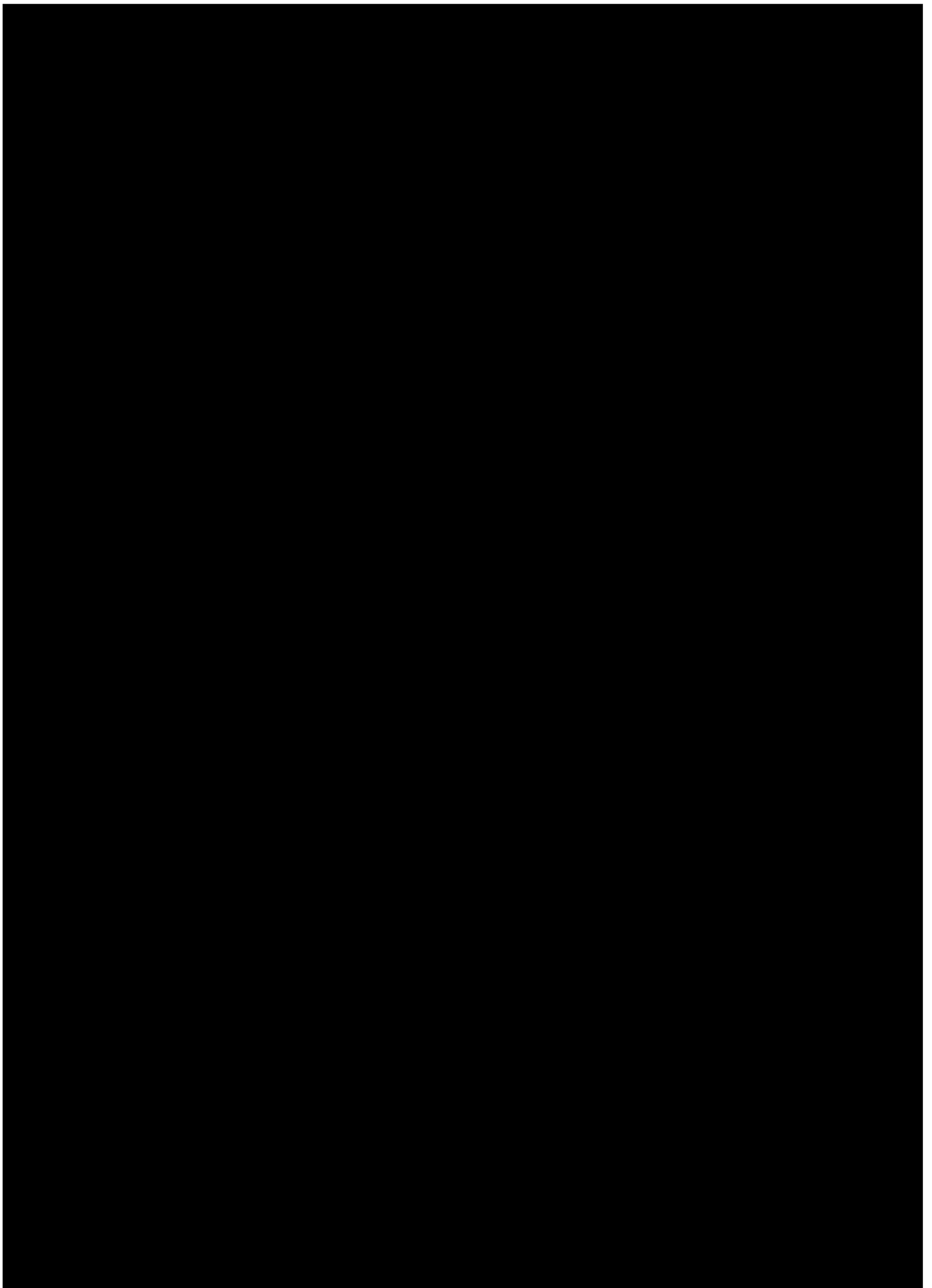


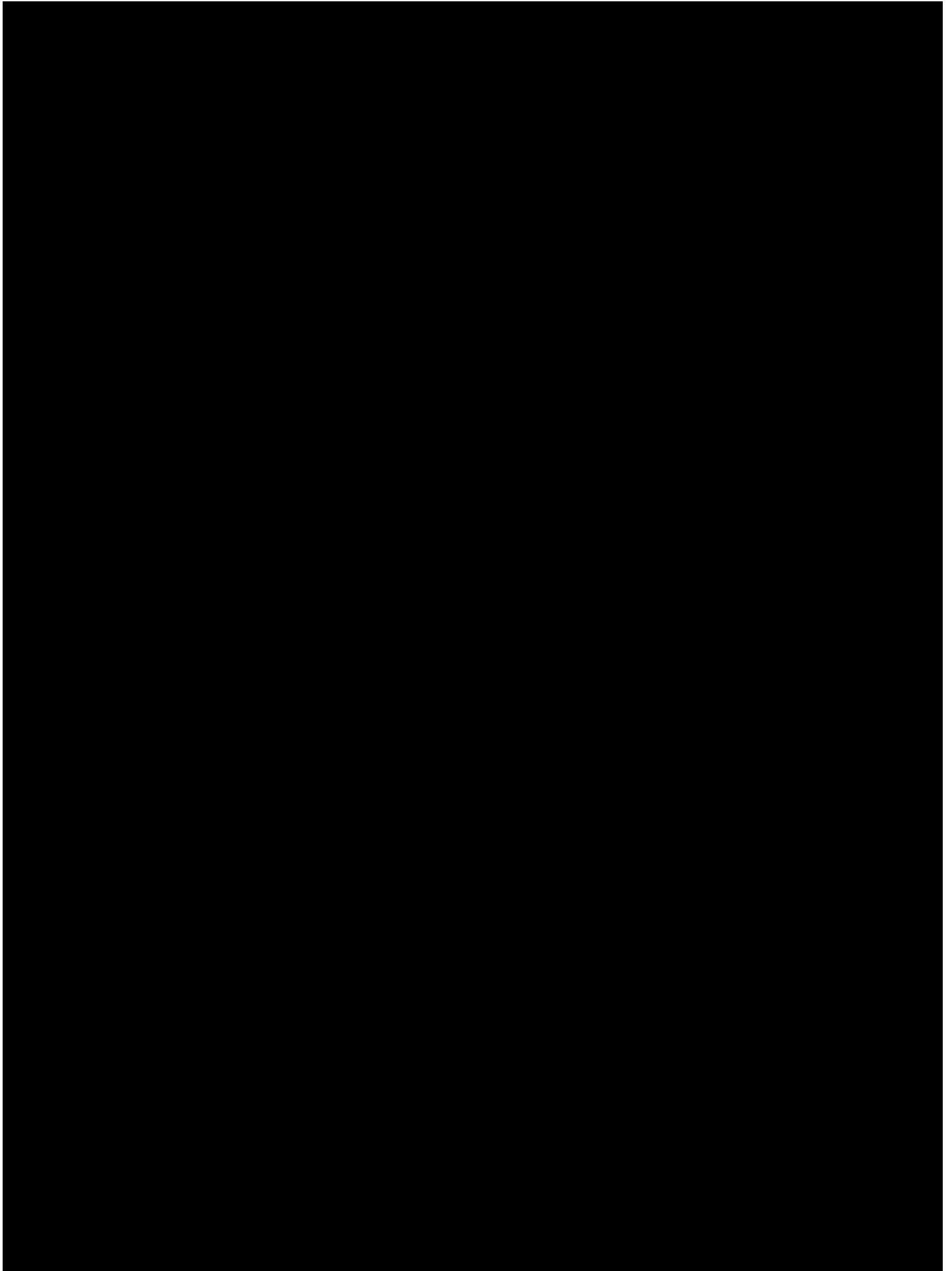


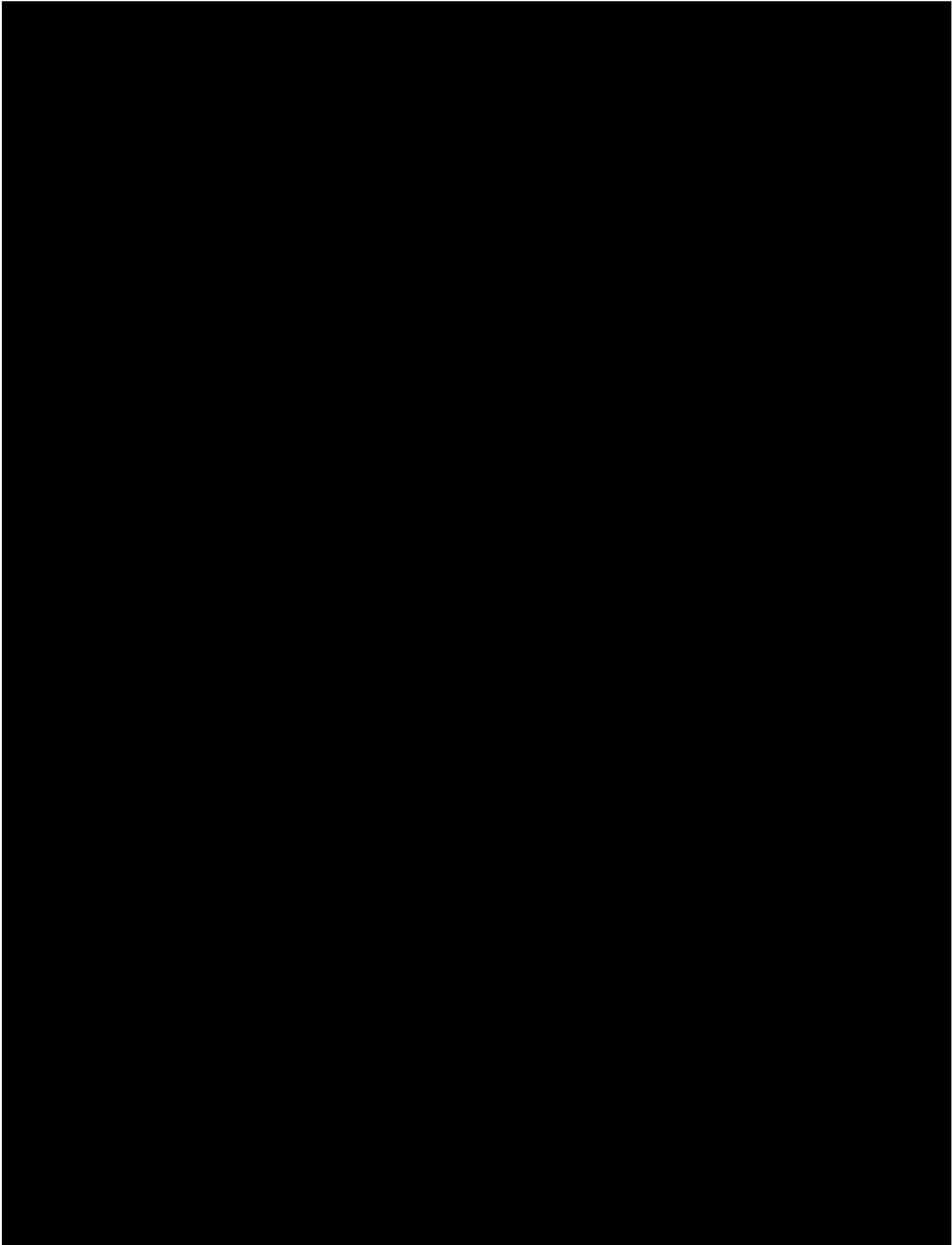


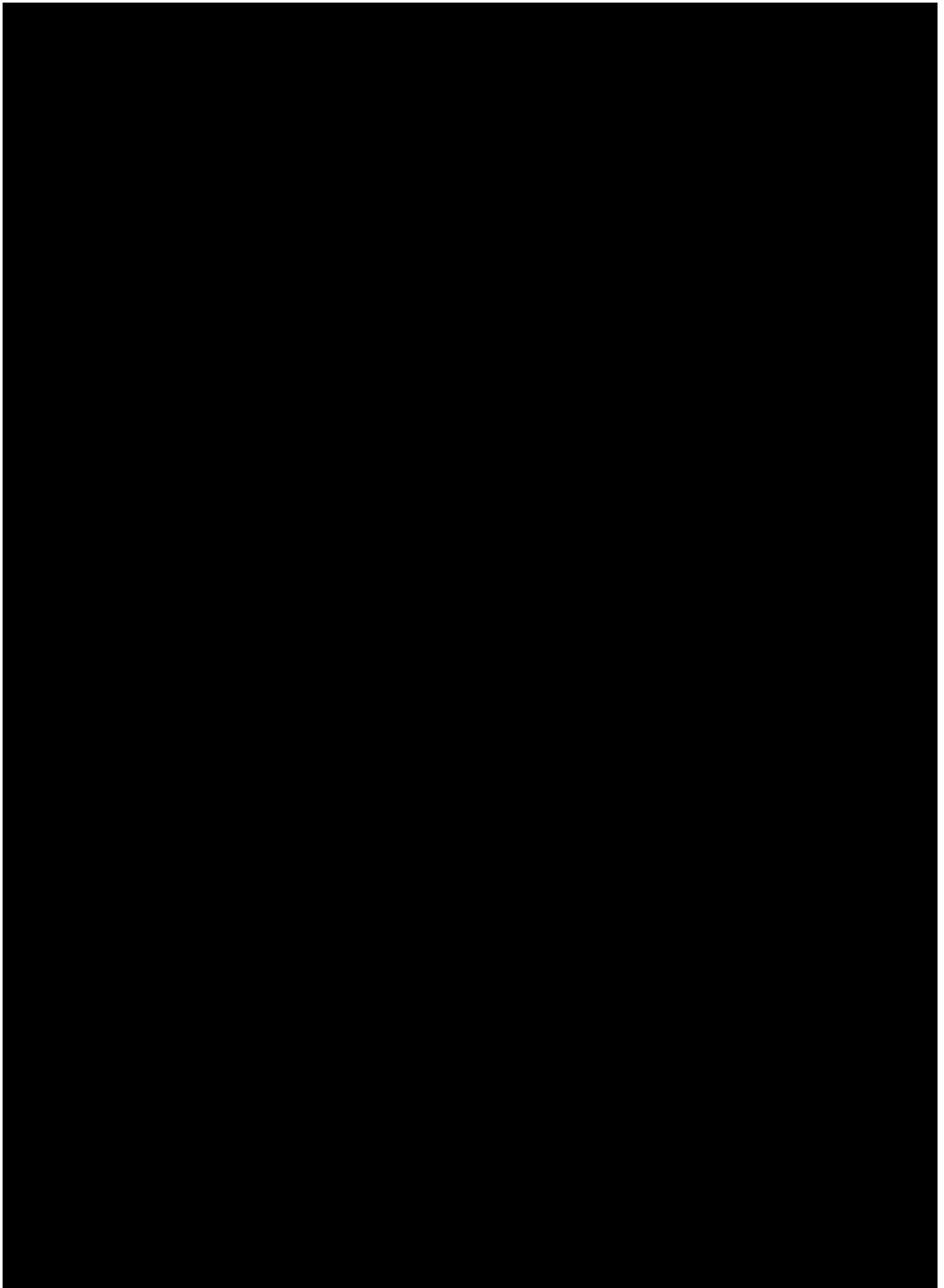


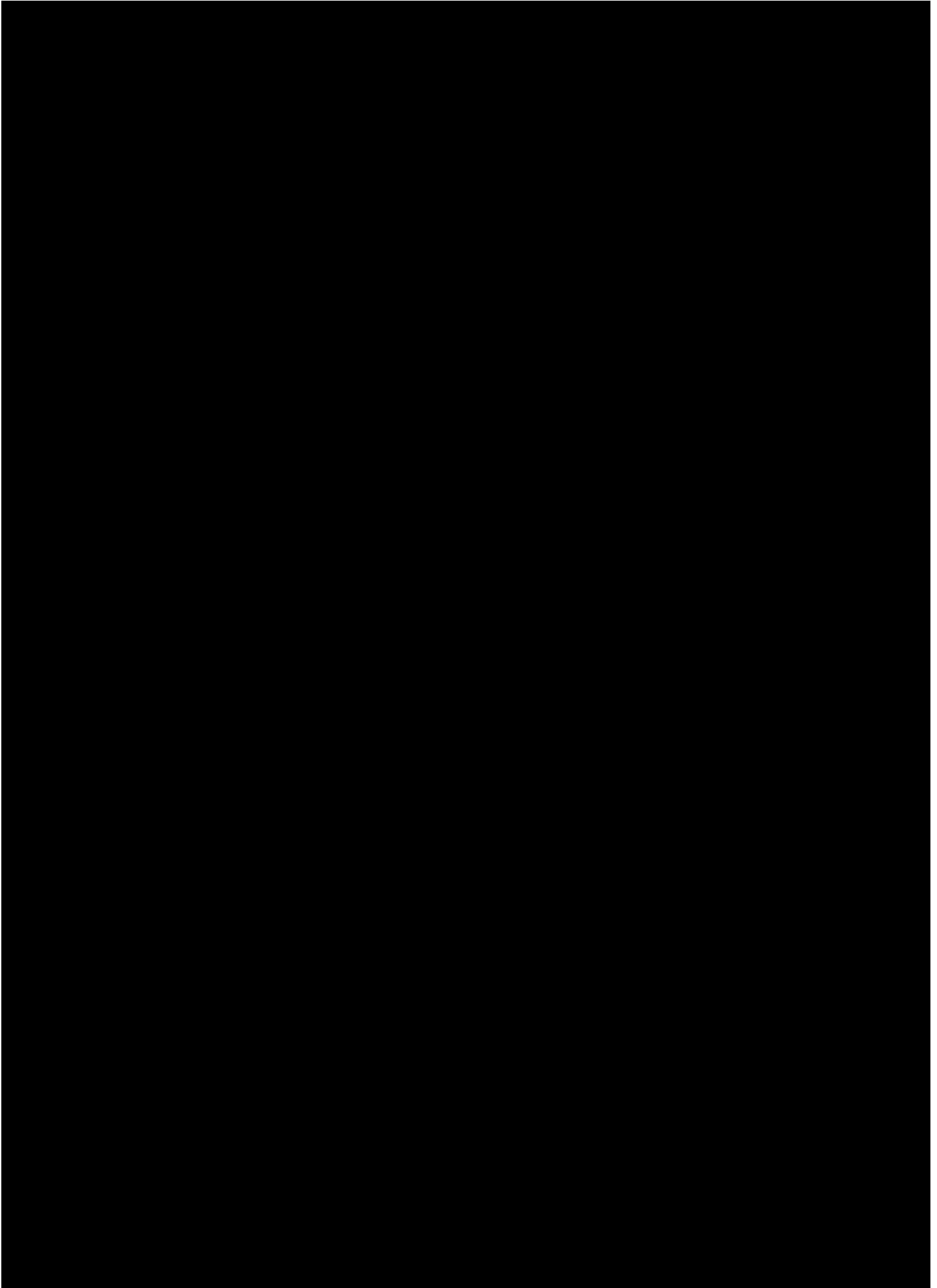


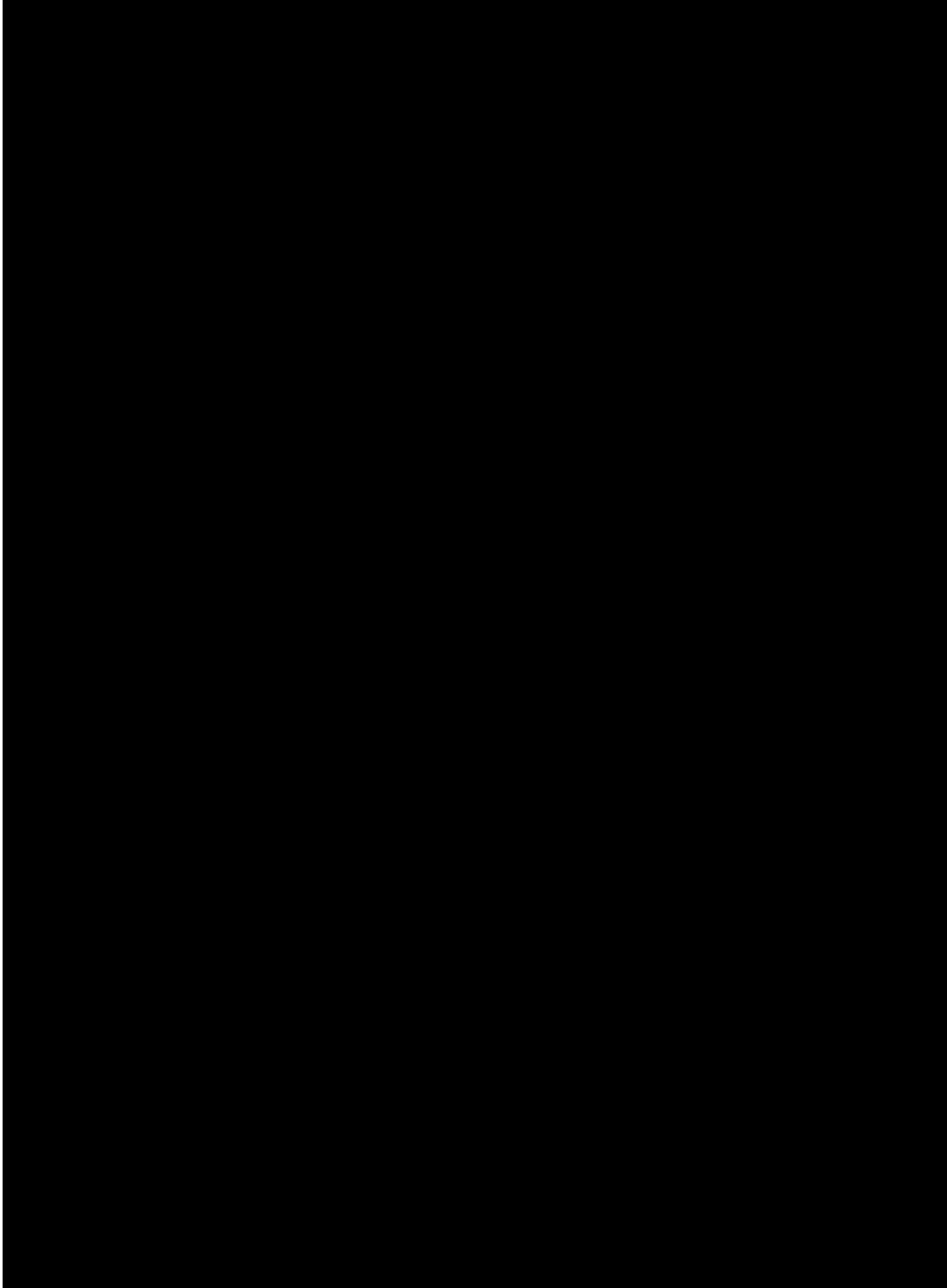




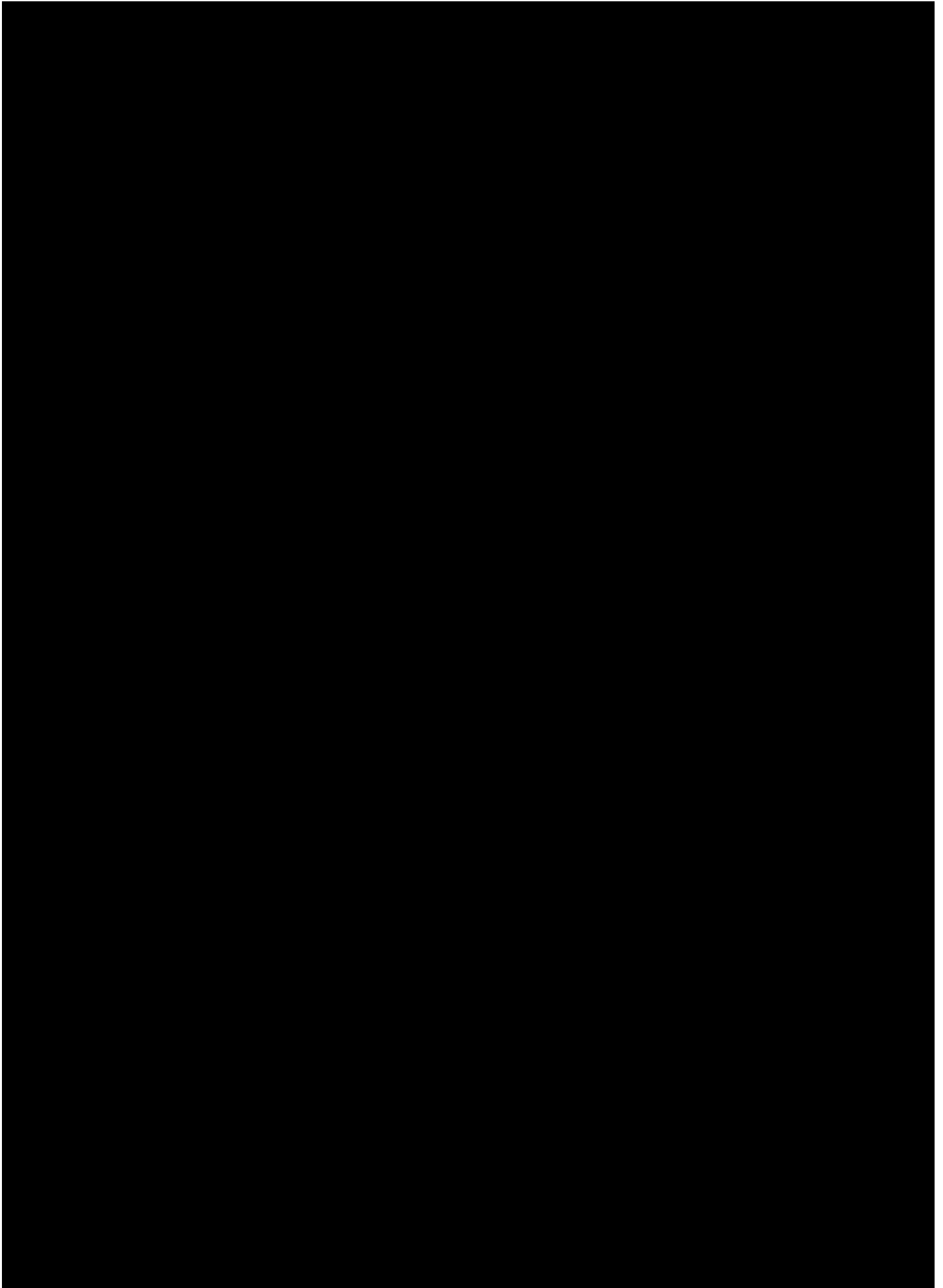


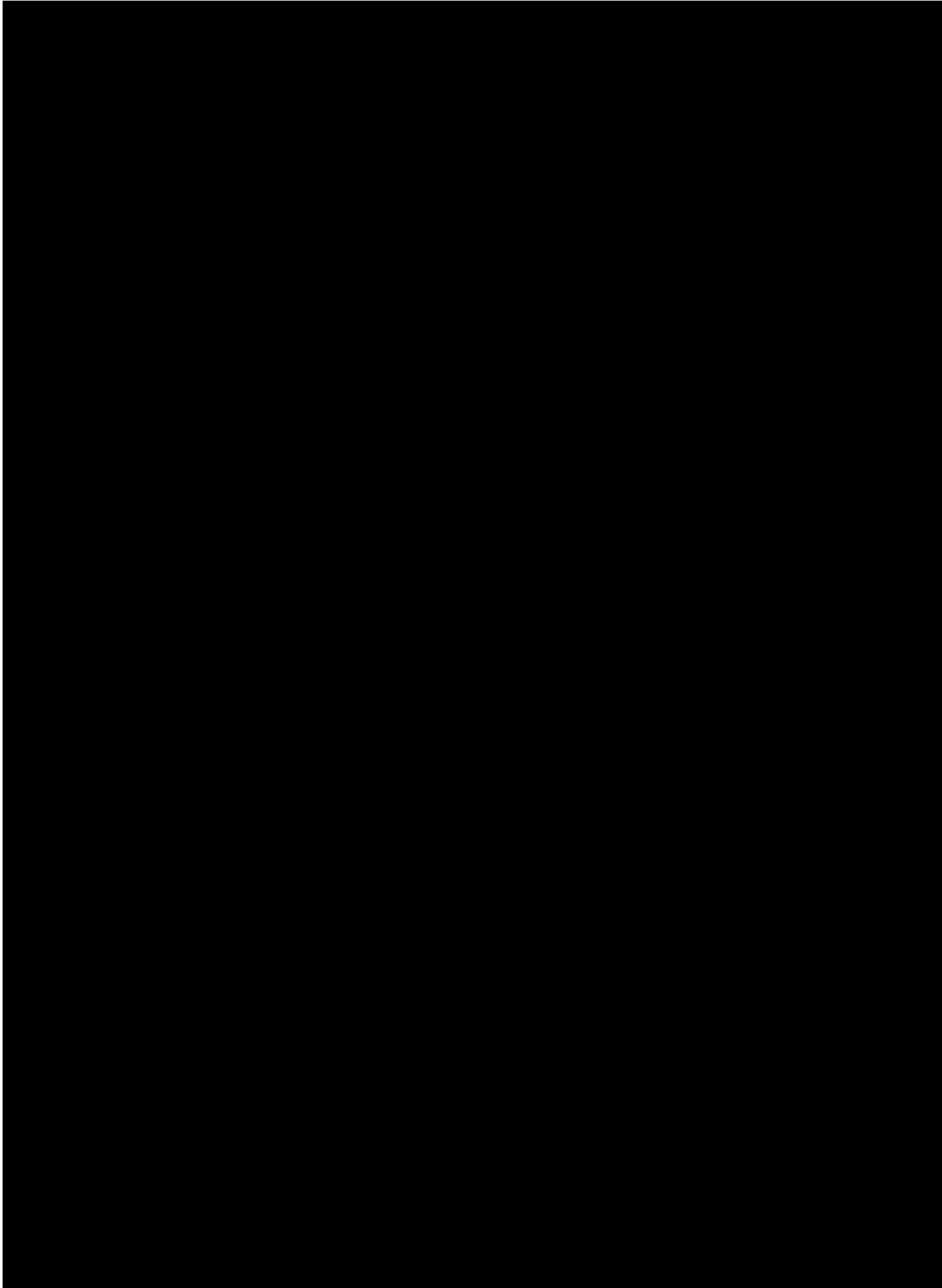


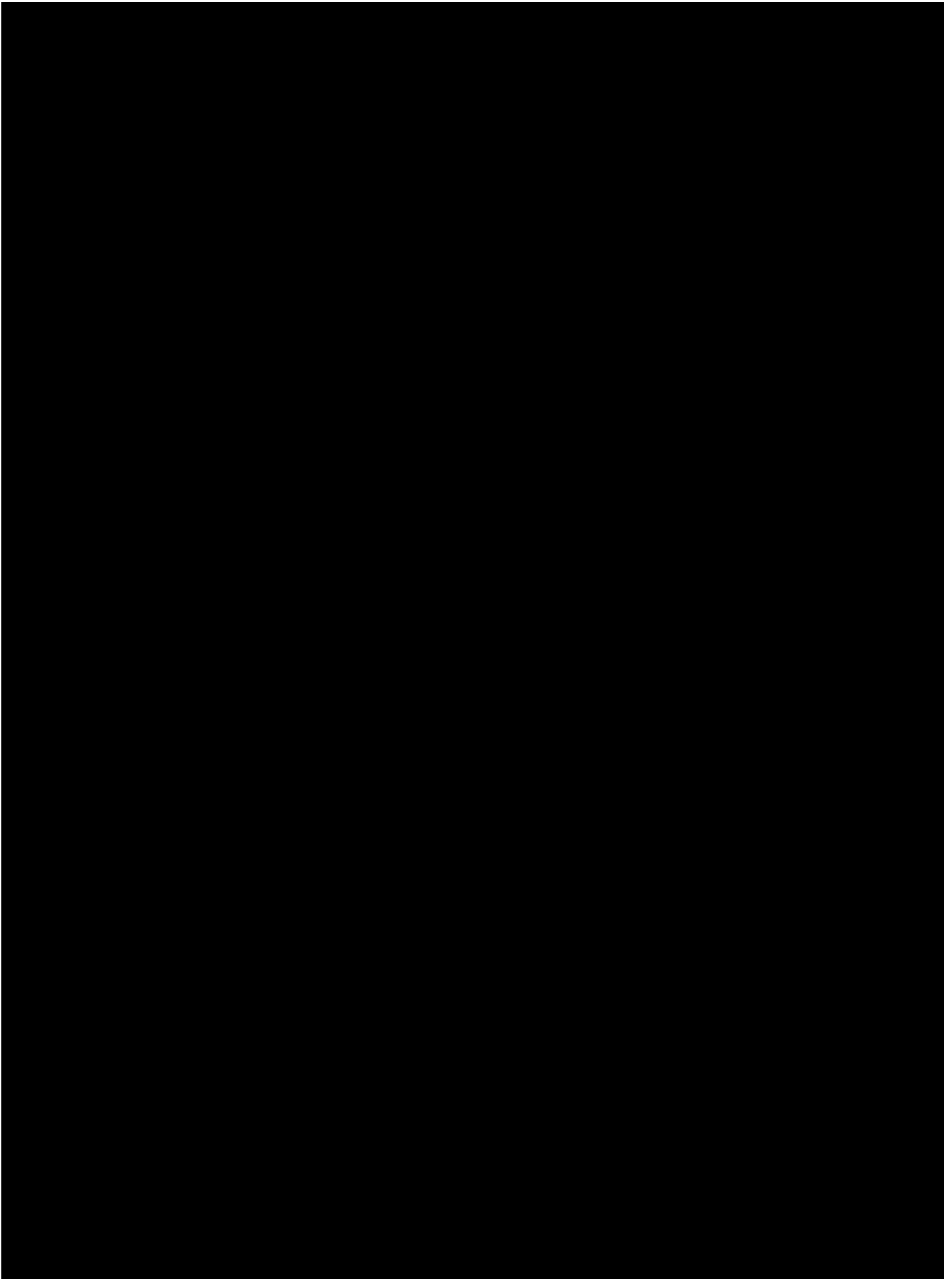


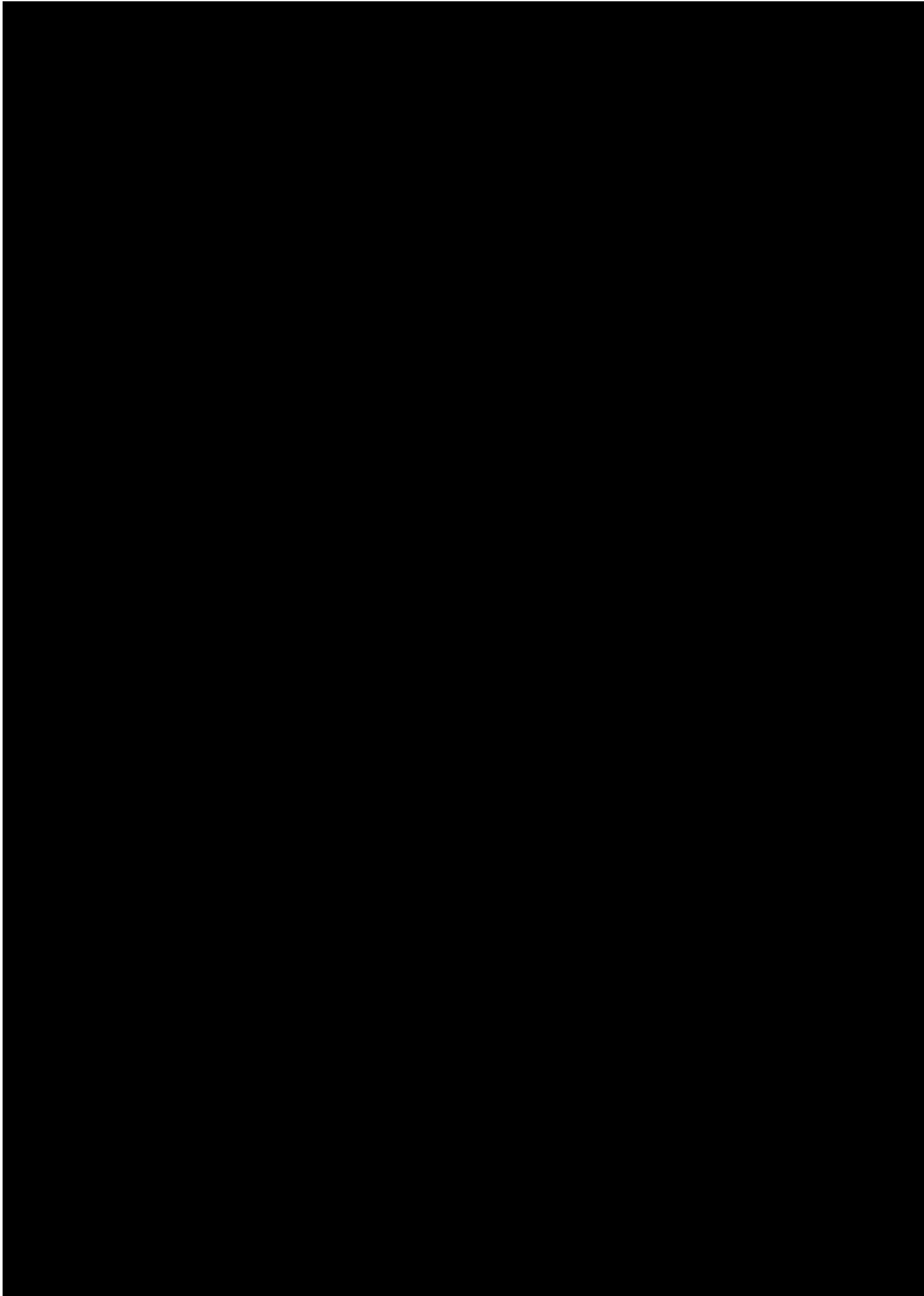


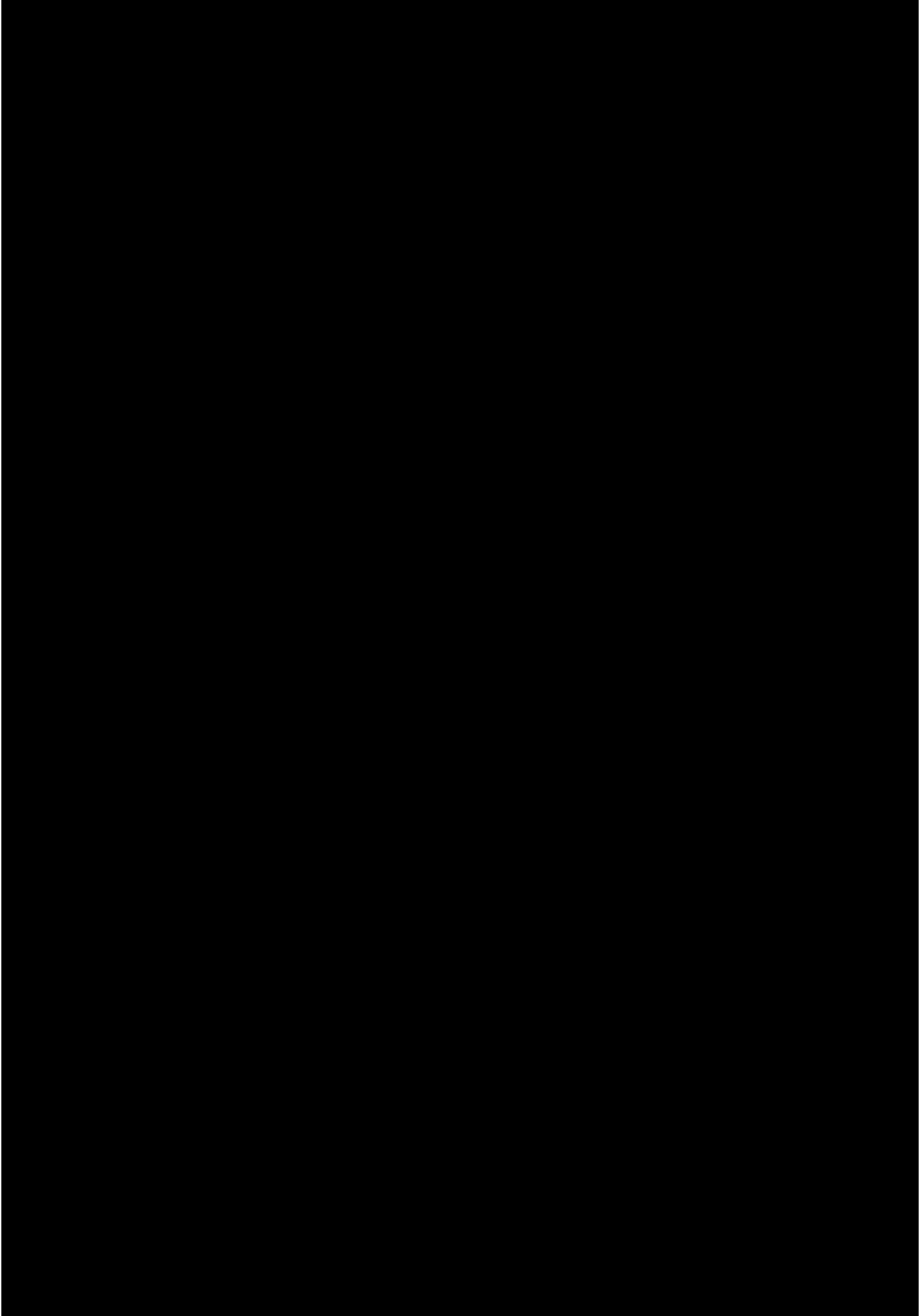


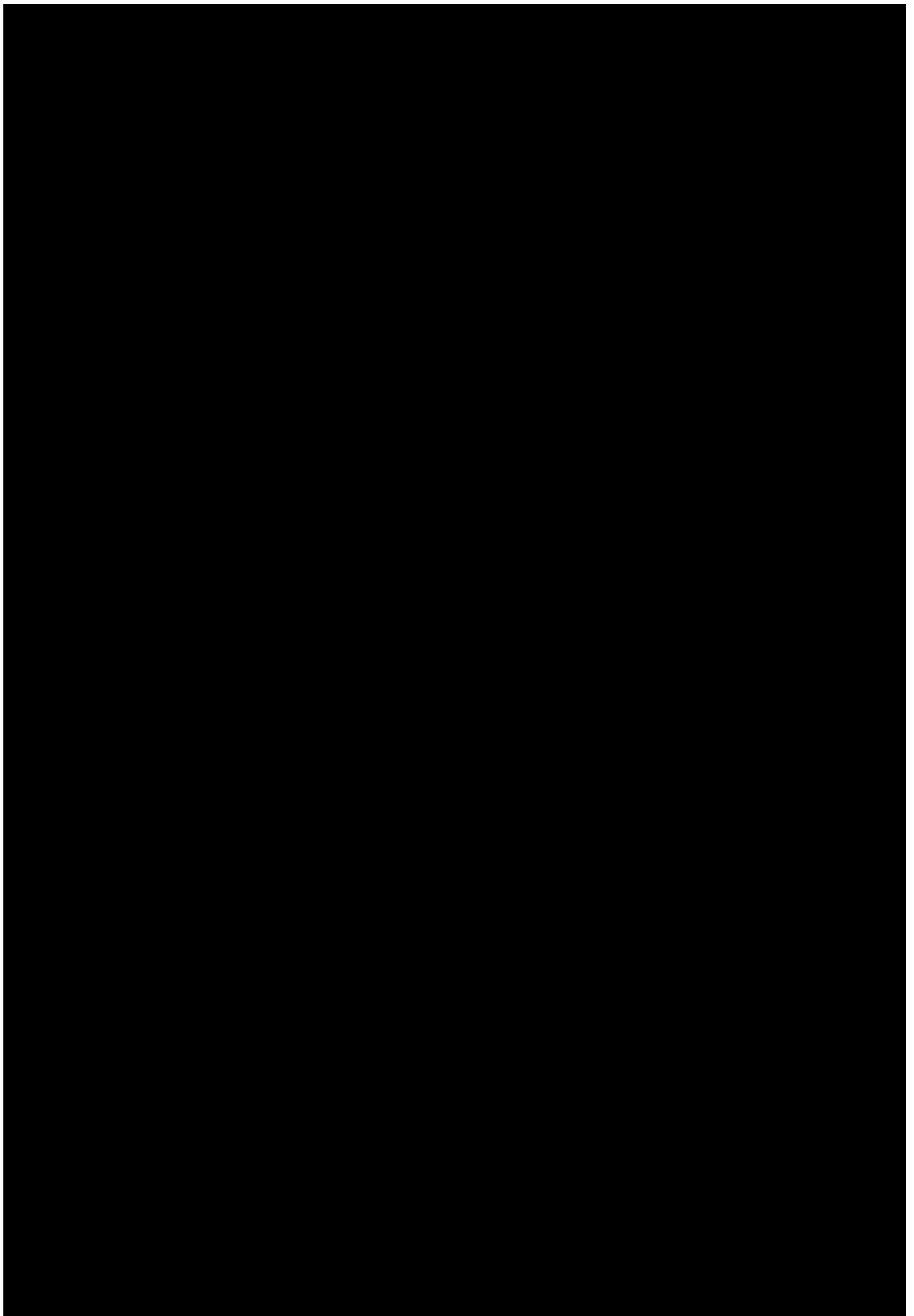


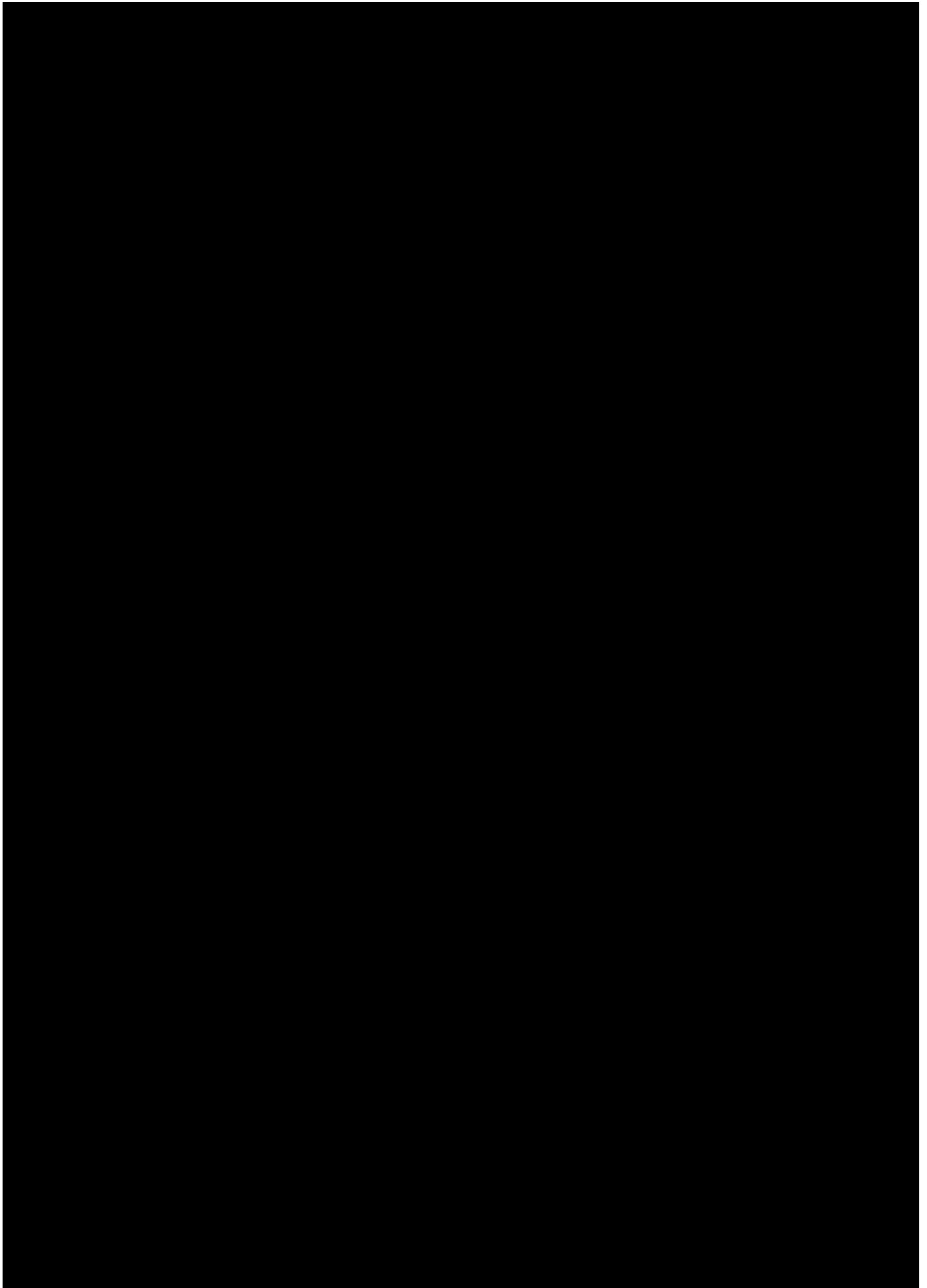


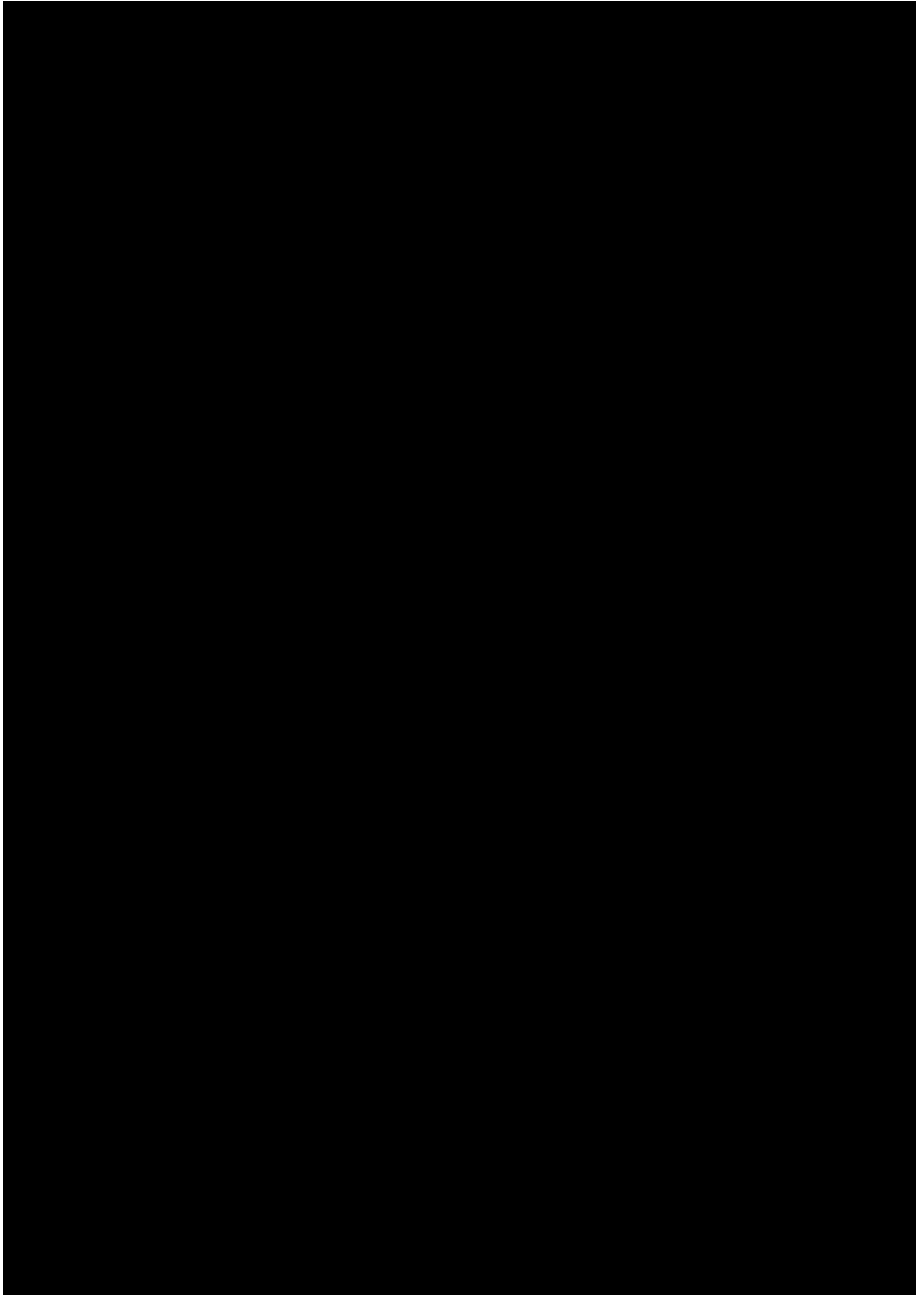




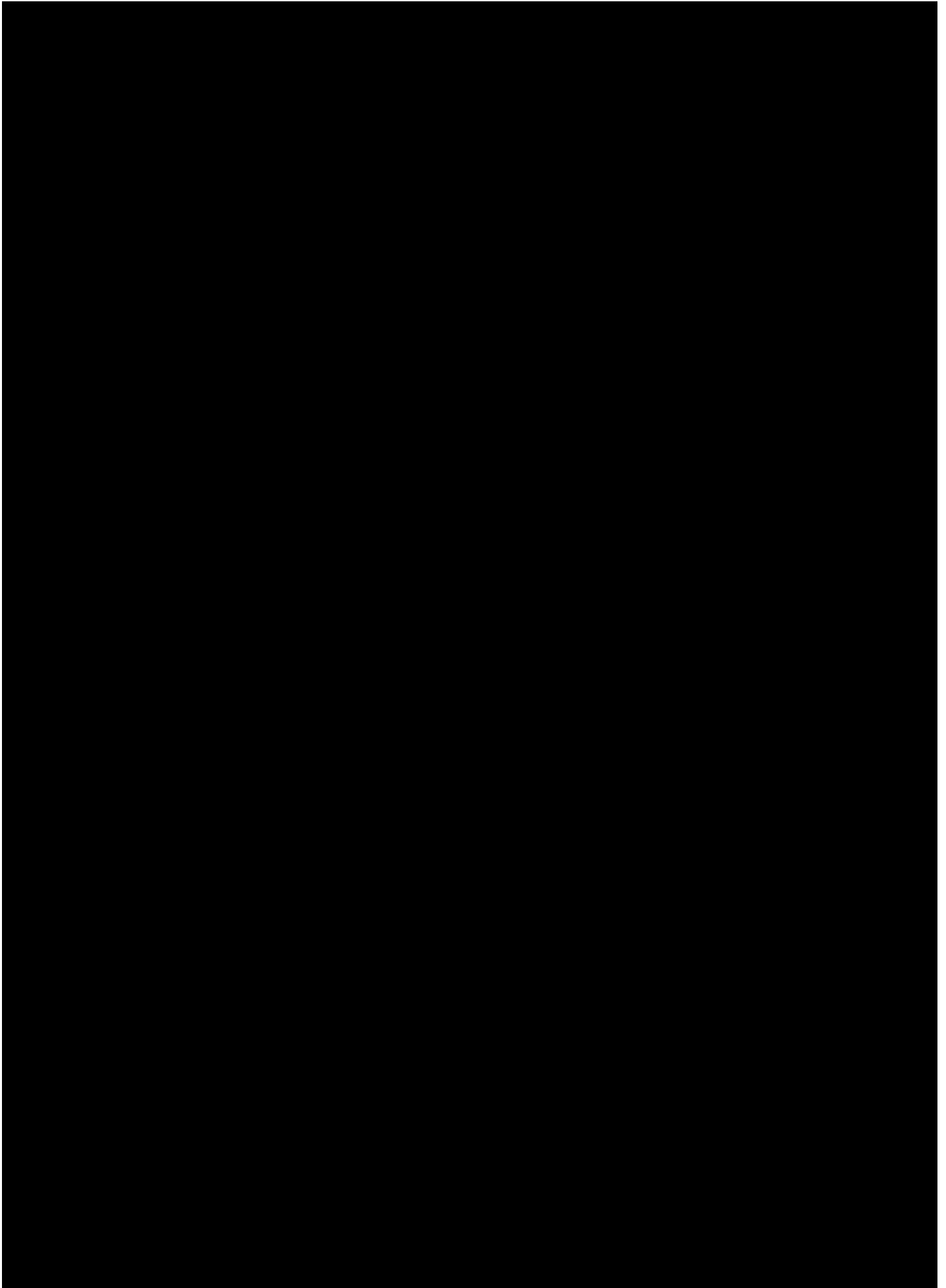


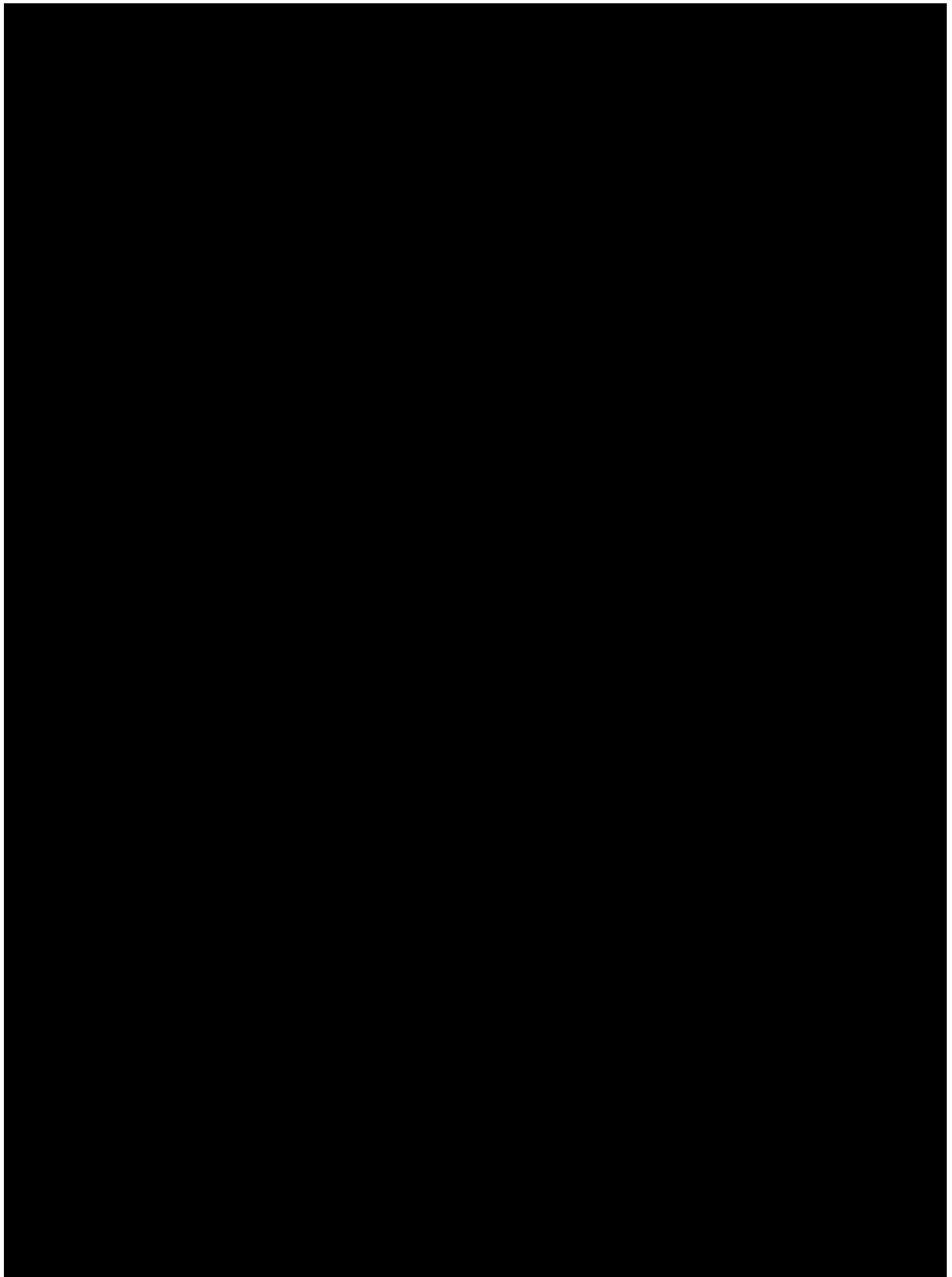


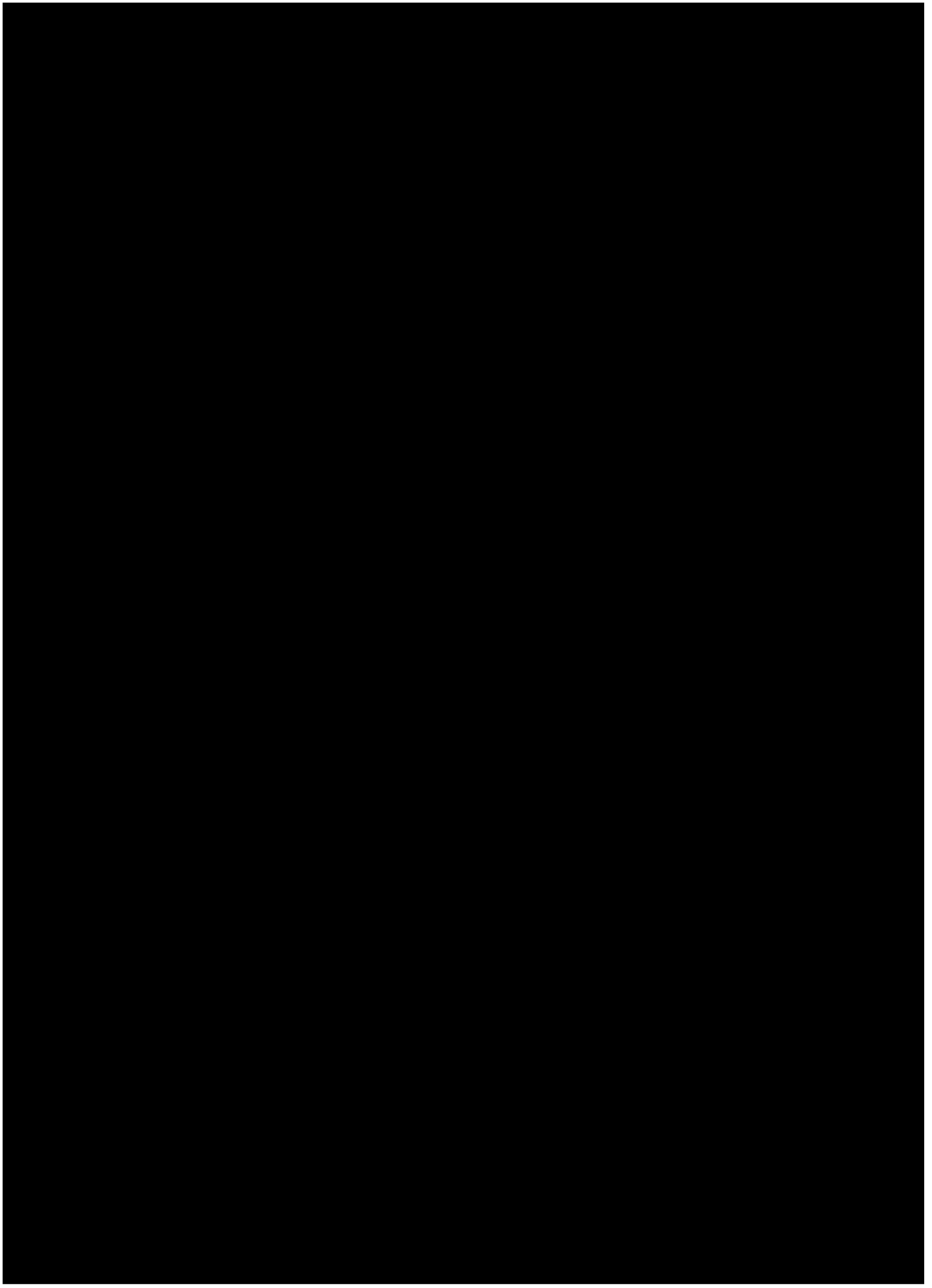


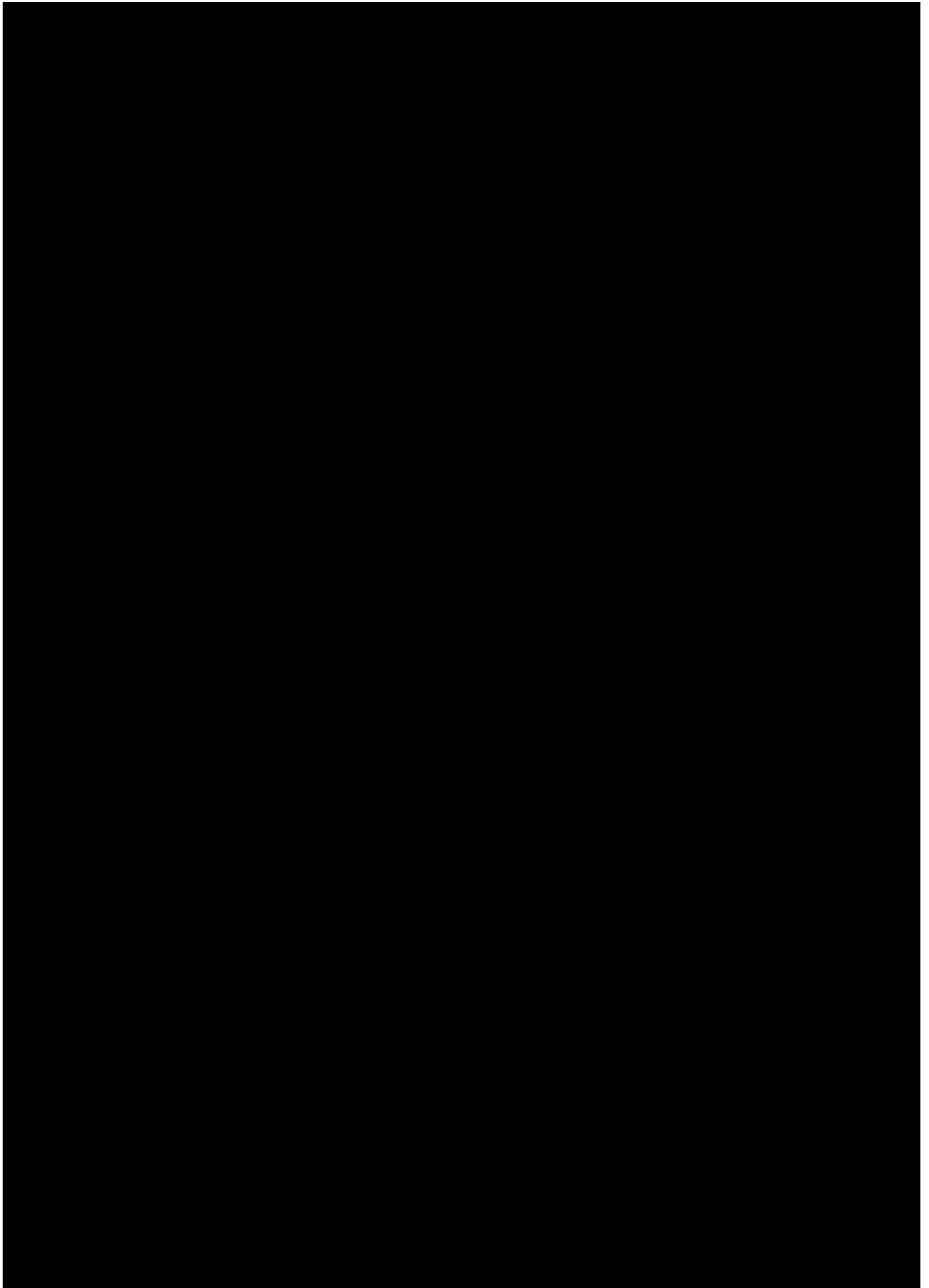


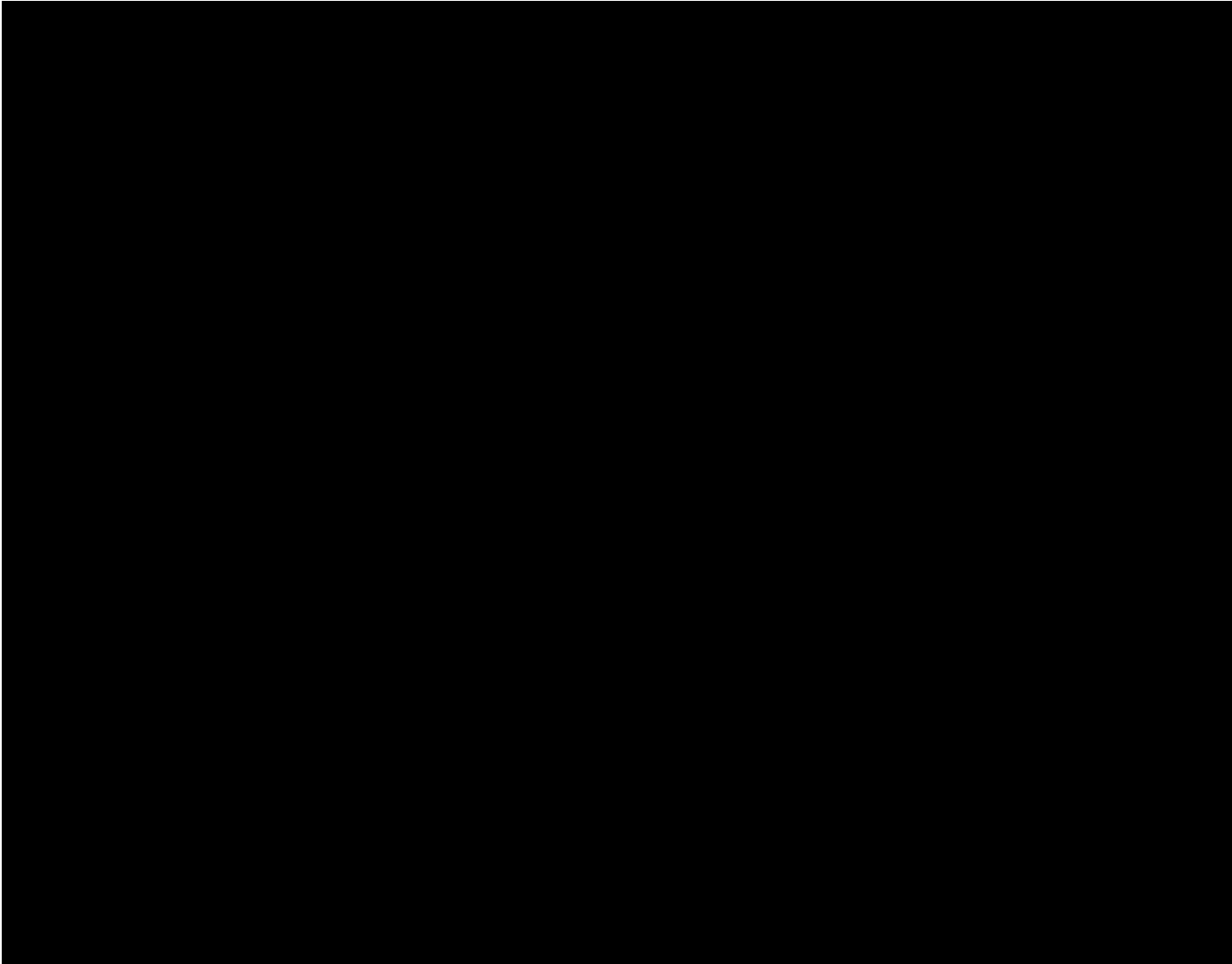












KEBBE: I don't know what Hawatt – [redacted] when I told  
20 him "you been ICAC'ed" and he said, "nothing to do with me. I've got  
nothing to fear. They're silly ICAC" I said, "No" you have to – I almost  
become a lawyer..... you have to abide by the rules. But –

BERRY: But when you speak to Michael Hawatt about the ICAC investigation –

KEBBE: This is when it first happened.

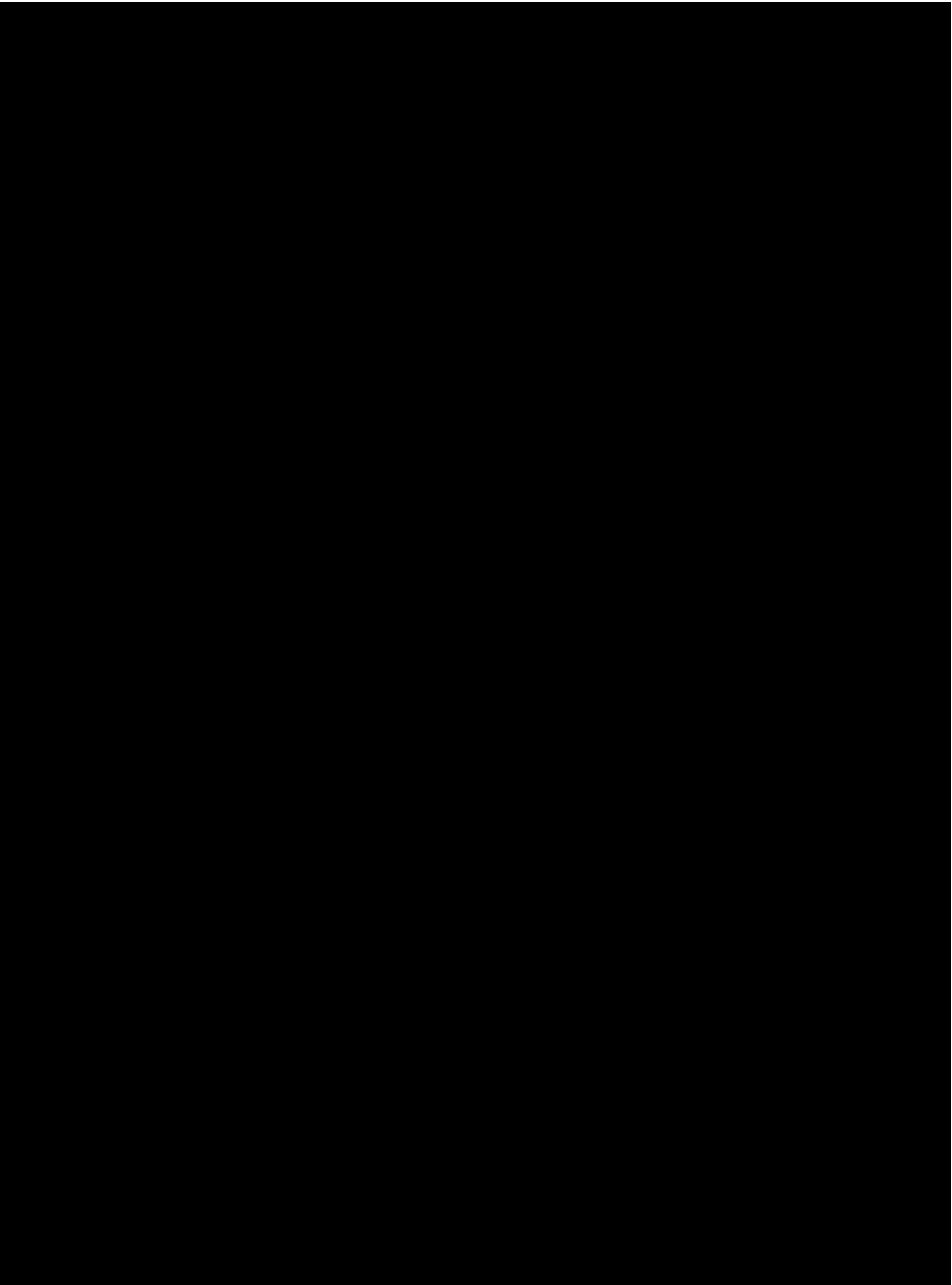
25 BERRY: Sure. Has he given you some instructions or some story or anything to tell  
ICAC if –

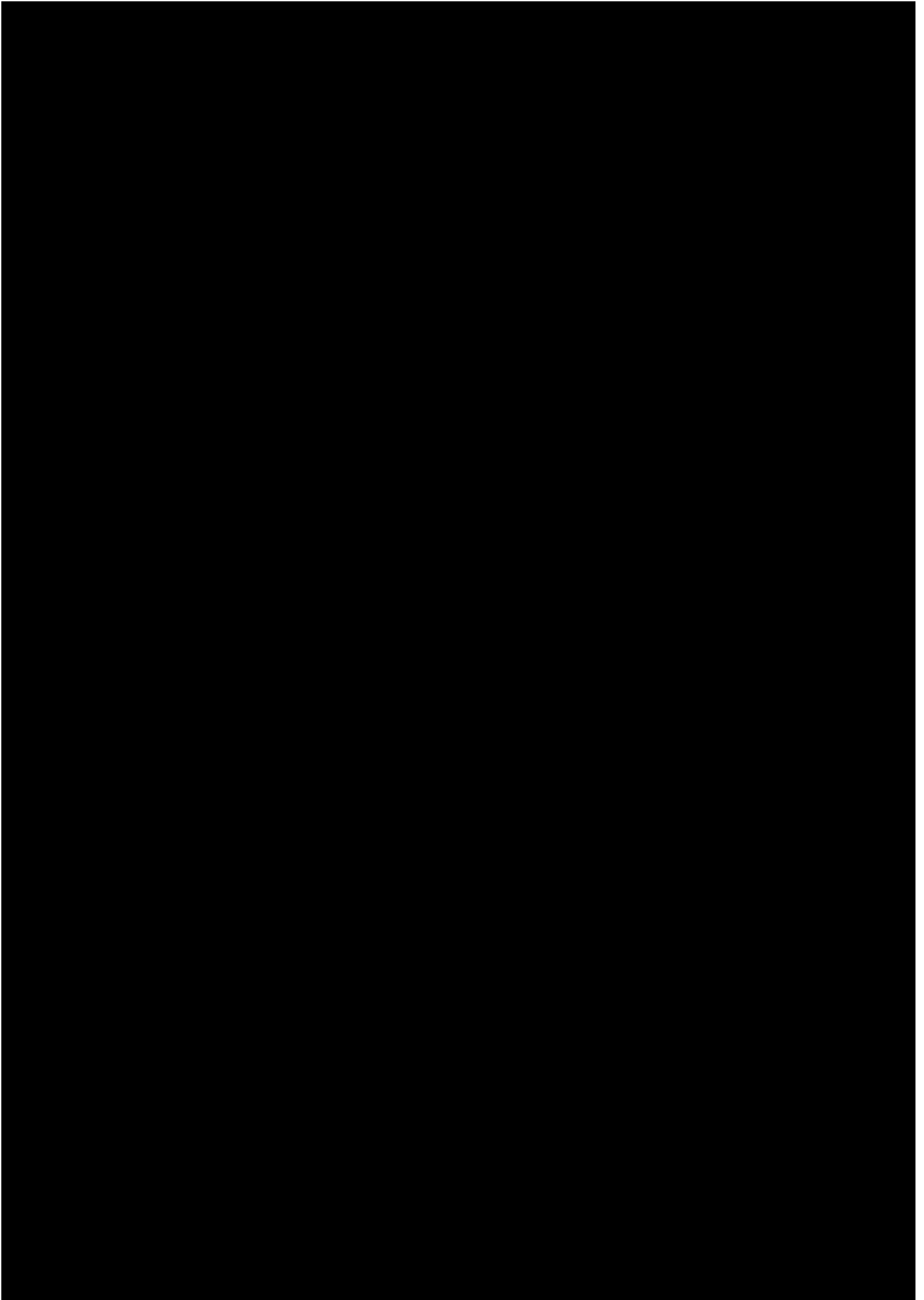
KEBBE: We were at - it was Ramadan and we were at this Ramadan dinner in  
30 Punchbowl and that's the first I saw him after that, you know, ".....ICAC  
coming into the Council and going into Vasil's .....and his place" and  
he said, "oh, silly they even took my wife's and" I said, "I mean they must  
have some evidence to go. They can't be silly they're very smart people.  
They looking after the right people." He said, "No I've got nothing to do –

you know I'm clean and" so he just doesn't worried. I was upset about the situation, because what affected a good Council, and a lot of great people who worked for it, and you know.

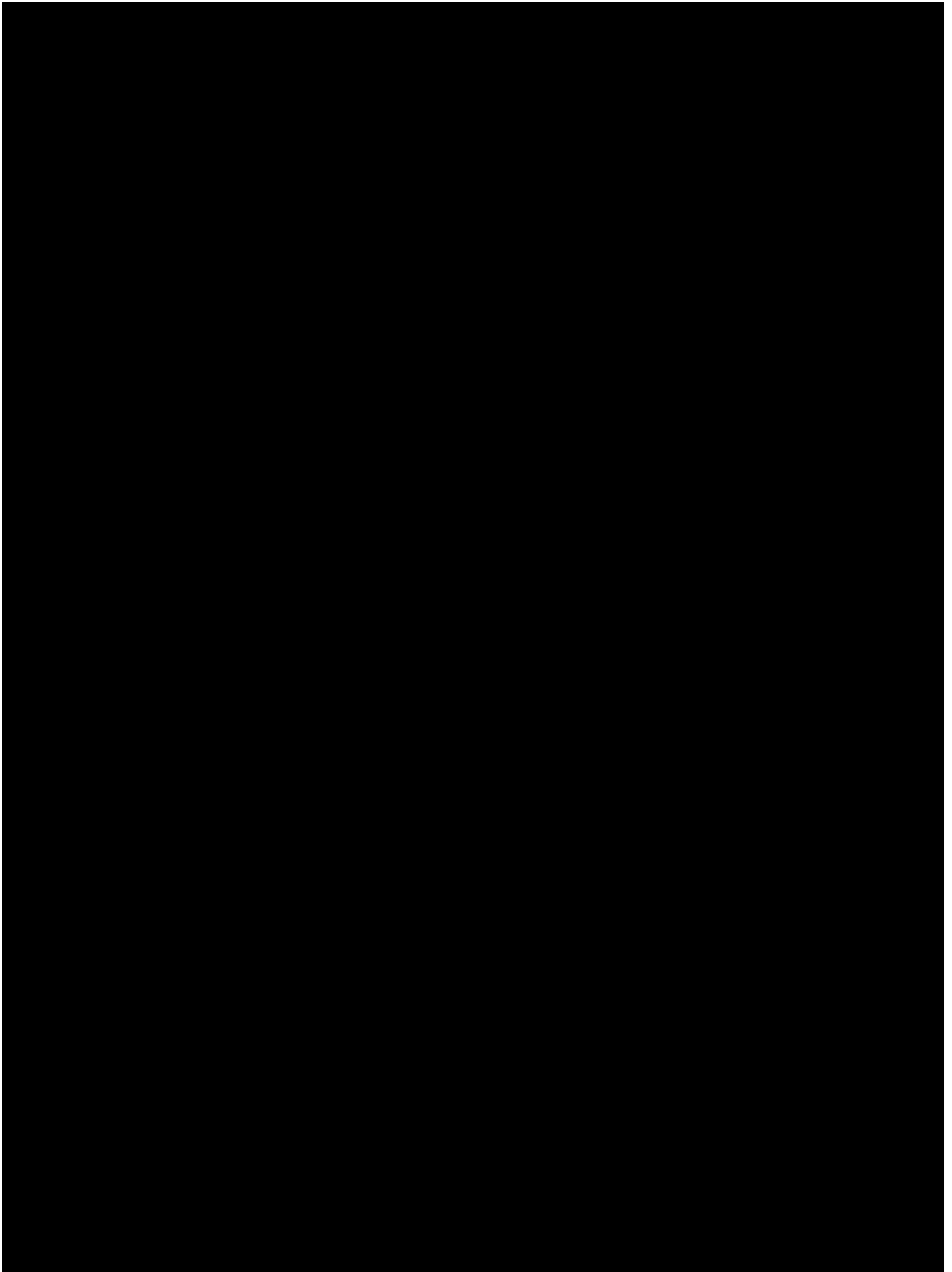
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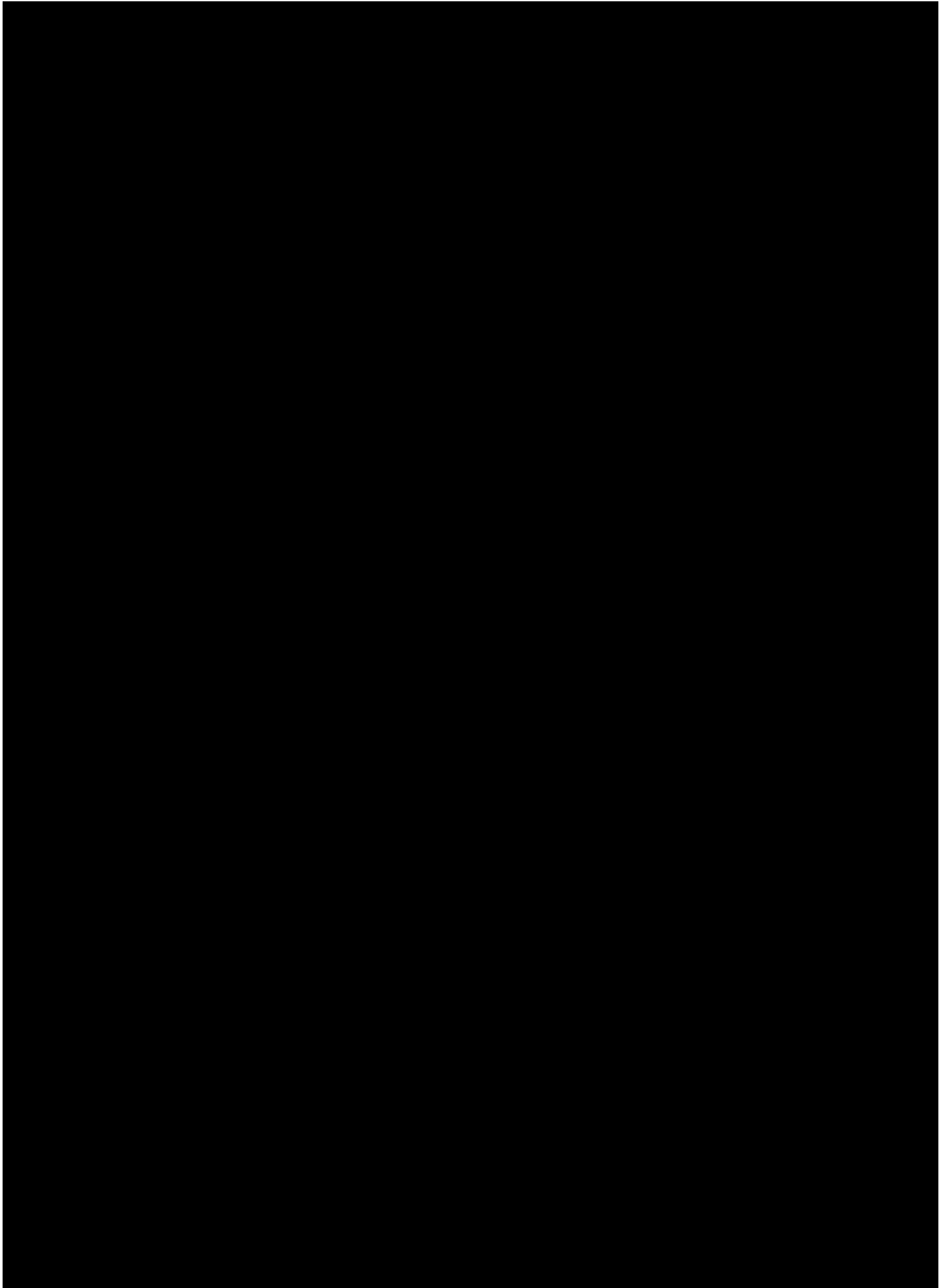
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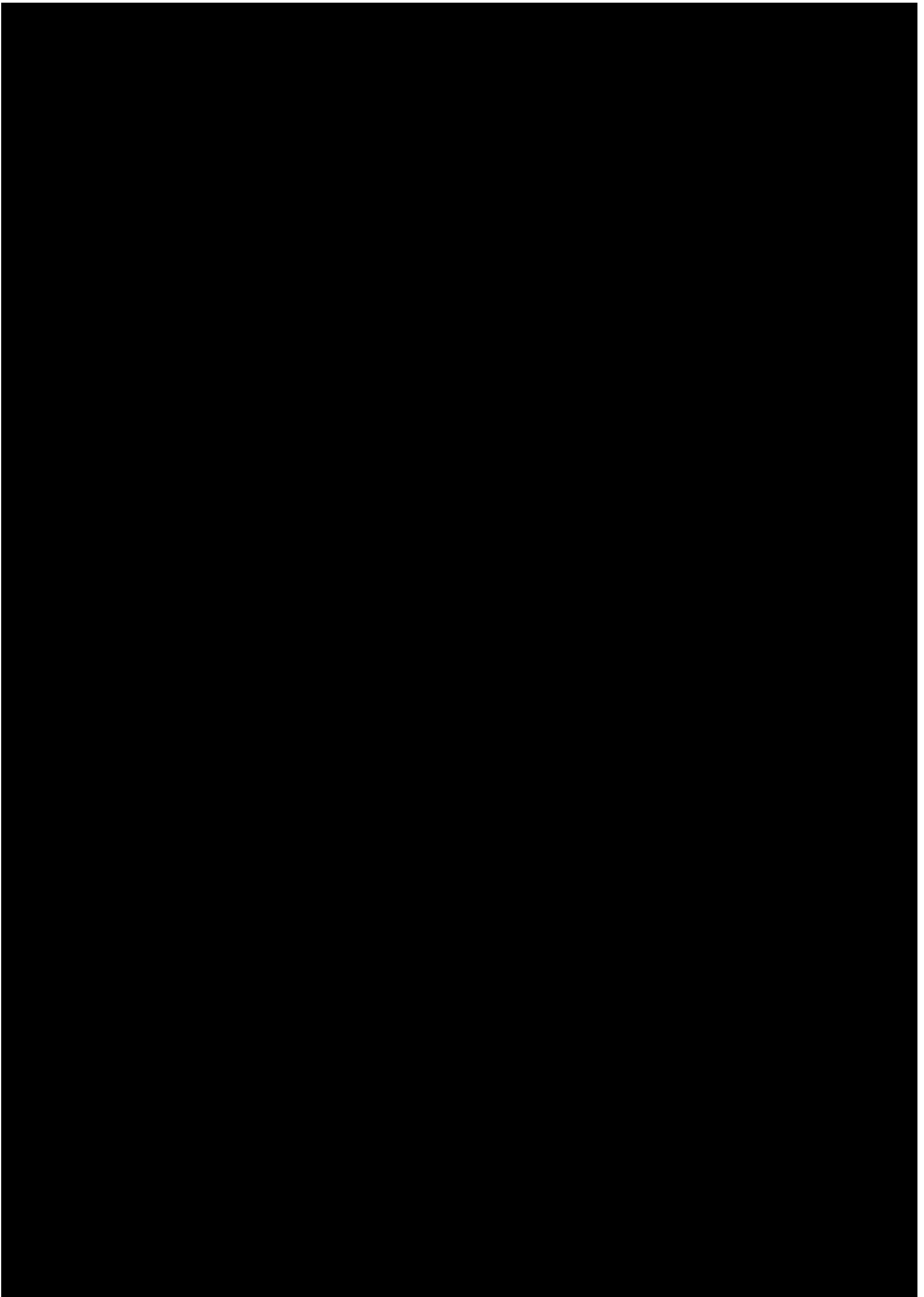


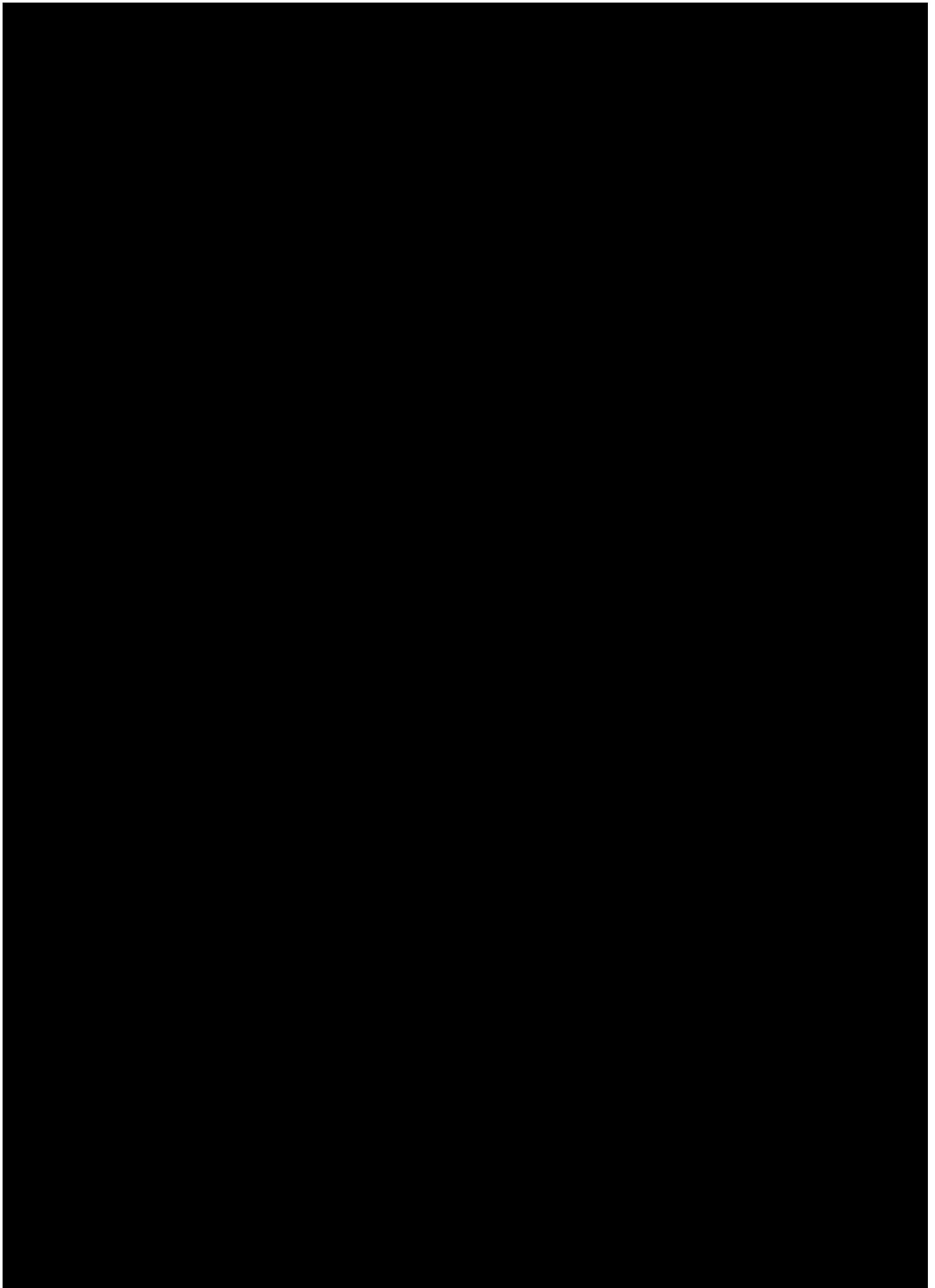


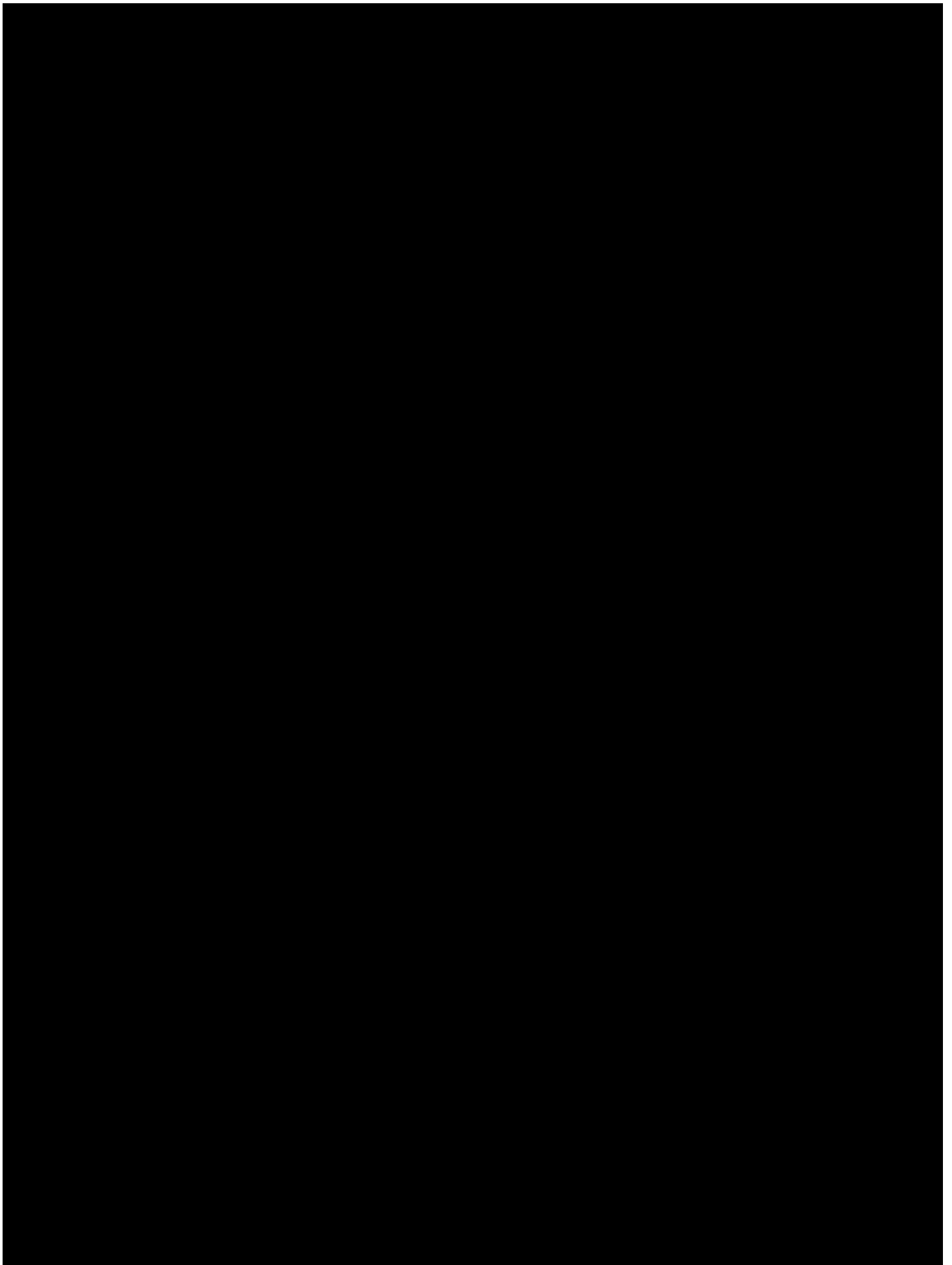


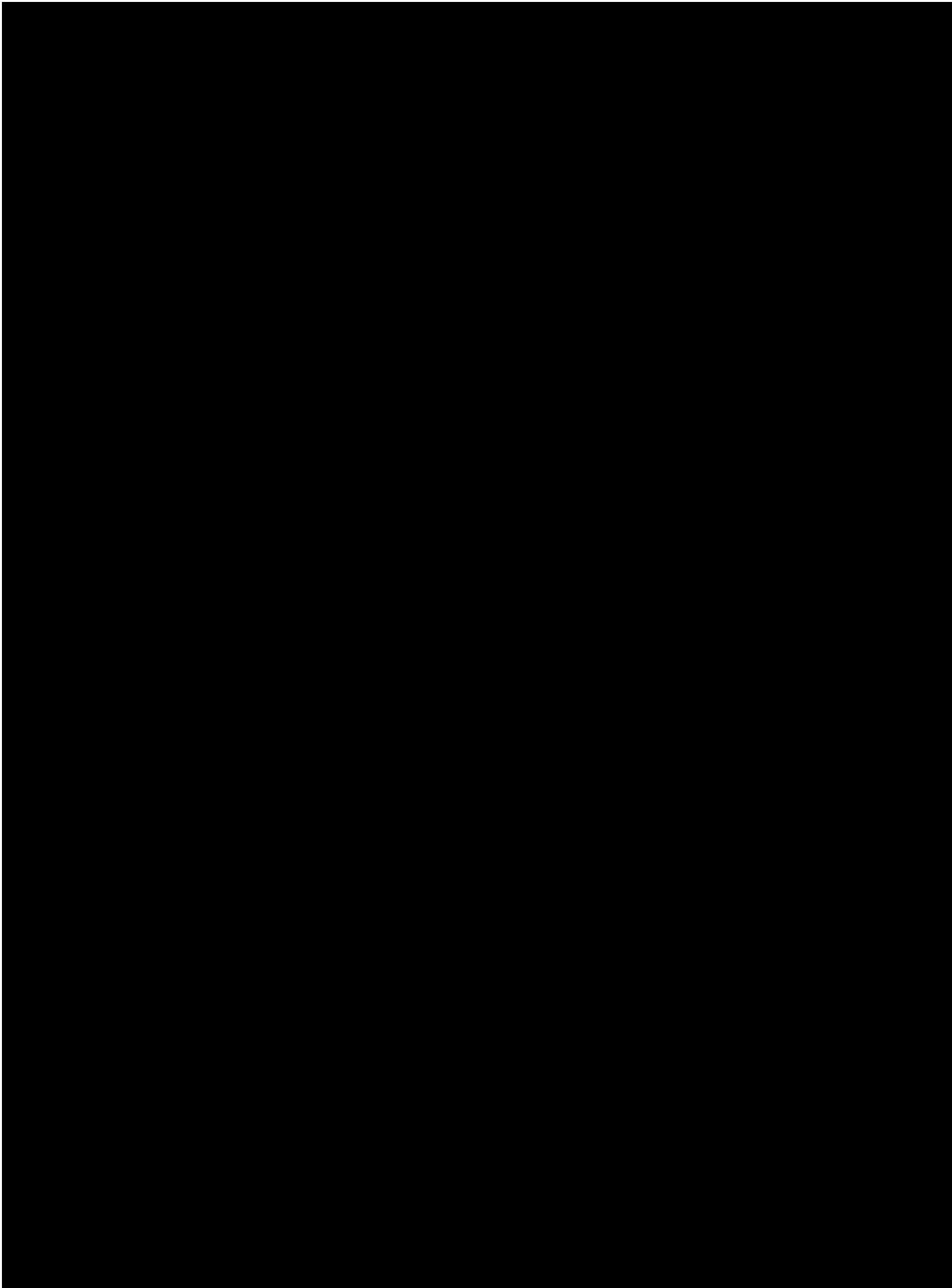


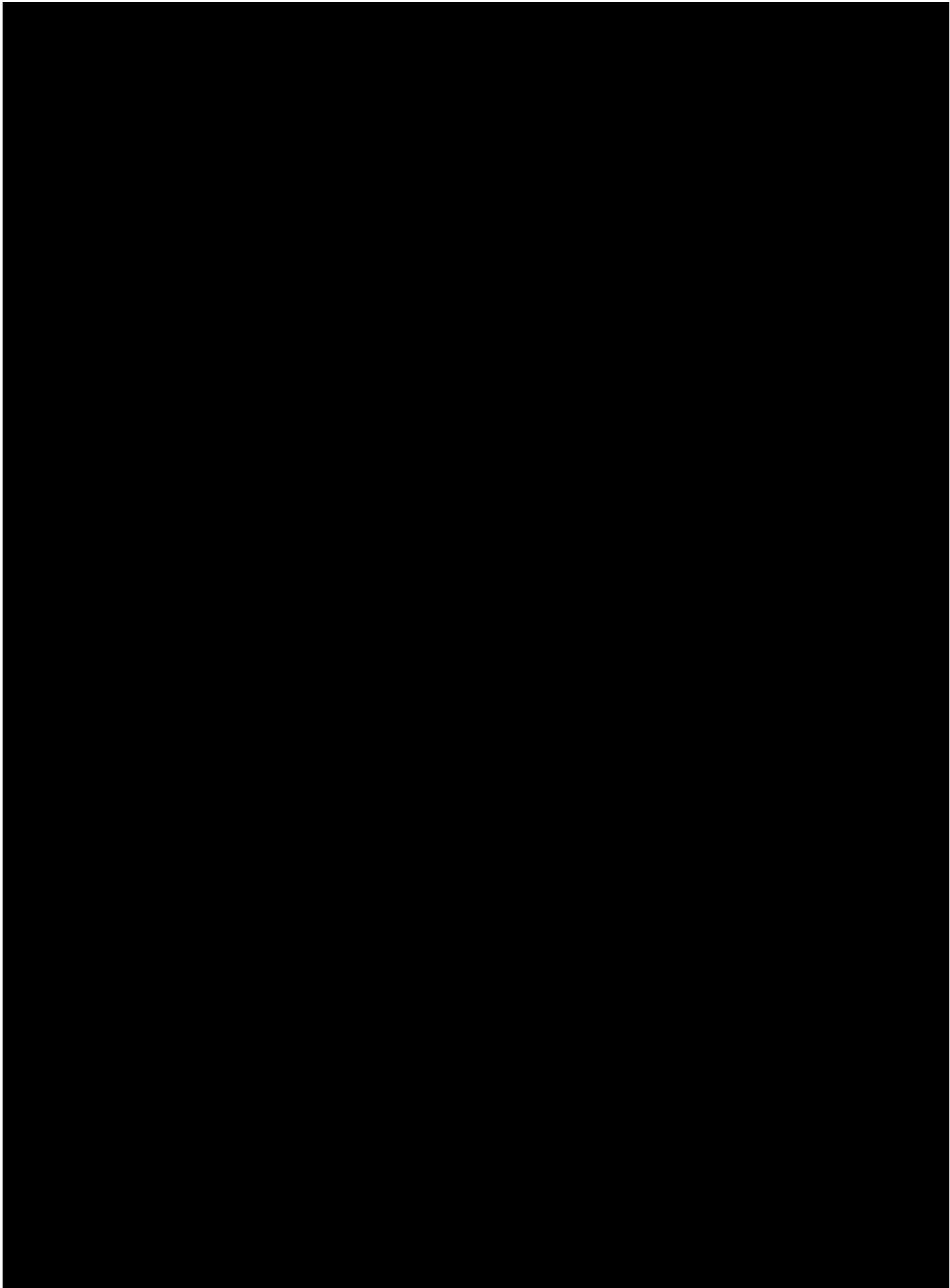


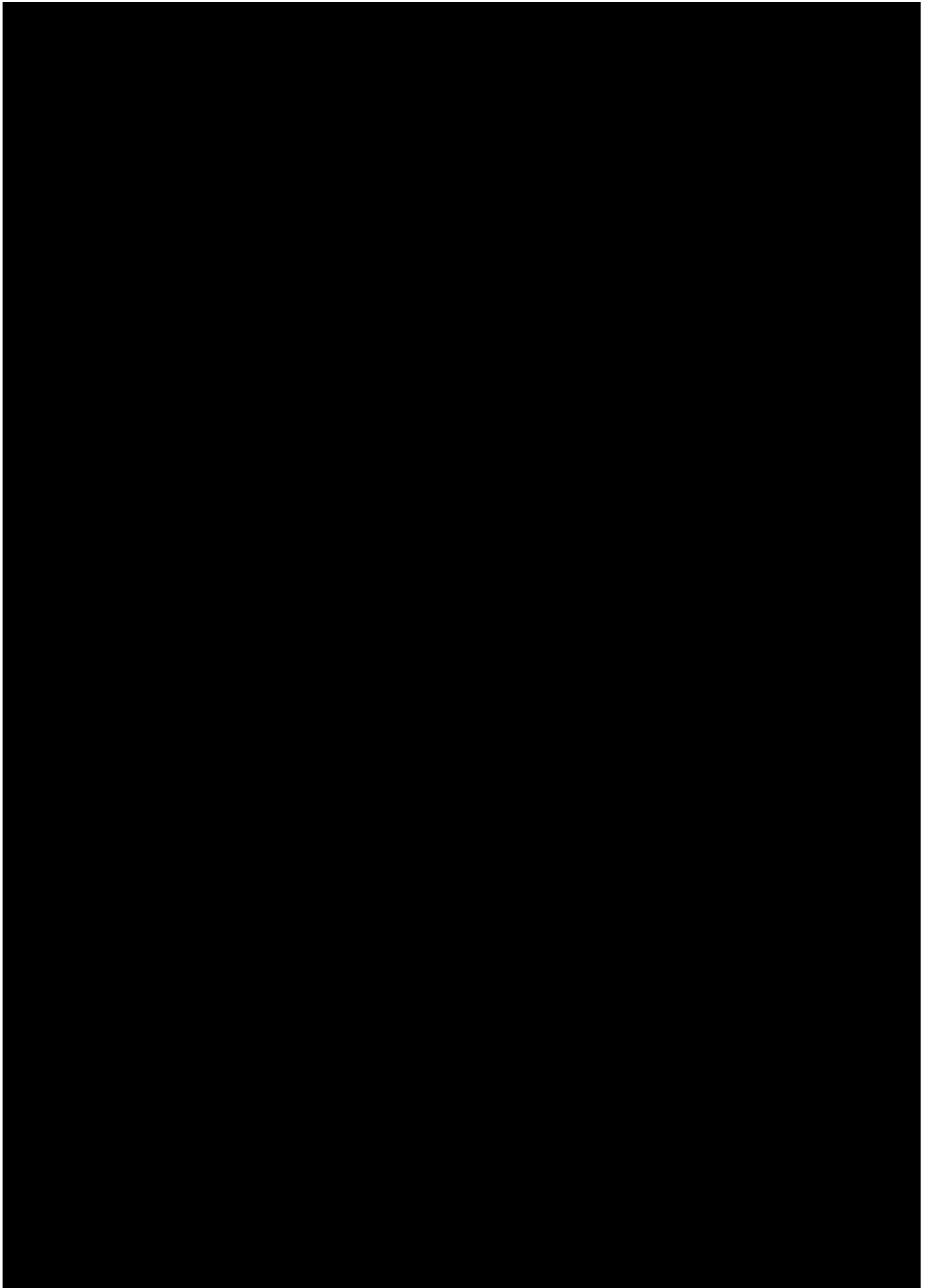




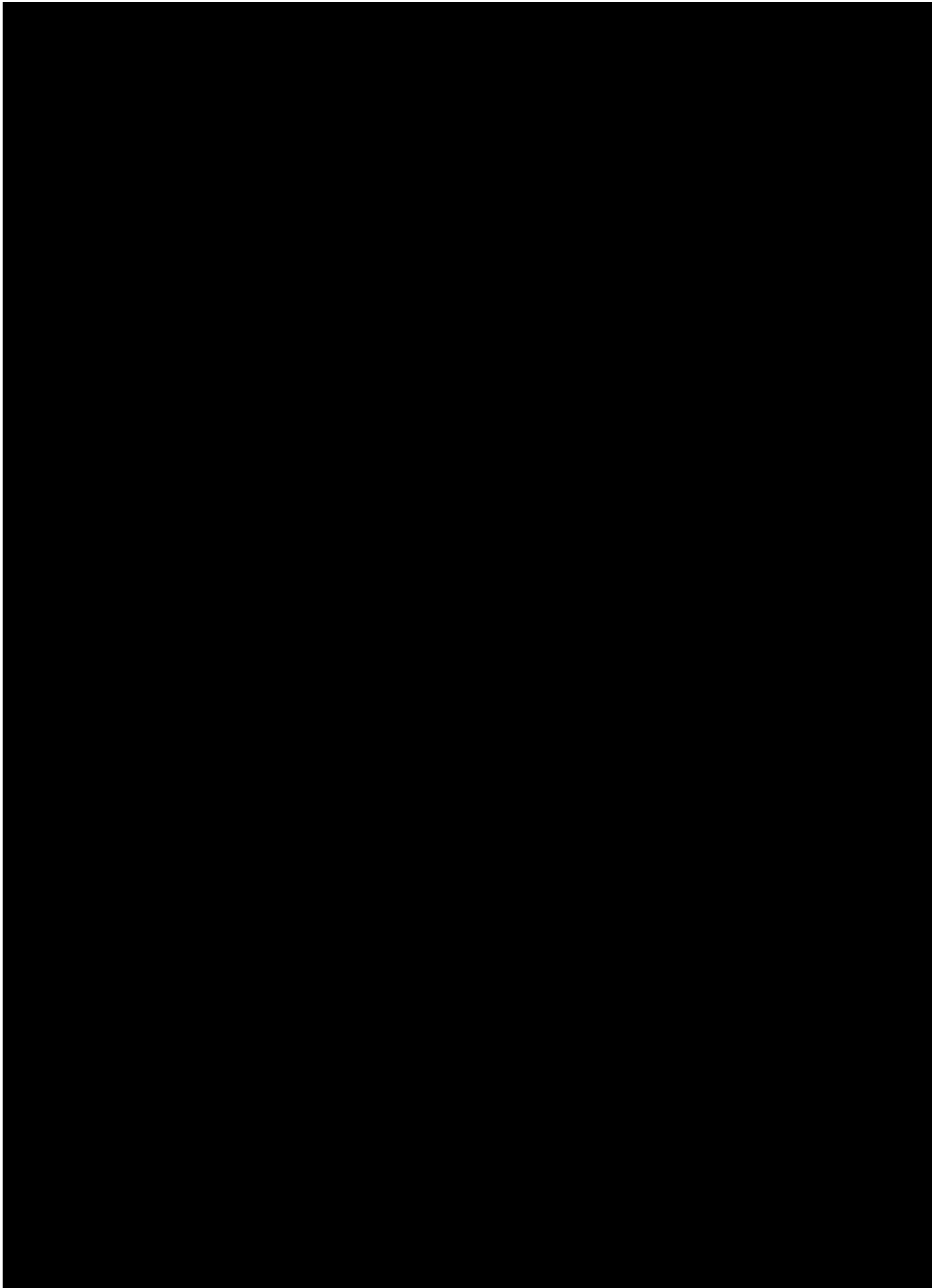


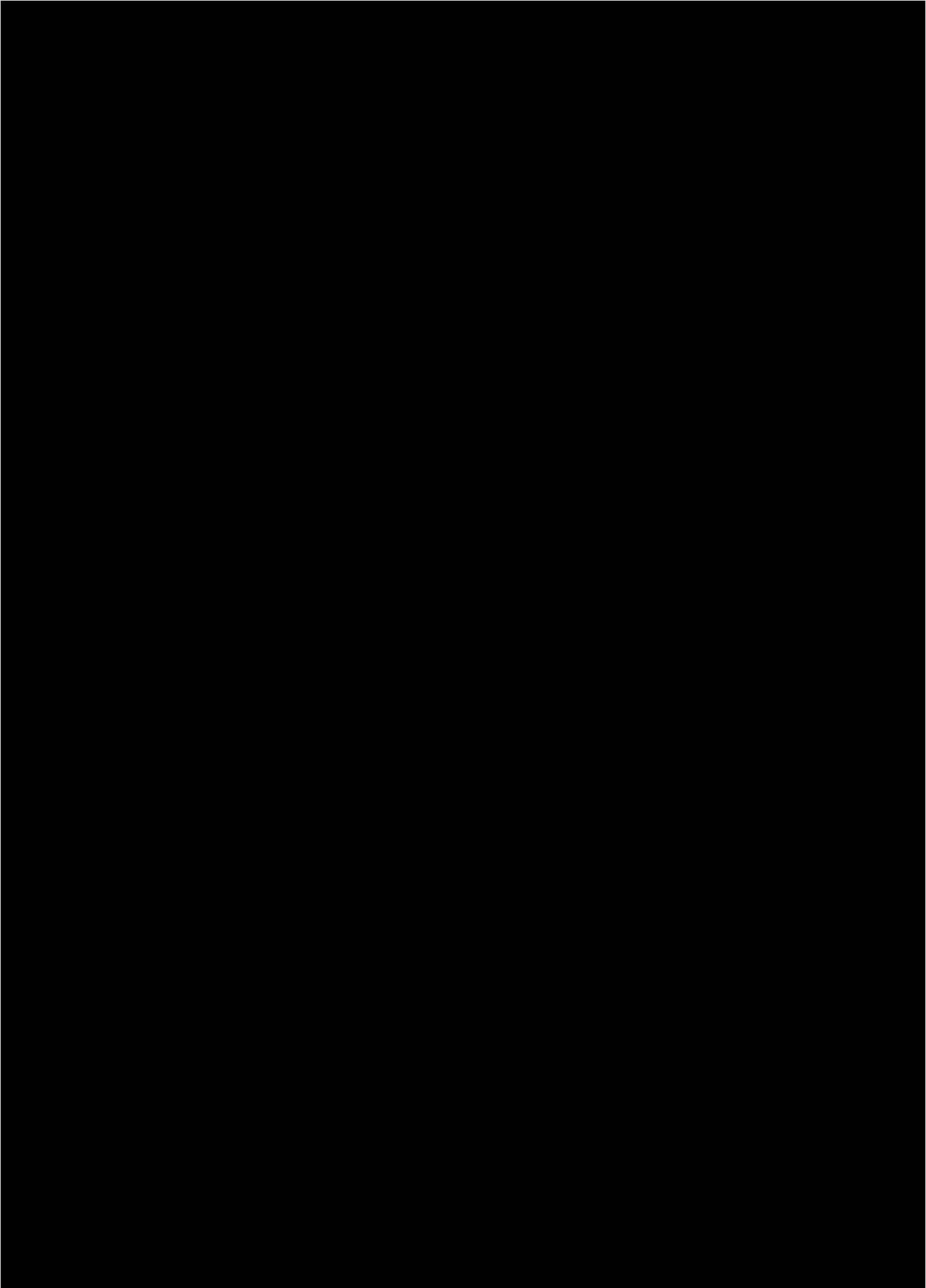


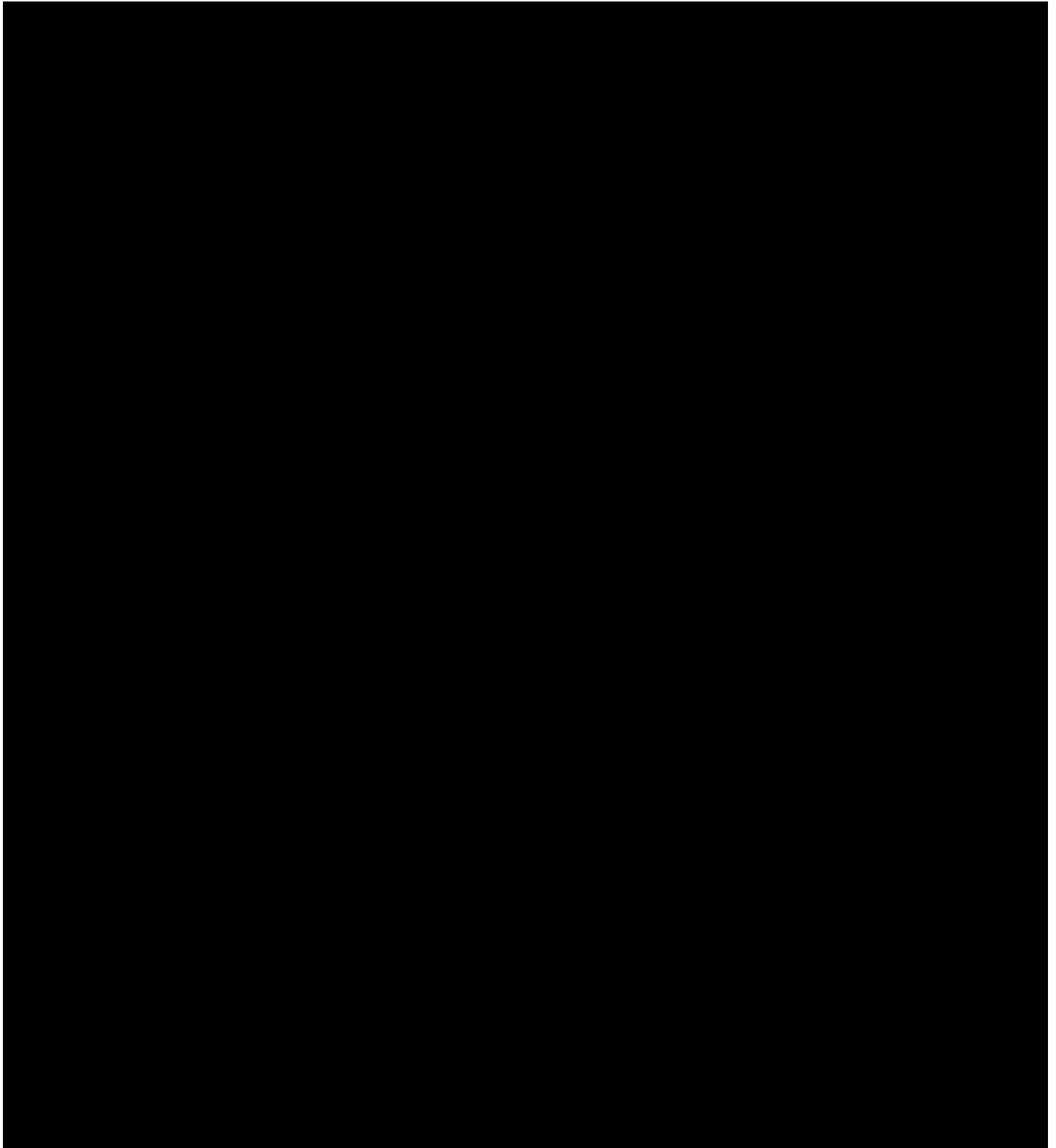












30 KEBBE:

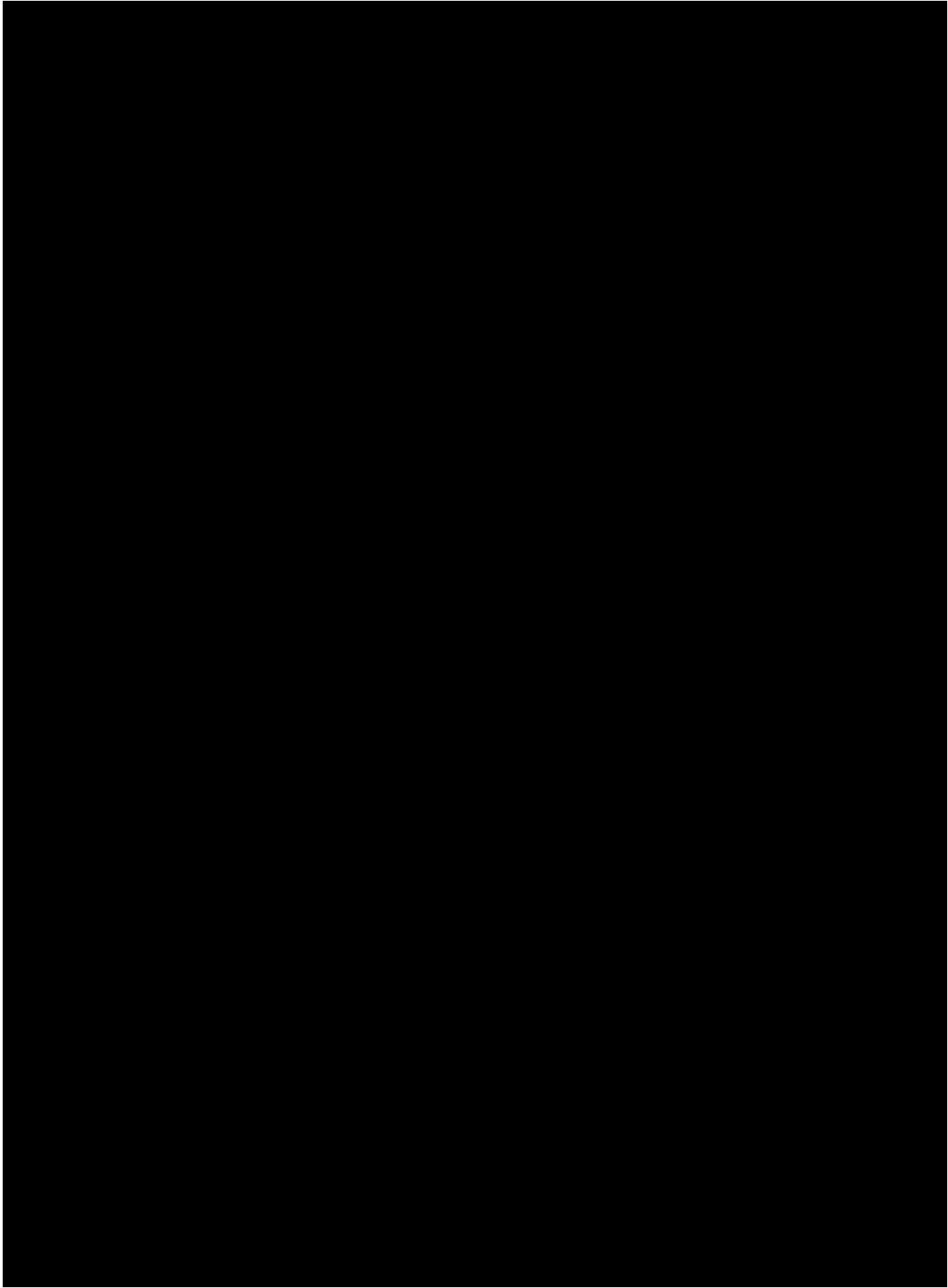
Jim Mont – you have to remember Jim Montague is – been the longest serving member in Local Government. I love him. Everyone loves him and respects him.

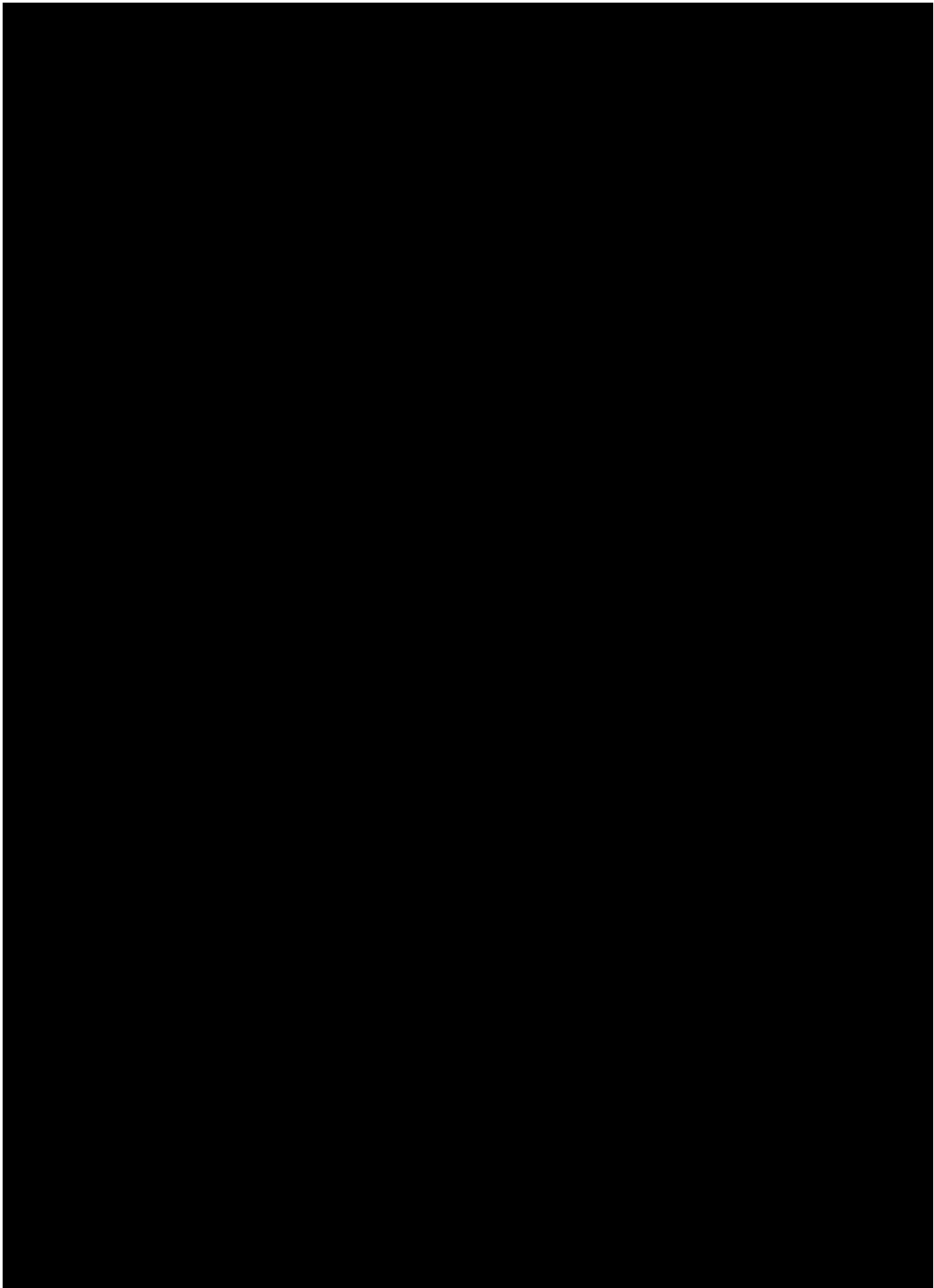


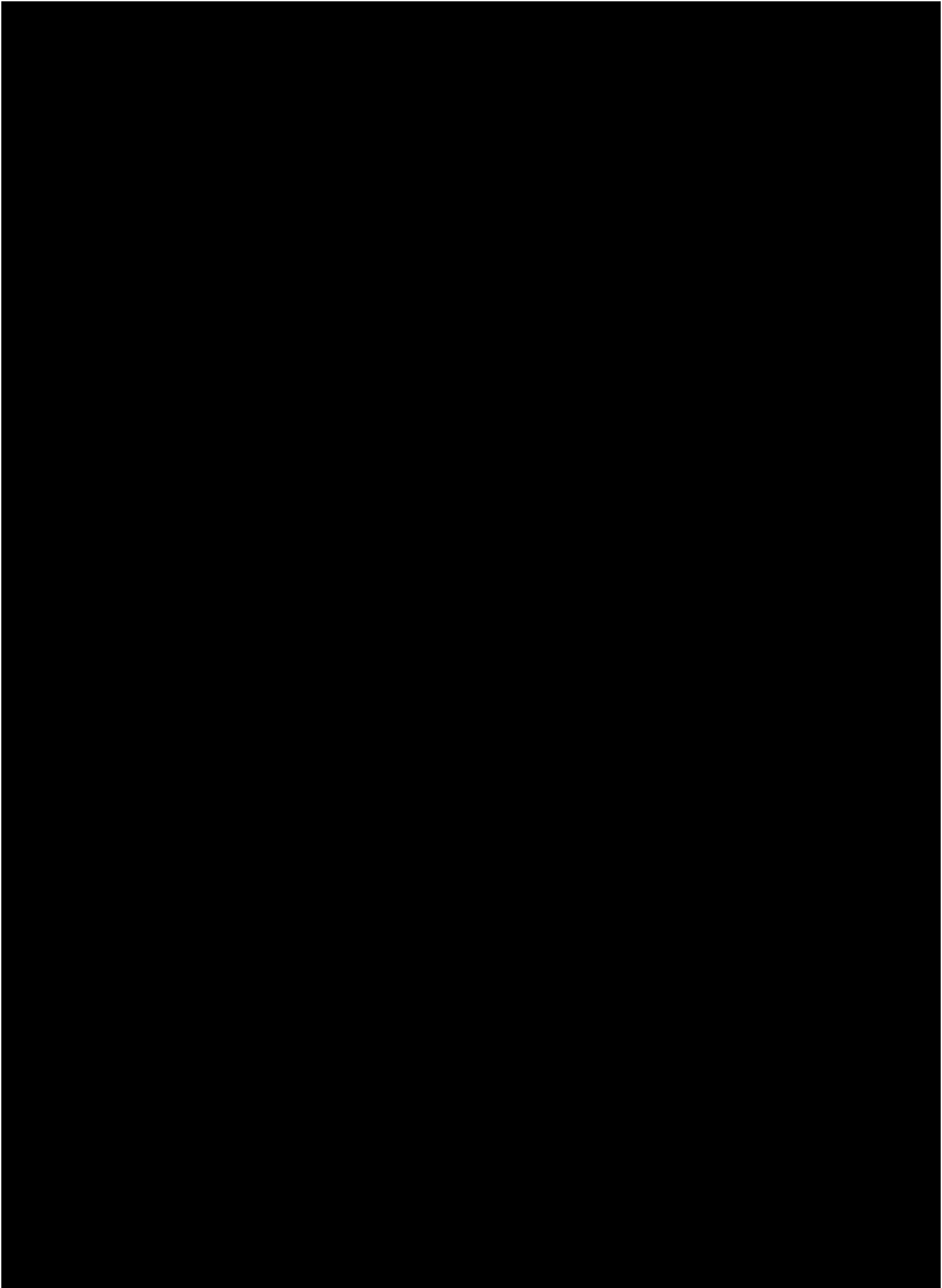
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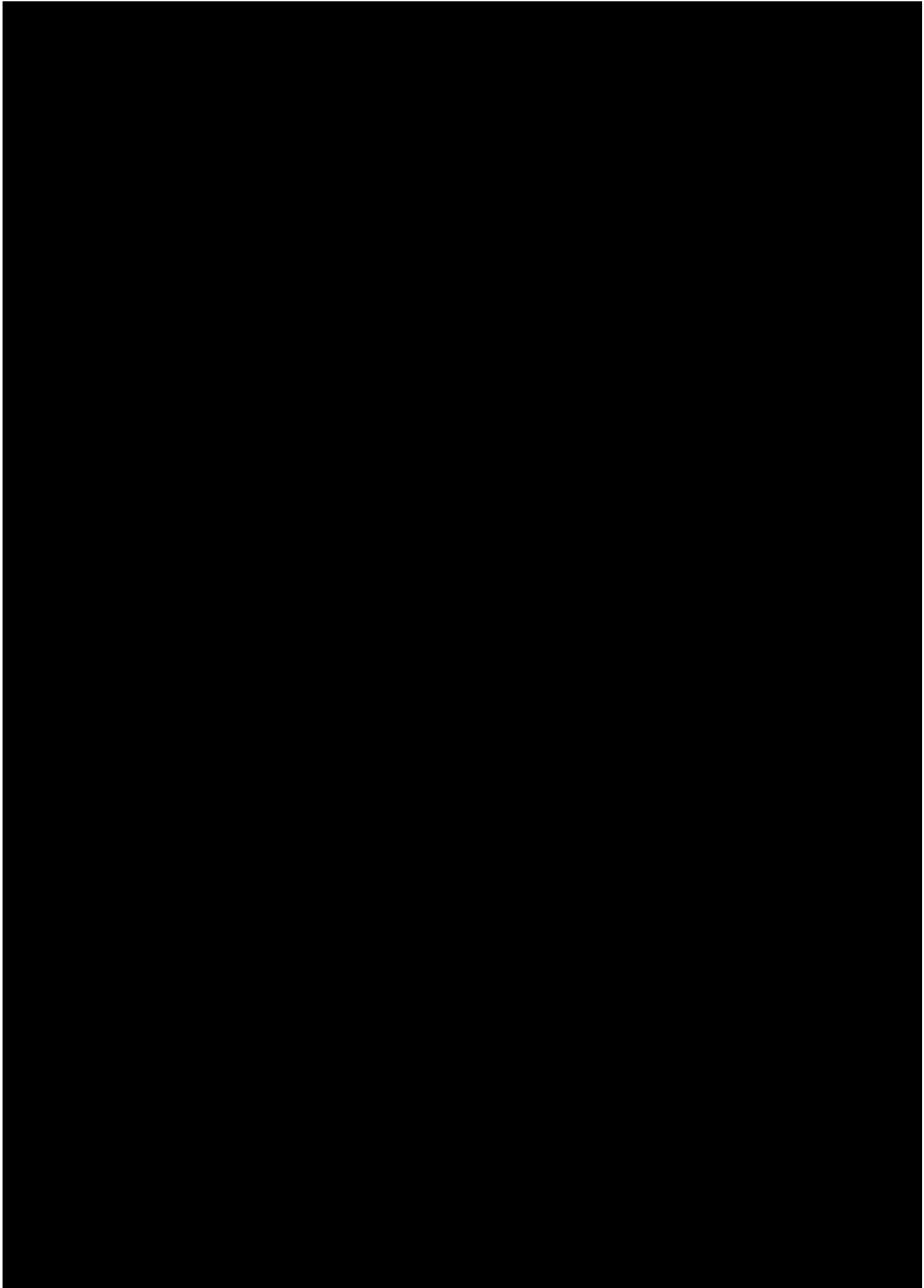
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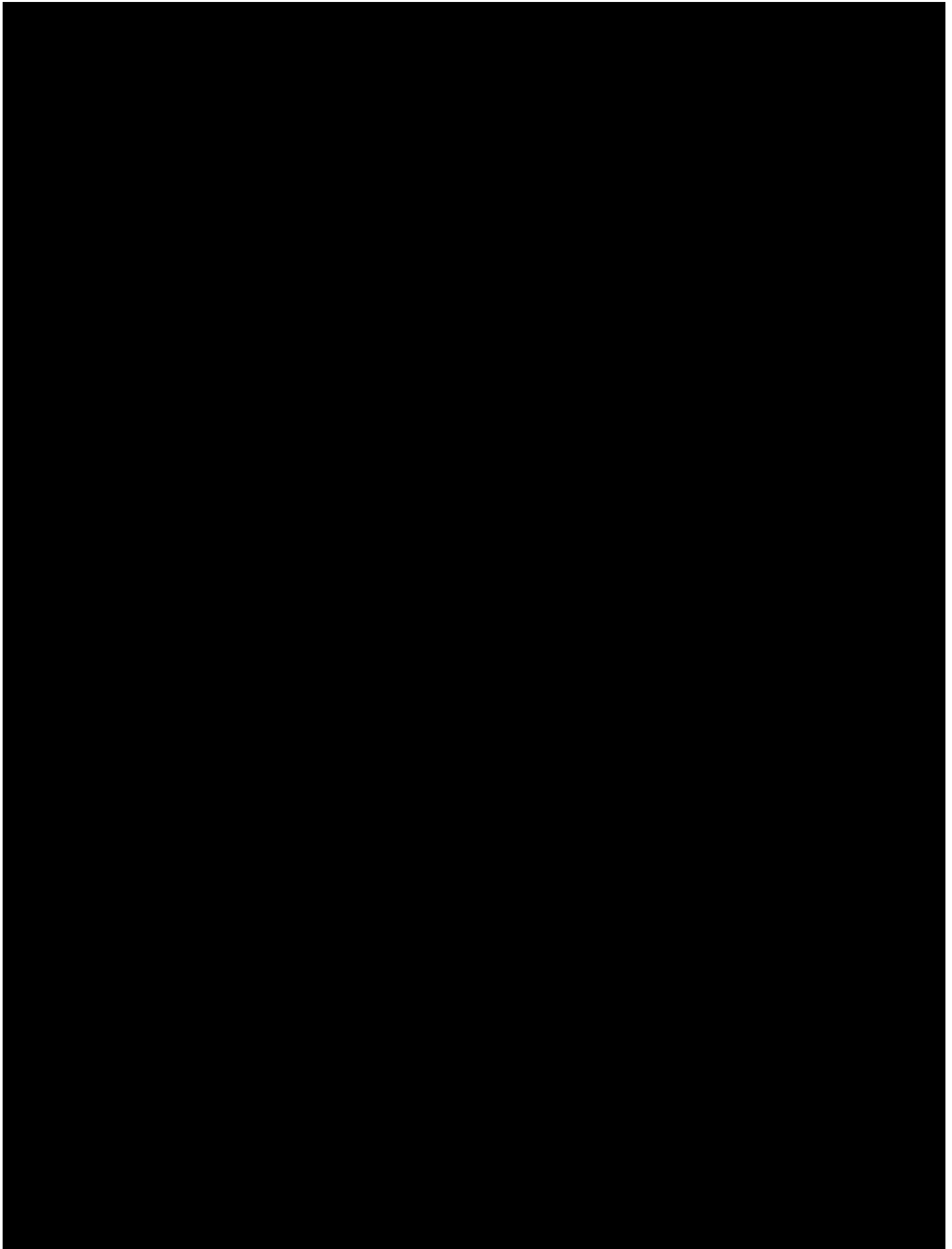
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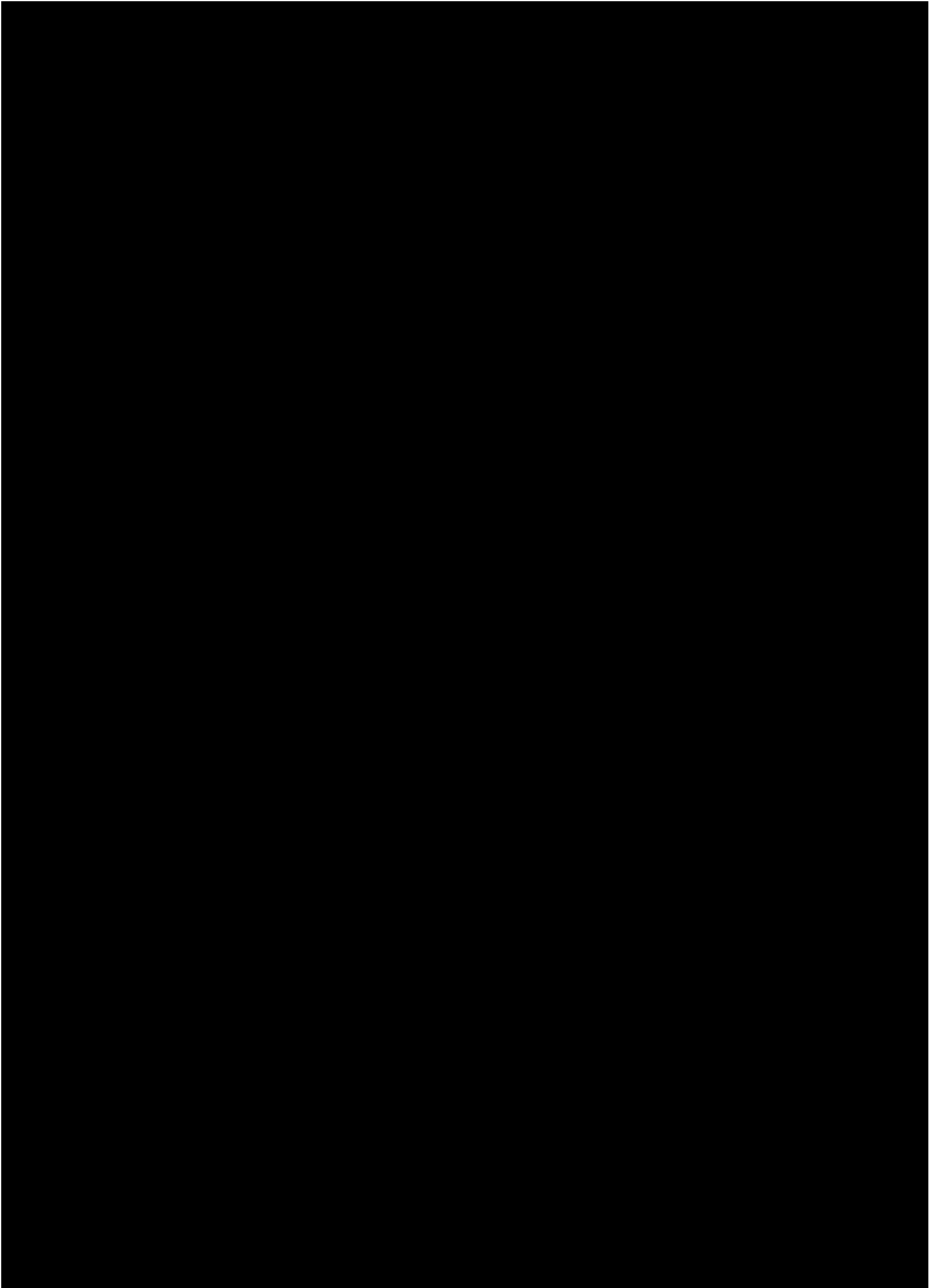


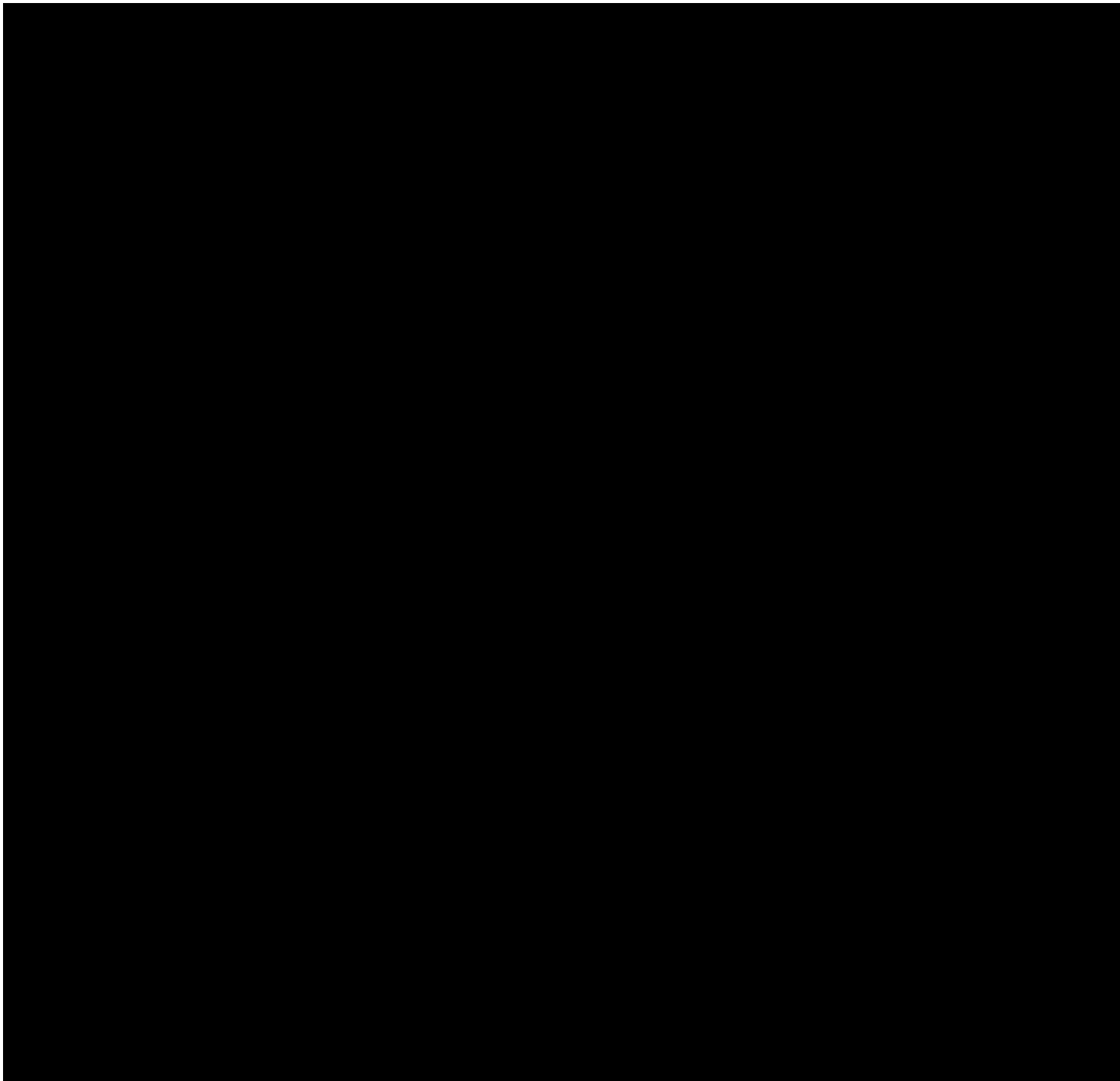












KEBBE: Because when you hear that they keep meeting in Azzi's place; they keep meeting in Azzi's place, and –

BERRY: Whose meeting in Azzi's place?

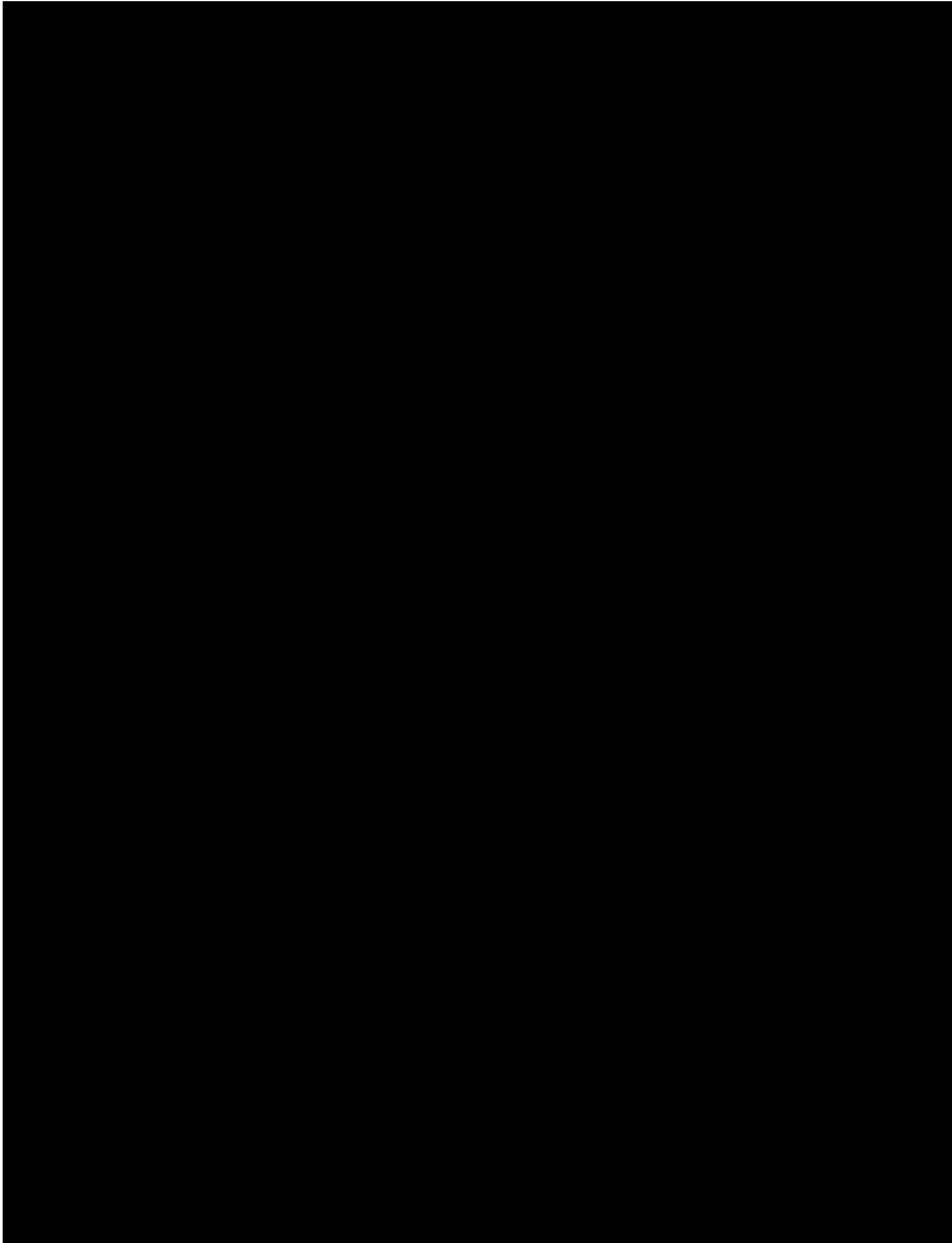
25 KEBBE: And I know Jim Montague has been for lunches there too many times. Everyone was – I was left out .....

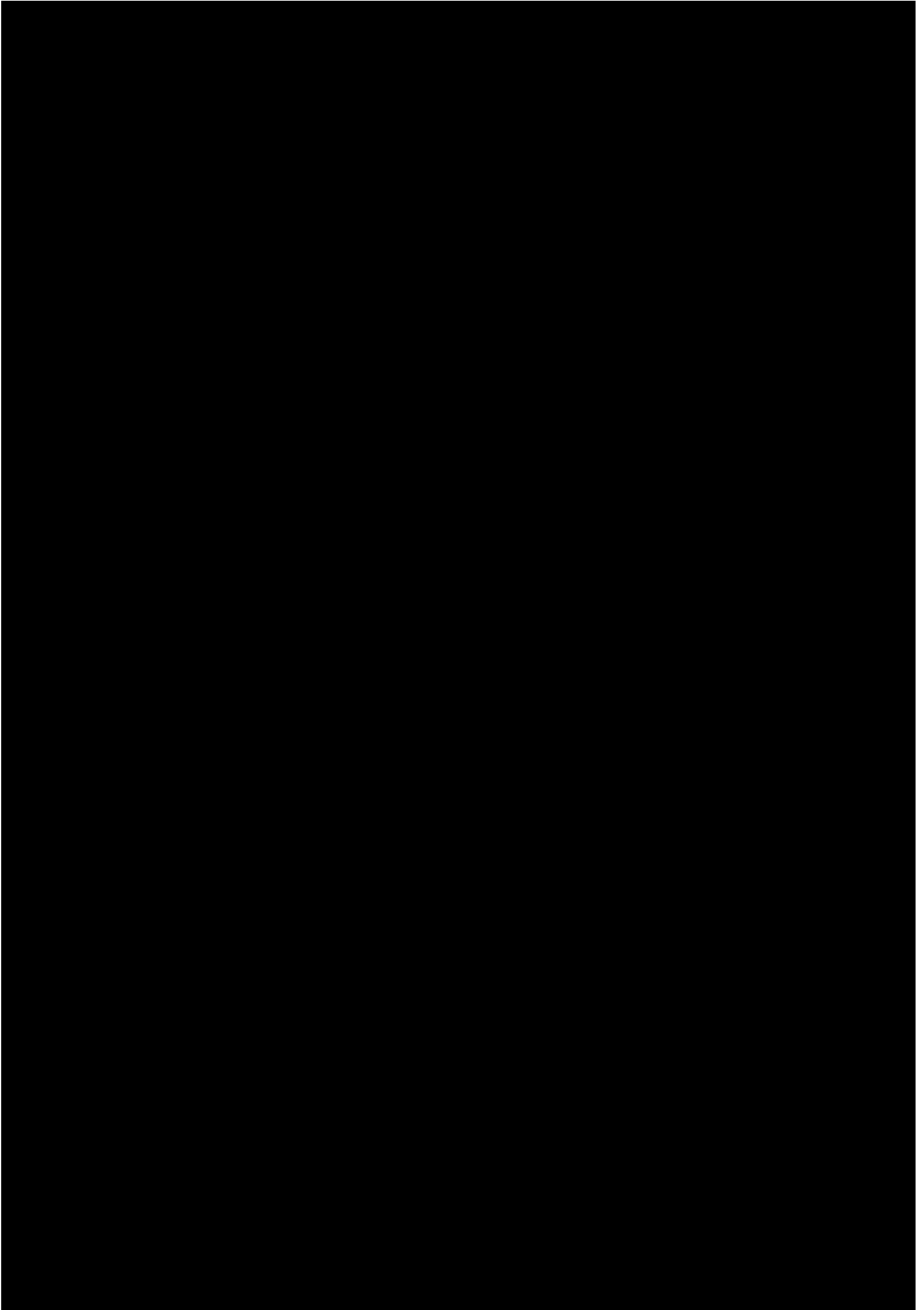
BERRY: So people go to Azzi's house.

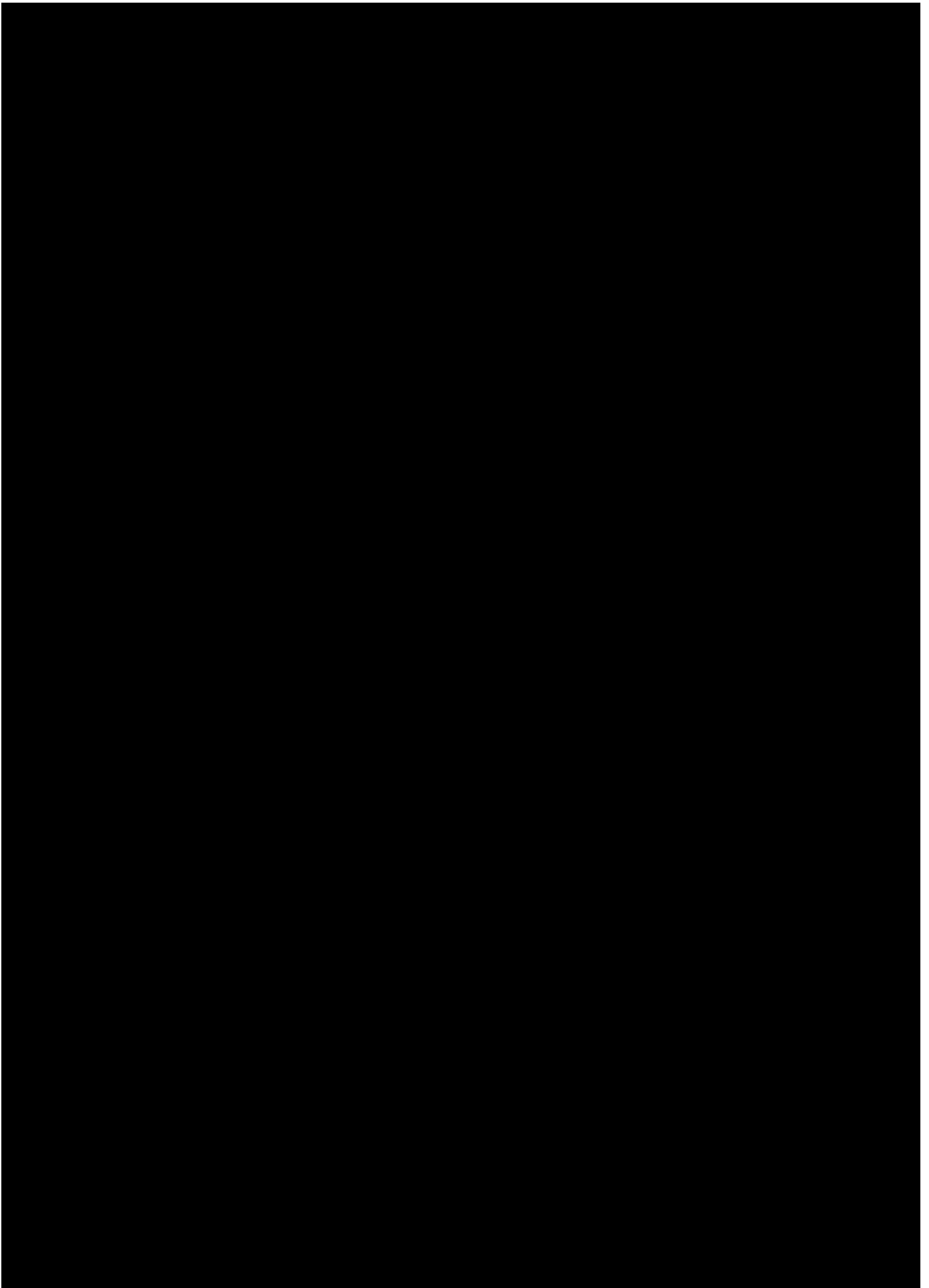
KEBBE: Yeah, not me. I was never invited.

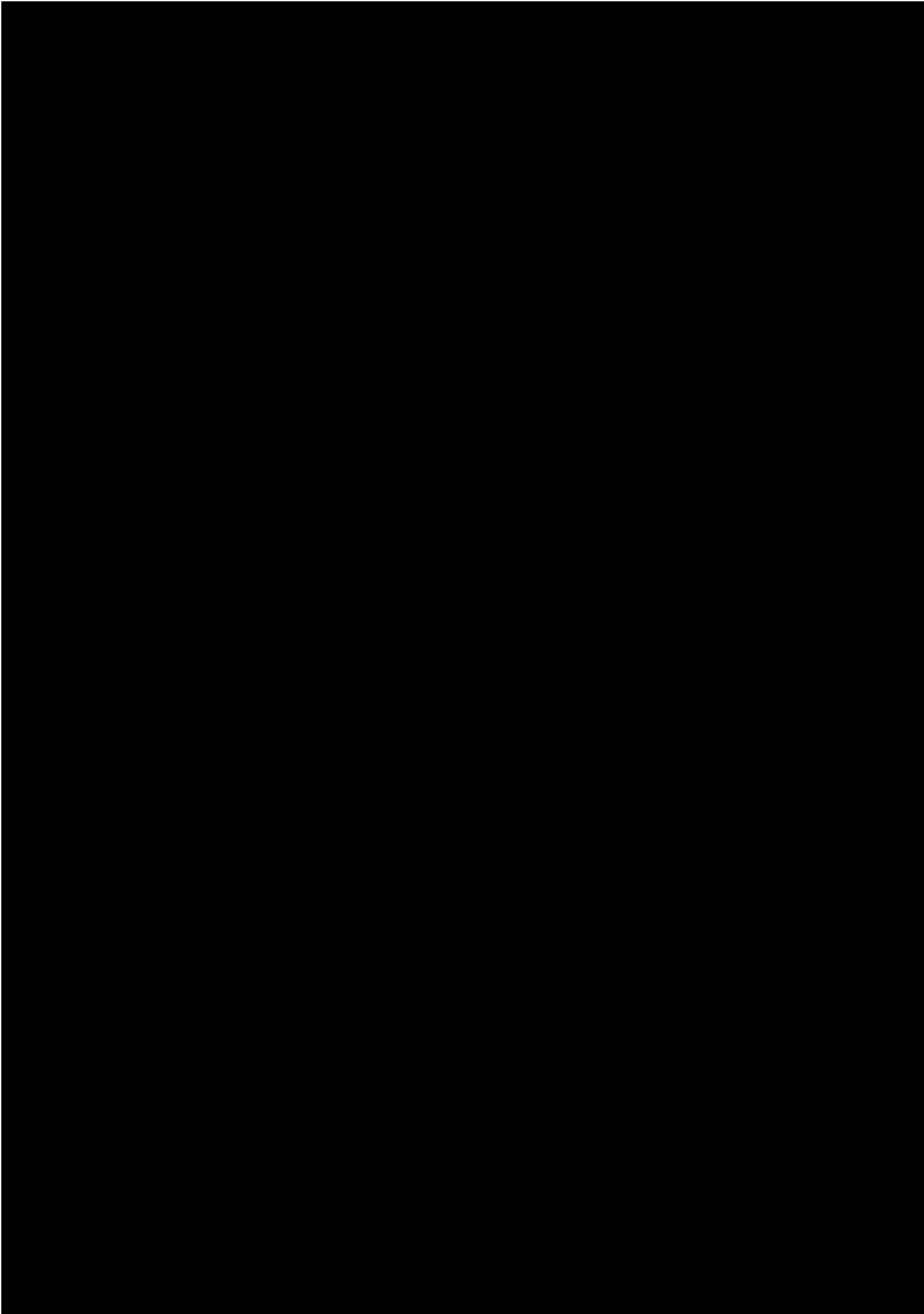
BERRY: Okay no that's alright.

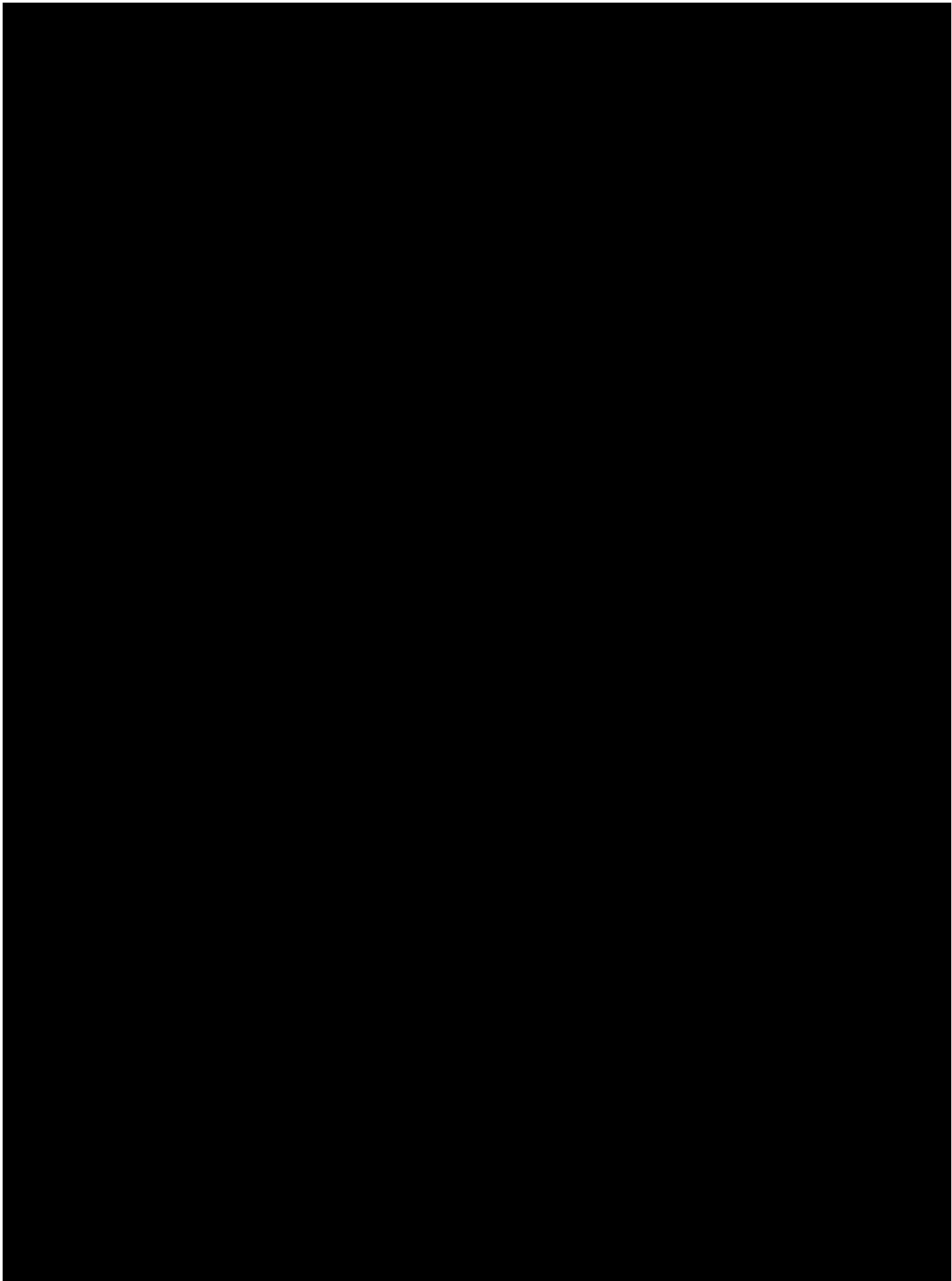
KEBBE: Because I'm – because my mother can't stand if she told them off.

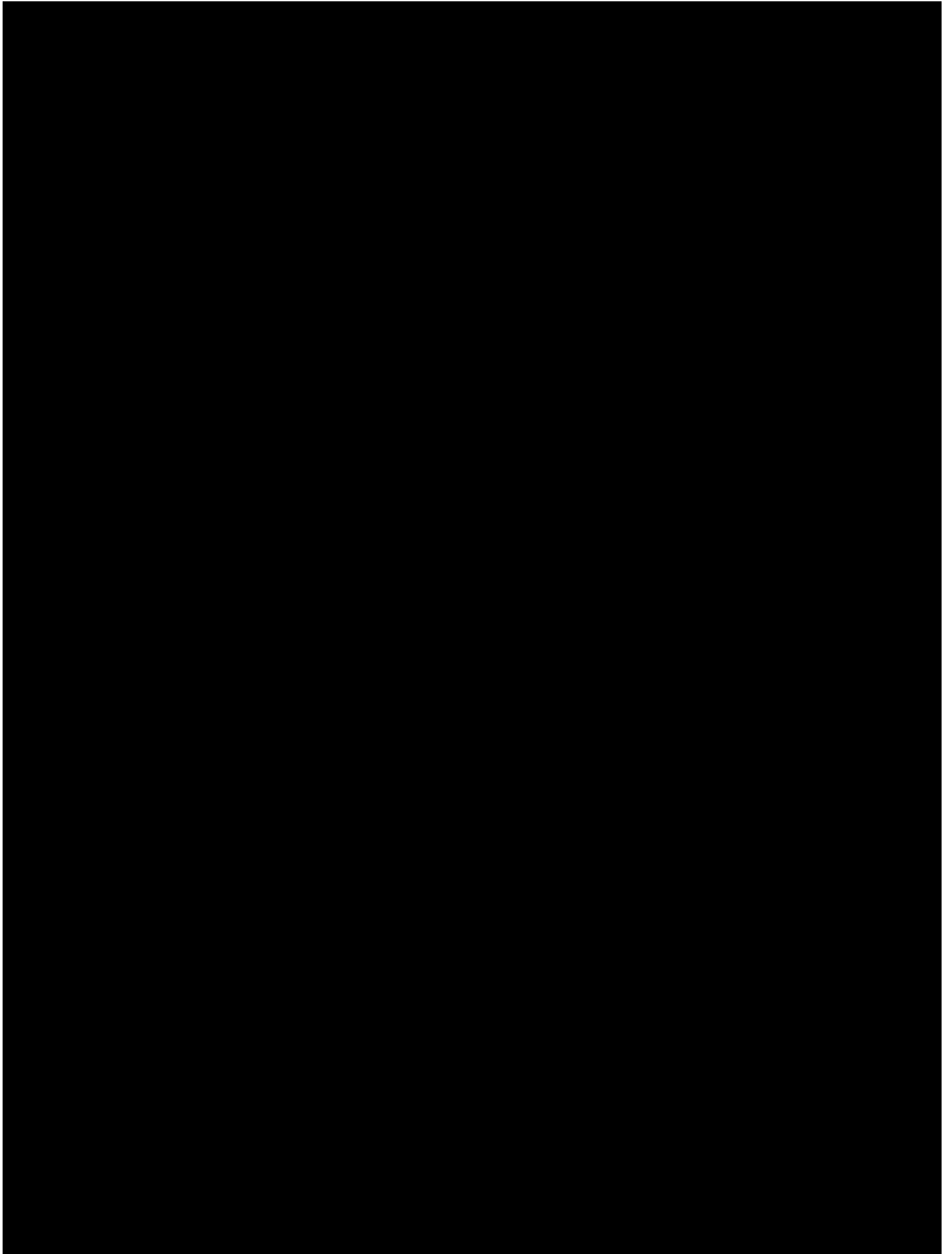














BERRY: I suppose earlier you were talking about the issue with Jim Montague being sacked, or almost being sacked and him having [REDACTED] write –

15 KEBBE: He was in audience when we had the meeting –

BERRY: At Council?

KEBBE: - the night, yeah, at Council when we called a special meeting.

BERRY: Is that and that's in January this year.

KEBBE: Yeah, extraordinary meeting.

20 BERRY: What was that all over? Why was there an extraordinary meeting to have Jim Montague removed from Council?

KEBBE: Jim Montague and the Mayor, because we were treated like school children. Always – we couldn't speak in the Chamber, we couldn't debate, we couldn't say anything at all. We were just suppressed.

25 BERRY: So that was the only reason?

KEBBE: Yeah, that was, yeah ongoing for – and not only to do with the Director also was –

BERRY: Right.

30 KEBBE: Spiro Staffis, because he was hired and he was – and then they wanted to not hire him and pay him out, and there was a lot of in discrepancies, you know of – apparently what Jim said at the time there was a letter written against Spiro, but it was an inside letter. It was – there's no fact about that letter and –

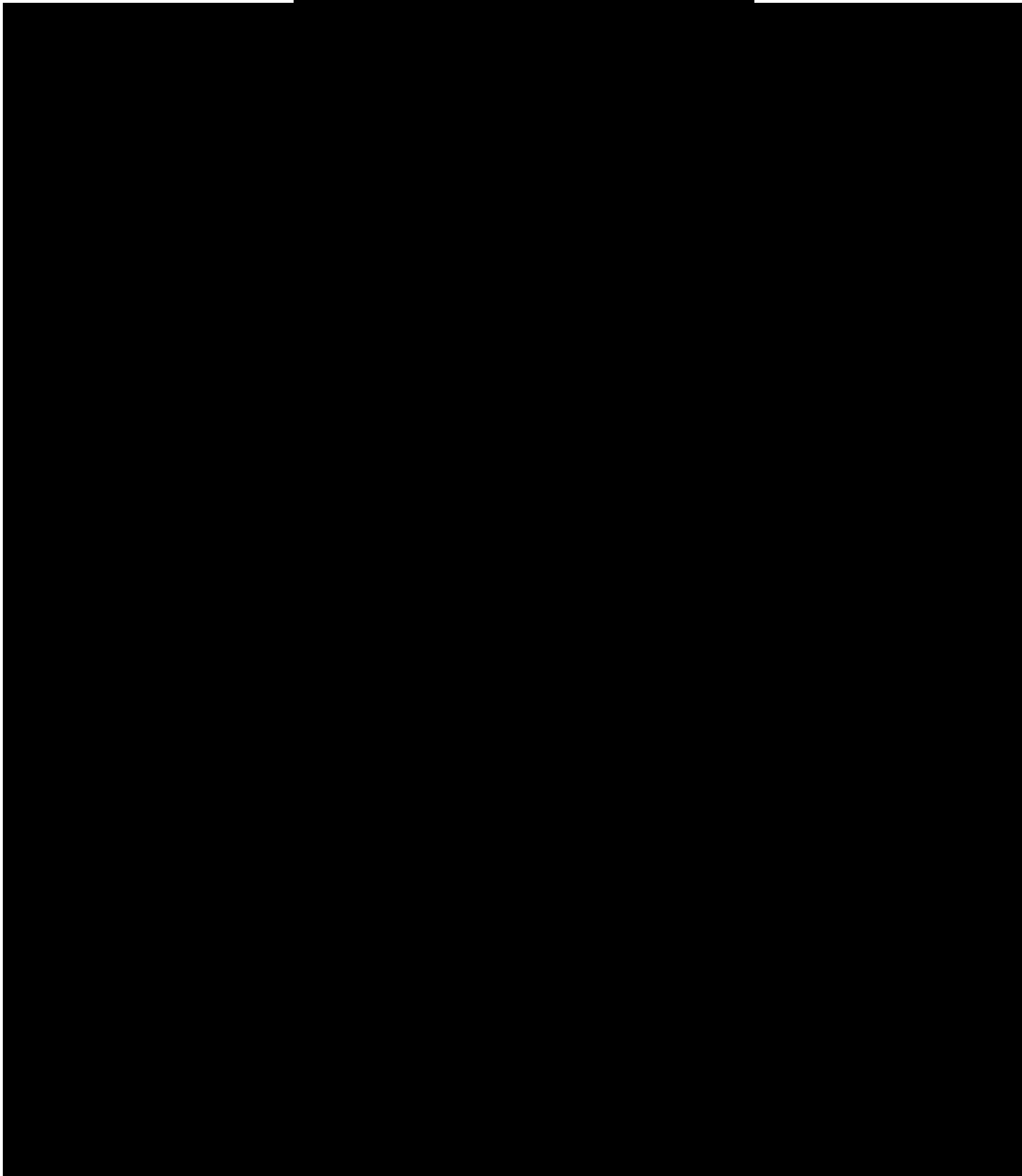
BERRY: What letter are you referring to?

- KEBBE: A letter that we hiring Spiro and Spiro is related to the Greek Vasils and, but that's not true. They don't even know each other.
- BERRY: How do you know they don't know each other?
- KEBBE: I asked Spiro.
- 5 BERRY: When did you ask Spiro that?
- KEBBE: When he come in. I said, "You related?" "No". And apparently his wife know me for over 30 years when I used to help .....sister Mary's house and Spiro said, do you know my wife and I said, "Well are you and Vasil related?" and he – Godfather – Godmother, because in the Christian – I'm  
10 Orthodox, you know, even if you're baptised you are related. He said, "No, no I hardly know the Vasil's" but that someone was jealous of Spiro getting the job and Jim believed it, at the time, that's why we all –
- BERRY: Did you see this letter that accused Spiro being related to the Vasils?
- KEBBE: Well you can go to the file and find it.
- 15 BERRY: I'm asking did you see the letter?
- KEBBE: No I didn't see the letter. I was told about the letter. We all spoke –
- BERRY: Who told you about the letter?
- KEBBE: - all about it, and .....from Hawatt, Azzi, Con, Ken, me and Esther; and all of us -
- 20 BERRY: Sorry –
- KEBBE: - you know as Councillors.
- BERRY: Right. Who told you about -
- KEBBE: But on the .....
- BERRY: Who told you about the letter? Who told you about this letter? Which  
25 Councillor, or which person told you this letter exist –
- KEBBE: I think Hawatt did, I think Hawatt did, because said he – after signing him in on the dotted line, you know, because – and so we obliged – Council is obliged to pay him and then they wanted to get rid of him. They were interviewing other people.
- 30 BERRY: Did you have any conversations with Hawatt or Azzi prior to Stavis (?) being offered that position about Stavis getting that position?

- KEBBE: Yeah, I asked him actually; I asked him who is Stavis and, “oh, he comes highly recommended. He used to be in” is it Botany? Or Parramatta I’m not sure, and he’s very good, because we were left without a Director, and I think he was going, and, he said, we’ll just .....
- 5 BERRY: Who were you speaking to about this? Who were you talking to about Stavis?
- KEBBE: Oh, was the boys Mark Adler and I, and Hawatt and Azzi we were at the dinner table and then when we find out – at first we heard oh, he was being hired and he’s going to start, and then we heard he’s not, you know, after signing on the dotted line, and –
- 10 BERRY: Where was this dinner at?
- KEBBE: At the Council, at Council, yeah.
- BERRY: At Council. When was the dinner?
- KEBBE: Well, we usually have every second Thursday and every fourth Thursday in the, in the –
- 15 BERRY: In the Chambers?
- KEBBE: - dining room – not Chamber, Chamber is our meeting place. In the dining room, yeah, because they were supposed to come in and then we find out he’s not starting because there was a hitch, and that the plot was arranged. He went – what happened – Michael Hawatt told me they’re gonna serve a letter onto the Mayor to call for extraordinary meeting to deal with this situation immediately. So when they went knocking at – on Brian Robson’s door it was a couple of days before Christmas, and he refused to acknowledge it.
- 20 BERRY: How do you know it was a couple of days before Christmas?
- KEBBE: Because it was 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>, and I said look leave us live in peace, because it’s Christmas. Leave it till afterward, and Brian told me actually. He said, they came to my door the two of them, and Brian – I was aware of it from Brian.
- 25 BERRY: Who’s that? Hawatt and Azzi went to his door?
- KEBBE: Yeah, to his door and they didn’t tell me they were going to serve him, and so I rang Jim, and Jim said, “Yeah, I’m aware of it, because Brian rang me.” And I said, let us live in peace we’ve had a dreadful year, you know, and that’s when – and then we had a couple of weeks of peace and then January came and it started all over again.
- 30 BERRY: How did you vote on that?
- 35

- KEBBE: Well on the –
- BERRY: Extraordinary meeting?
- KEBBE: It didn't take place, because we kept things shut down.
- BERRY: That was the 27<sup>th</sup> of January wasn't it?
- 5 KEBBE: 27<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>? Let me have a look, yeah.
- BERRY: About that time.
- KEBBE: It was the – yeah, 28<sup>th</sup>.
- BERRY: 28<sup>th</sup> I apologise.
- KEBBE: Yeah.
- 10 BERRY: So no one got to vote on that occasion. Is that when the Police were called?
- KEBBE: No because they kept shutting us down. They wouldn't let us talk or debate.
- BERRY: Was that the night the Police were called?
- 15 KEBBE: That's right. And Brian Robson left the Chamber; left the seat and being the PT I had to – he vacated his seat, so it can't be vacated so I went into the –
- BERRY: I understand.
- 20 KEBBE: - and I kept saying you know you have to come back, you have to come back, and nobody listening. I said, "Well let's move to get rid of both of them."
- BERRY: Then I believe there was a further Council meeting over this matter. Is that correct?
- KEBBE: Yeah.
- 25 BERRY: What happened there?
- KEBBE: We were gagged again.
- BERRY: You were gagged again?
- KEBBE: Yeah.
- BERRY: Did anyone from Council vote on this?

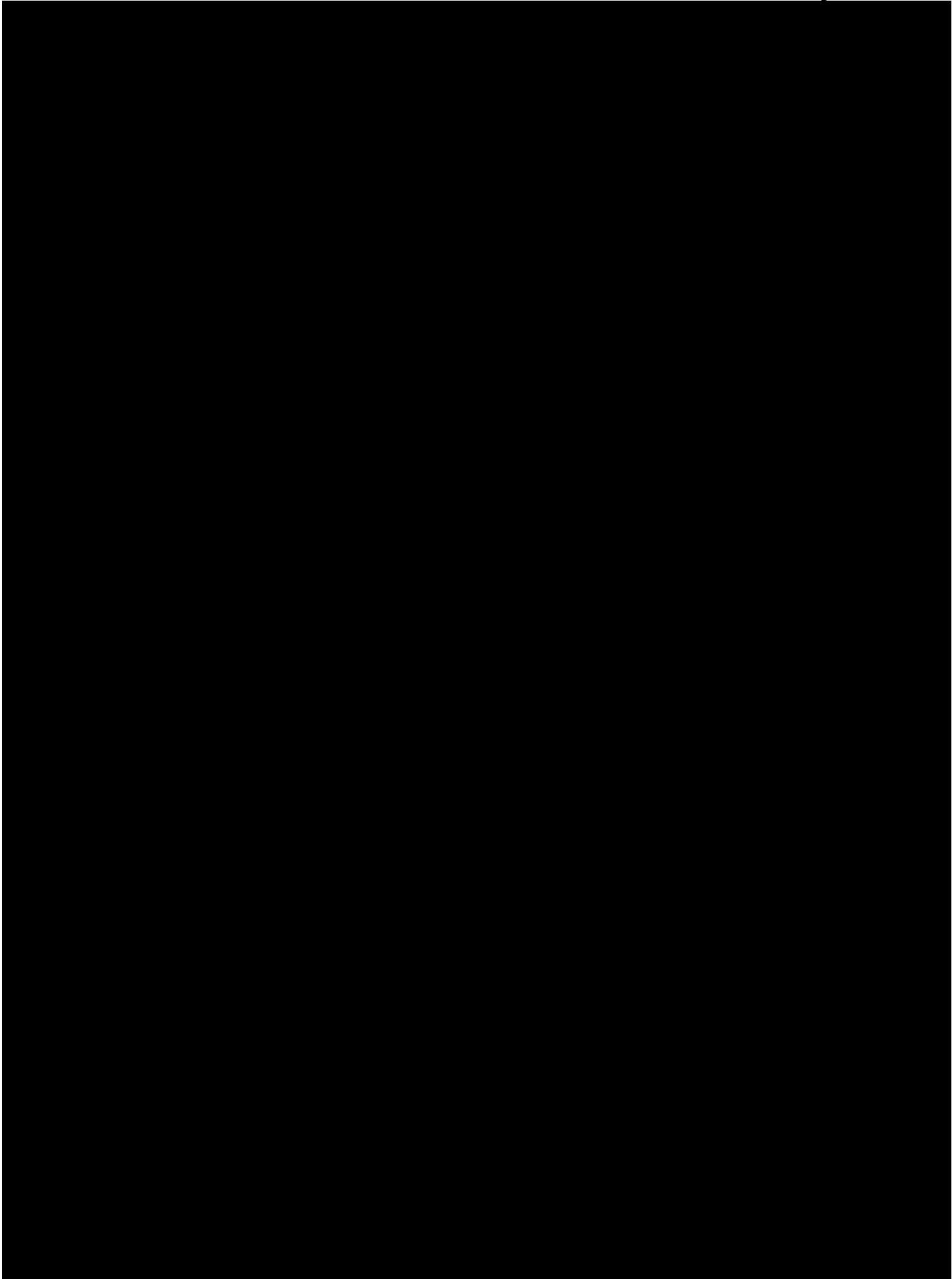
KEBBE: We weren't – nothing took place. We – nothing happened. We can get all the records, you can get all the records, because you know. [REDACTED]

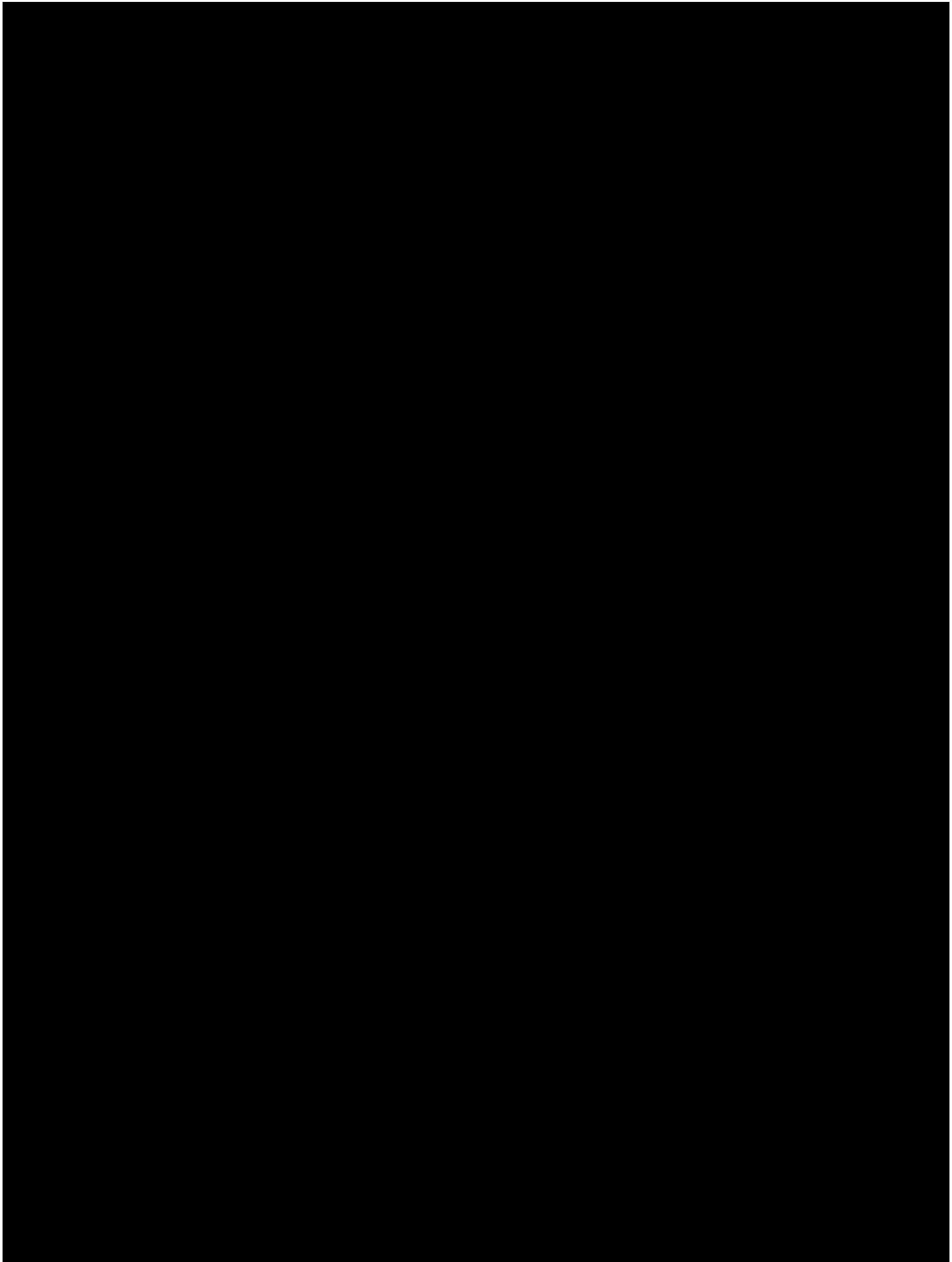


BERRY: Did you know about – who was on the panel for the interviews?

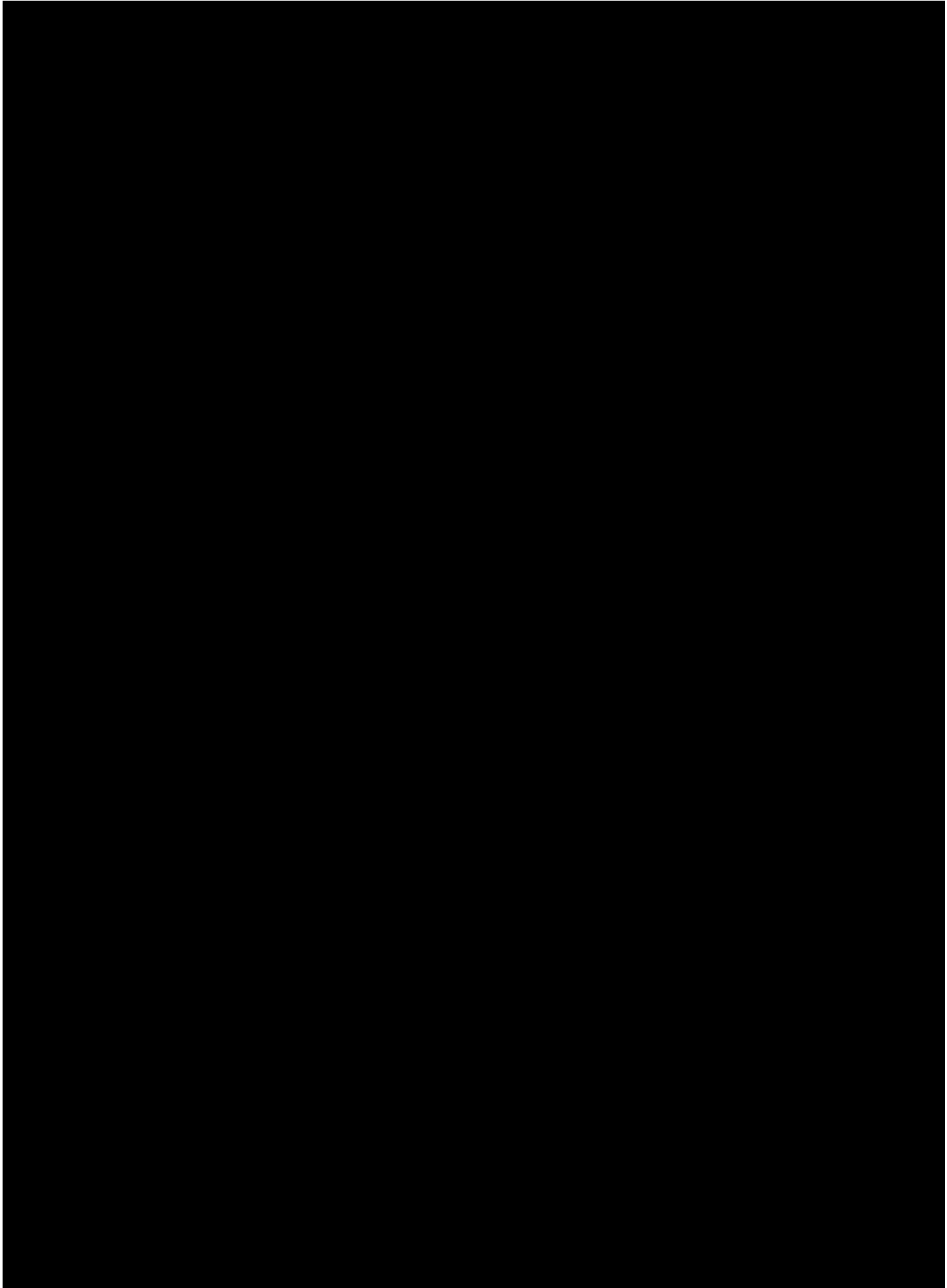
KEBBE: Not me no I don't know.

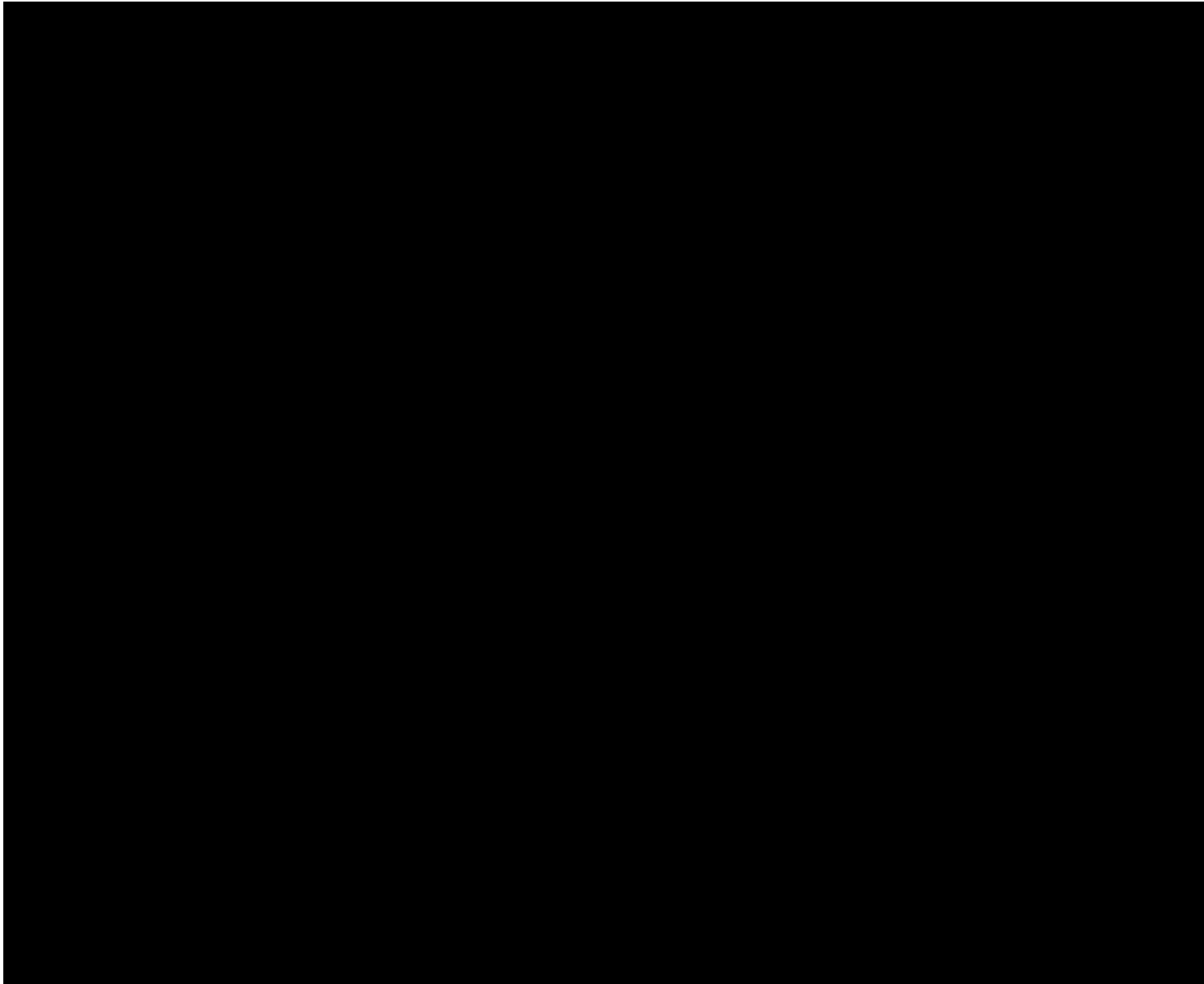
- BERRY: I'm asking whether or not you knew who?
- KEBBE: Oh, excuse me, excuse me. I heard that maybe Hawatt was. Is that true?
- BERRY: What do you know that?
- KEBBE: Or am I wrong? I heard that, I heard it, but I thought it was odd.
- 5 BERRY: And Michael Hawatt hasn't told you that?
- KEBBE: Why would – no, no but someone – I think to be honest Linda Isla said it, why would the Councillor and, and I said –
- BERRY: Did you speak to Hawatt about him being on the panel?
- KEBBE: No, not really –
- 10 BERRY: Not really or no?
- KEBBE: - no, no, no I'll say no.
- BERRY: Are you sure?
- KEBBE: No I'm not sure to be honest, but I – it's, it's something that –
- BERRY: I don't want you making stuff up. Only tell me what you know.
- 15 KEBBE: Okay, no, no.
- BERRY: Do you know if Michael Hawatt was on the panel for the interview?
- KEBBE: Well I heard he was, but I'm not certain okay.
- BERRY: Okay.
- KEBBE: Is that better?
- 20 BERRY: That's fine.











**INTERVIEW CONCLUDED AT 1:58PM.**