

BEHIND THE GREY TAPE

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INT.KARENS APARTMENT - DAY

25 year-old philosophy major, CHANCE, ponders calmly in an old wooden kitchen chair. He pulls a lighter from his coat pocket and brings a flame to the end of a cigarette. He smokes. He thinks. He wonders...

CHANCE (V.O.)

A German man by the name of Baron d'Holbach once said, "If we go back to the beginning we shall find that ignorance and fear created the gods."....Brave fucking words for an eighteenth century man wouldn't you say? I mean today you can say whatever you want. Out loud, to yourself. Blog it, post it. Fuck, make of video of yourself picking your nose and you'll probably get ten thousand hits in a half hour. All that and no one bats an eye. Church. State. Nothing. But back then? Challenging the church? And not just some commonor either. d'Holbach was a wealthy, educated well respected man. I mean, he wrote parts of the fucking Encyclopedia. Okay..he wrote this book titled "Le Systeme De La Nature." Which means "The System of Nature." He lived in France. This book was so controversial that the Catholic church threatened to stop funding the crown if it wasn't pulled from circulation. Imagine that. Its insane. And why was the church so riled? 'Cause a country of free thinkers is insubordination. I gotta say though, my favorite quote of his is this."It would be useless and almost unjust to insist upon a man's being virtuous if he cannot be so without being unhappy. So long as vice renders him happy, he should love vice.".... Words to live by if you ask me..

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Chance sits at a corner table in dark-lit coffee shop. Books of philosophy are piled up next to his notebook in which he pens relentlessly. A waitress approaches bearing a fresh, steaming pot of thick black coffee.

WAITRESS

Can I top you up?

CHANCE

(breaking
concentration)

Ah...please.

She fills his mug with piping hot java.

CHANCE

Thanks.

WAITRESS

Have you read all of those?

CHANCE

..Sorry?

WAITRESS

Have you read all of those?

CHANCE

Read them? No. I study them. Reading is for magazines and newspapers. Texts such as these require consumption and digestion similar to a holiday feast. Only once you have devoured every morsel can you begin to describe the taste.

WAITRESS

Oh..okay..well...let me know if you need another warmer.

She leaves his table. He gazes off in her direction, lingering in the wake of his arrogance.

CHANCE (V.O.)

I've always been awkward around women. I love women. I want to end up with one. You know, wife, kids, that sort of thing. I don't know, maybe because I grew up in a orphanage full of boys, it set me back. Or maybe I'm awkward with everyone and I simply recognize it

(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)
 more because of the potential with
 a women. I don't know but I hear
 myself talking and I'm thinking,
 "Give her the short version
 asshole, shut the fuck up." But
 before I know it I've drenched her
 in verbal diarrhea. I pity the next
 to ask me about my day.

INT. BENS PLACE- EVENING

Chance is reciting the finer points of his philosophy
 project while binding BEN'S arms and legs with duct tape.
 All Ben can do is scream inside his own mouth.

BEN
 (behind the
 tape)
 MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!

CHANCE
 So what are you anyways? A
 compatibilist? No..and you can't
 be metaphysical libertarianist.
 Your an incompatibilist aren't
 you?

Chance scans the room in search of evidence to back is
 theory about BEN. He settles on a crucifix hanging by the
 door.

CHANCE
 (smiling)
 Yeah, you know what gave you away?

Chance peels the tape over BENS mouth back.

BEN
 HEL.....!

CHANCE
 (retaping Bens
 mouth)
 The cross. That makes you a
 theological determinist right? You
 know god determines your fate by
 some sort of advanced omniscience
 right? Me, I have no clue where I
 fit? I mean under the
 circumstances I've been given a
 rare approach to the debate. Fresh
 eyes. New angles. See I thought I
 might be a compatibilist. You know
 the idea that determinism and free
 (MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)
will can co-exist. But I'm not
convinced yet,..are you?

Chance peels back the tape again to hear BENS answer.

BEN
(breathing
heavy)
W-what?..

INT. JACKIES PLACE - DAY

Chance is filling up the tub with cold water while JACKIE
lay bound on the bathroom floor next to him. He elaborates.

CHANCE
Determinism. The theory that all
current and future events are
causally necessitated by past
events combined with the laws of
nature.

JACKIE
...I-I ag-gree...?

CHANCE
Really? See thats what I'm talking
about. When did theory become a
dirty word?

JACKIE
..We are a-a p-product of our en-
vironment...are you gonna kill
me...?

CHANCE
(taping JACKIES
mouth)
Soon as the tubs full be
patient.(CONT.)

JACKIE
(behind the
tape)
MMMMMMMMMM!

CHANCE
..See I have a different view. I
think...my environment is a
product of me..Case in point.

INT. KYLES PLACE - DAY

Chance has KYLE tied to his kitchen table. A variety of knives are spread across the seat of a kitchen chair. Chance paces back and forth while engaging Kyle in his debate.

CHANCE

Now, you see I never knew my parents. I don't have any siblings, relatives or friends. But I am not sad or depressed. I'm not bitter or afflicted. I'm indifferent. Like the Omish or some bush tribe. I have an edge.

KYLE

...W-What's th-that...?

CHANCE

(smiling)

Love. Love is a state in which people are most prone to see things the way they are not. I don't have love. I don't know love.

KYLE

I-I'm...s-sorry...I..

CHANCE

(sealing Kyle's mouth)

It's not you fault silly. That's just how it shook out. But the point is that I'm the perfect test pilot...

INT. BENS PLACE - NIGHT

Chance has a firm grip around Ben's neck. While articulating his theory, Chance strangles Ben. Not with anger, not with passion, not with aggression but with a desire for understanding.

CHANCE

I mean uninfluenced by the,..by the binding properties of love. How rare is that? Most love something. Someone.

BEN

(beyond the tape)

ugghuhg....

CHANCE
You know what I mean?

Ben is limp. He is dead.

INT. JACKIES PLACE - DAY

The tub is full. Chance turns off the faucet and submerges Jackie's head in the water.

JACKIE
MMMMMMMMM.....!

CHANCE
My professor says I should choose an easier topic for my assignment but he doesn't realize my resolve. I still have to research a few other aspects of course. Such as the concept of biological determinism. You know what that is?

Jackie's body turns limp and falls to the floor motionless. She is dead.

INT. KYLES PLACE - DAY

Chance continues. Kyle has a large knife sticking into his chest.

KYLE
MMMMMMM...!

CHANCE
Well basically it means that you, your actions, decisions and feelings are a result of genetics. You believe that?

KYLE
MMMMMMMM!

Chance leans in close and turns the blades handle 90 degrees.

CHANCE
No, I don't buy it either.

INT. KARENS APARTMENT - DAY

Chance extinguishes his cigarette and continues his discussion. Sitting across from him is Karen who is tied to her chair.

CHANCE

You see I am constructing a new theory. You want to hear my thesis?

KAREN

Okay.

CHANCE

Freewill. Freewill exists but can only be possessed by those who are not possessed by love.

KAREN

So you love nothing?

CHANCE

And nothing loves me right back.

KAREN

I think your a coward.

CHANCE

Its a delicate balance.

KAREN

So what?.. So you think that justifies you to commit murder? Thats sick..

CHANCE

It's science to me. I told you I am not restricted by any outside forces. I am free.

KAREN

You think your the only orphan you fucking..megalomaniac..?

CHANCE

No bu-

KAREN

Fucking philosophy martyr? ..are you out of your mind-

CHANCE

Hey-

KAREN

You know what?...I grew up in..in foster care. And it hurt. But I grew up Chance. I stood up, went to school and earned a degree...I've made something of myself now. And now you want to take it all away for some sick class project? Thats bullshit Chance! Its not fair!

CHANCE

It's bigger than that Karen. It's bigger than me, you the world. It's seeing freewill. Living it....Look...I'm sorry. It's all random. That's the idea. I picked names from the phonebook. Your number four. The last one I need. Then it's over. You want some water?

Karens shoulders sink while warm salty tears breach her lashes and rush down her pale trembling face.

KAREN

..Okay..

Chance walks to the kitchen where he pours Karen a glass of tap water. He dumps a vile of powder into the water a stirs it vigorously. He casually walks back to Karen and serves his concoction. She swallows every fateful drop like a parched camel.

KAREN

T-thanks....you know what I did the other day? I called this company called "Family Finder." ...They help you find long lost relatives.

CHANCE

Really?

KAREN

Aren't you ever curious who's out there?

CHANCE

Not really,..No, how do you feel?

KAREN

Alright..you don't want to know your family?

CHANCE

They chose a long time ago.
Freewill. How do you feel now.

KAREN

Dizzy..why..

Phone rings.

CHANCE

Just relax,...I spiked the water.
The sedative will take the edge
off of the cyanide. You will
simply go to sleep.

KAREN

...Y-you..you...coward...

CHANCE

(whispering)

Shhh. It's okay, sleep.

Answering machine

KAREN (V.O.)

This is Karen's phone leave a good
one.

BEEP!

LEANNE

Hi Karen, this is LEANNE ROGERS
from Family Finder. I'm calling to
let you know that we have some
good news. Let me be the first to
congratulate you, you have a
brother-

KAREN

(breathing slowly barely
conscious)ugh...mmm..

CHANCE

It's okay...

LEANNE (CONT'D)

-He is a 25 year-old philosophy
major with a really neat
name...Chance, call me when you
get home Bye!

BEEP! "End of Messages"

The loudest silence ever heard fills the room. Chance and
Karen lock eyes for the first time as family. As brother and
sister. Not a creature stirs besides the twin lone tears

bleeding down each of their cheeks.

Karens head rolls back limp with her dead eyes.

THE END