

EPHEMERAL

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE : LOS-ANGELES, 1993 - *"as life goes on"* -

A very hot day. Traffic jam in both directions.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

A Tv news helicopter circling above the traffic jam.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

A police car parked on the emergency lane, light bars flickering and flashing.

Two police officers JAKE (42) and BOB (44), standing next to their car. Watching the traffic jam.

Not so far from them three vehicles are lined up. A van, a midsize car with military license plates and a station wagon.

Bob notices the van exhaust pipe. Fuming thick black smoke.

INT. THE FORD VAN - DAY

Two Neo-Nazi brothers. Behind the wheel MIKE (25). ARTHUR (31) on the passenger seat. A silver lightning bolt necklace around his neck.

In the back of the van Arthur's son STEVE (7) is playing with an electronic video game. He's surrounded by cardboard boxes and... two shotguns.

Arthur grabs the nearest shotgun. Pats his pockets.

MIKE

That's exactly what we should do,
Arthur.

ARTHUR

These people are pretty damn
serious. We can't fool them.

Arthur finds a couple of shotguns shells. Reloading the shotgun.

MIKE

They pay us but they don't know
shit. The real problem in our
society is not --

ARTHUR

It doesn't matter. We have an
agreement and --

MIKE

Without any valuable idea,
ideology, or belief, just and only
an economic purpose. A Japanese
company. It won't ring a bell to
anyone.

ARTHUR

Really? And what about the Japanese
supremacy over the American
economy?

MIKE

And then? It's not just about the
Japanese. I tell you the real
problem --

ARTHUR

Mike, open your eyes? If we don't
do anything, even the food will be
made of rice, tuna fish and
freaking soya milk!

MIKE

I know.

Mike sighs.

MIKE (CONT'D)

If we follow their plan, people
will think the exact same thing.
And we don't want that. Because
it's more than that. Way more than
that.

Arthur stares at Steve through the rearview mirror.

ARTHUR

It's all about our legacy, right?

MIKE

White people need to wake up.

ARTHUR

For only white people are real
people...

MIKE

White people are the strongest,
Bro. An historical fact.

ARTHUR

Indeed.
(beat - whispering)
White people need to wake up.

INT. THE MIDSIZE CAR - DAY

The rear of the van seen through the windshield.

The driver in his military uniform is the colonel RAY DIMMERS
(28). On the passenger seat his son DAVID DIMMERS (7) playing
with an electronic game.

Ray is sweating a lot. Grabs the window crank handle. Opens
the window.

RAY DIMMERS

The task he gave you is more than
justified.

DAVID DIMMERS

But Ray --

RAY DIMMERS

Ray? David... You can't --

DAVID DIMMERS

What?

RAY DIMMERS

You know what.

DAVID DIMMERS

I like --

RAY DIMMERS

No. Not again. Please.

DAVID DIMMERS

Why? It's cool. Or maybe I like it.

RAY DIMMERS

Alright.

Ray sighs. Smiles.

RAY DIMMERS (CONT'D)

You call me only by my real and my only name. Not Ray, nor Colonel. I say "Daddy" or "lovely Dad" or "super cool dad" or "awesome Dad" or "yeah, I'm so lucky to have the best dad in the world".

David bursts out laughing.

RAY DIMMERS (CONT'D)

You like that, don't you?

David can't stop laughing. Ray stares at his son. Chuckles.

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

The rear of the midsize car seen through the windshield.

The driver is DAMIEN O'SHEA (25), a hippie. On the passenger seat EMILIE BASILE (27) is working on a 1993 laptop computer.

DAMIEN

Emilie?

EMILIE

Yup.

DAMIEN

Can you --

Damien stares at Emilie. She's typing on the keyboard.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Can you just give me a minute?

EMILIE

Yup.

Damien gives her a stern look.

DAMIEN

This morning I drank my magic potion. It gave me a lot of energy, which is "kinda" cool... obviously... but the problem is that it makes me a little bit crazy too. So don't be surprised if in a few minutes I'm going to take out a white mask, put it on my face then stab you a couple of times with a big butcher knife.

(MORE)

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Would you be fine with that?

EMILIE

Sure.

DAMIEN

So irritating.

Emilie stops typing. Looks at Damien.

EMILIE

What?

DAMIEN

I need to talk to you.

EMILIE

Damien, these equations are a pain.

DAMIEN

Sure. Why not. I will wait until you turn off that blasted machine at 11 o'clock tonight, so you will have all the necessary time to give a phone call to that infernal company of yours and have a long conversation about those equations for a few more hours. Well... I don't think so. I'm sorry but what I have to say can't wait that long.

Emilie turns off the computer.

EMILIE

Very well, Damien. I'm listening.

DAMIEN

Oh. Really? Well...

Damien uncomfortably moves on his seat. Scratches the back of his head. Feeling uneasy.

EMILIE

So?

DAMIEN

Good lord.

EMILIE

What is it? What's bothering you?

DAMIEN

Well... it's a little bit harder than I was expecting. I have pictured this scene many, many times in my head, like some kind of rehearsal, you know... and it seemed quite easy. But now that's the real thing and ... I don't know... it's complicated.

EMILIE

You have to clarify things... a little bit.

INT. THE MIDSIZE CAR - DAY

Back to the midsize car.

RAY

We won't tell your mom. You know her. She will overreact once again. She will call your principal. Naturally it will make things worst for you. Then she will put the blame on me, so I will have the opportunity to feel bad. And it will stress me out. And it won't change anything at the end. And that's why I don't think it's a good idea.

DAVID

I got it.

RAY

Good.

DAVID

But...

RAY

Obviously.
(beat)
What, David?

DAVID

But... still I don't get it. What did I do wrong, Ray? You said that it was more than justified. But really, I don't get it.

RAY

You are top of your class, good kid, very good grades. Your teachers only have good words about you. Then you start acting out, and you throw food at people. What do you think, David?

DAVID

But Ray... the Tv.

RAY

Stop calling me Ray. The Tv? What about it?

DAVID

I've seen it on Tv. There was this very cool man, you know, and he was throwing all kind of things against the wall, and everyone was super impressed. They said it was a great example of "abscess tract" art. And then --

RAY

Wait, wait, wait. What did you say? What kind of art is that?

DAVID

"Abscess tract" art.

Ray chuckles.

RAY

"Abscess tract"? You mean abstract, David.

DAVID

Yes that's it. That's what it is. But please don't interrupt me, mommy says it's not polite.

Ray nods. Smiling. Good point.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Anyway. And then they said that he was creating a living piece of art. I thought it was a great idea to make a living piece of art, but then a wall isn't really alive, right? So I thought it would be cooler to do a living piece of art on something really alive.

RAY
We won't tell your mom.

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

Back to the station wagon.

Damien is staring at Emilie

EMILIE
Are you going to say something?

Damien remains motionless.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
Alright. That's it.

Emilie opens her laptop.

DAMIEN
No, no, no, please! Just hold on a
second. I got it.

Emilie laughs.

EMILIE
You got it?

Damien straightens up in his seat. Plays with the dashboard's
buttons. Trying to turn up the air conditioning.

Emilie observes him closely. Intrigued.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
So, what are we doing now?

DAMIEN
Ok, here we go. Emilie... I...
damn.

EMILIE
Damien, please. Stop fooling
around. Just let it go. I don't
know... find a way to tell me what
you have to tell me. Find the right
words.

DAMIEN
Ok, but I'm not sure about --

EMILIE
Listen, I love you and you know it,
right?

DAMIEN
I... think so. Yes.

EMILIE
Good. There's nothing to be afraid
of, then.

DAMIEN
I...

Damien takes a deep breath.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
Once upon a time...

An heavy rain of flowers overflows the screen...

WIPE TO :

INT. A FLOWER SHOP - DAY

The flowers scatter off.

A lovely flower shop.

Behind the counter Damien is making a bouquet. Bored.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
...there was a florist named
Damien. He was bored to death. No
motivation. Having no interest in
anything. Every day was exactly the
same.

The front door swings open on Emilie. She heads to the
counter.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
One day, Emilie came to the flower
shop. In Damien's opinion she was
the most charming, the most
beautiful girl the world had ever
known. And yes, when Damien met her
eyes, his world collapsed.
Everything went upside down in a
very good way. His boredom turned
into passion.

Once again flowers are blown all over the screen...

WIPE TO :

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

Back to the station wagon.

Again the flowers scatter off.

DAMIEN

And after one year --

EMILIE

Oh, Damien that's so sweet.

DAMIEN

The story is not over yet.

EMILIE

Oh... sorry.

DAMIEN

No offense taken. Well as I said, after one year Damien was so in love, he couldn't spend a day without thinking about her. Every single day his joy just grown and grown. Impossible for him to imagine his life without her anymore. No way José, out of question sir. But, because there's always a but, his happiness weren't complete. Something was missing. In fact to achieve complete happiness he thought something had to radically change.

Damien twists trying to reach into his back pants pocket.

Emilie stares at him. Worried.

EMILIE

I know my job keeps me too busy. I know I should spend more time with you. I mean, I get it... you feel like you are being pushed aside, and... Please, Damien, don't break up with me. Please, give me a chance. Let me try to fix this and -

-

Damien finally takes a little box out of his pocket. Opens it. A golden ring.

DAMIEN

It's not about "Lords of the ring".

Emilie laughs. Crying at the same time.

EMILIE

I know.

DAMIEN

Emilie, will you marry me?

Emilie cries even more. Shivering.

EMILIE

Sure! Definitely. I mean yes. Yes!

Damien takes the ring. Throws the box out of the window.

Emilie laughs nervously.

He takes her left hand. Slips the ring on her finger.

Emilie hugs him.

Damien kisses her passionately.

DAMIEN

Sorry, I would have kneel, but
there's not so much room in here.

(beat)

God. I'm the luckiest man on earth.

Emilie kisses him.

INT. THE MIDSIZE CAR - DAY

Back to the midsize car.

David puts away his electronic video game. Turns his attention to Ray.

DAVID

Well dad, I'm listening.

RAY

Hold on. I need to get myself out
of the ditch.

DAVID

Everyone told me that art is an
amazing thing and that I should get
into it, but when I'm doing it...
bang! I'm getting grounded. It's
not fair.

RAY

I know. I know. You see art is supposed to be something original and --

DAVID

And that's exactly what I'm thinking about my creation. And it was funny too. It's good to make people laugh, isn't it?

RAY

Ouch.

(beat)

Ok, David, what you did was maybe pretty, very certainly funny but not necessarily legal. Before using other people for your own creation you have to ask for their permission. Would you like people to throw food at you without reason?

DAVID

No.

RAY

Besides, there's an appropriate time and place for everything. And lunch time is certainly not the right moment to be in an artistic mood. So we can easily deduce that if you don't wait or ask for the right moment to do things, you might get grounded, indeed. Because that's how it works.

Ray sighs. Relieved.

DAVID

Ok, maybe you're right... but... drawing graffiti on walls is forbidden. However I see a lot of people doing that at school. They don't ask if they can do it and still they don't get grounded.

RAY

I know, but --

DAVID

So why do I get grounded, and not them? Why are they allowed to do forbidden things while I'm not?

RAY

It's not the same, Dave. Like you they don't have the right to do forbidden things - which is precisely why this things are forbidden anyway -. They just don't get caught. And if they would, they would also get grounded. Severely grounded. So the point is, if something is forbidden it's always best not to do it.

DAVID

But we can do it anyway, right?

RAY

Yes. But you shouldn't. You should do what I do. Follow the rules. You respect the law. Life is a lot easier that way.

DAVID

I see... but...
(beat)
...never mind.

RAY

What?

DAVID

Sometimes you are doing forbidden things. Sometimes you are driving faster than the speed limit.

RAY

And I shouldn't. Why? Because I know it's forbidden and therefore I understand the possible consequences of my actions.

DAVID

I'm not so sure about that.

RAY

What?

DAVID

You keep saying the same speech all the time. I quote : "the day where a cop will give me a ticket I'll give a phone call, no more ticket, end of story".

RAY
And I shouldn't!

DAVID
Why?

RAY
Because everyone - including myself
naturally - have to respect the
law. So we can live in a well
organized human society. Otherwise
we call it Anarchy. And Anarchy
means chaos and injustice.

David nods. Staring into space.

DAVID
(still nodding)
This... is... awesome.

Ray shakes his head in disapproval. Smiles.

RAY
No doubt about it. You are my son.

DAVID
You bet I am!

Ray bursts out laughing. It made David laugh as well.

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

Back to the station wagon.

Damien and Emilie are right in the middle of a passionate
kiss.

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

Damien and Emilie are holding each other hands.

EMILIE
I put too much of myself into my
job. I'm aware of that. I --

DAMIEN
Emilie. I love you the way you are.
Simply put.

Emilie laughs nervously.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
And we are in business... right?

Emilie laughs again.

EMILIE
Yes. We... yes. Damien, you...

DAMIEN
Freaking yeah! You can't imagine,
Emilie, how much I love you.
(beat)
I love you, Emilie.

Emilie moves closer to Damien. Kisses him.

EMILIE
I love you too, Damien.

Damien opens the driver's side window. Gets his head out of the car.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

The station wagon. Damien. His head out of the car window.

On the left a sport car. Windows opened. A young man (22) behind the wheel.

DAMIEN
Hey!

The young man turns his head toward Damien.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
She loves me! And you know what? I
love her! Amazing, right?

THE YOUNG MAN
Congratulation man.

DAMIEN
Thank you!

Damien gets back into his car.

INT. THE MIDSIZE CAR - DAY

Back to the midsize car.

Ray and David are laughing.

RAY

Seriously, David. When you follow the rules, you respect yourself, you respect others. Respect is the key. Therefore, you've been punished and it's justified.

(beat)

You got it?

David stares at Ray. Sizing him up.

DAVID

You made your point.

RAY

Alright.

Ray sighs. Relieved.

RAY (CONT'D)

And... can you tell me why?

DAVID

Because I decided to create a piece of art without authorization.

RAY

Finally.

Once again David stares at his father. An enquiring look on his face.

DAVID

Ray?

RAY

Yep.

DAVID

May I say something constructive?

RAY

(frowns)

Well.

(beat)

Sure.

DAVID

Try to be a little bit less boring. You know... more... punchy.

RAY

Punchy?

David shrugs. So obvious...

Ray bursts out laughing. It made David laugh as well.

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

Back to the station wagon.

Damien and Emilie are kissing each other passionately.

INT. THE MIDSIZE CAR - DAY

Back to the midsize car.

David and Ray are LAUGHING OUT LOUD.

View through the passenger window. Bob is walking toward the van. He looks at them. Smiles.

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

Back to the station wagon.

It's getting hot. Damien and Emile are hugging each other in a very close embrace. Kissing.

EMILIE
Not here, Damien.

DAMIEN
Why not... I mean we could --

EMILIE
I know, but not here.

INT. THE MIDSIZE CAR - DAY

Back to the midsize car.

David and Ray are making funny faces at each other.

View through the windshield. The back doors of the van swing open. Mike and Arthur jump out. Both armed with a shotgun. Steve on their tail.

Mike walks on the road.

Arthur comes face to face with Bob. Steve still right behind him.

Ray catch a glimpse of the shotgun Arthur is holding. He stops the funny faces game. Gets back to a straight face.

DAVID
Dad? Are you alright?

RAY
Yeah... Sure.

Ray opens the driver's door.

DAVID
Where are you going?

RAY
Nowhere.

DAVID
What's going on?

RAY
Nothing.
(beat)
David, I want you to promise me something.

DAVID
What?

RAY
Whatever happens, stay in the car.
Ok?

DAVID
Yes... ok. But, Dad what's the problem?

RAY
Don't worry. Just give me a couple of minutes. Alright?

DAVID
Yes... I guess.

RAY
Good.

Ray gets out of the car. Closes the door behind him

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

Bob sees the shotgun Arthur is carrying. He draws his gun. Points it at Arthur.

BOB

Freeze!

Arthur stands still. Cold and emotionless. Steve still behind him.

Jake, the second police officer, takes position behind his car. His gun pointed at Arthur.

JAKE

Put the shotgun down!

Arthur crouches down. Still facing the police officer.

ARTHUR

Steve, please.

Steve moves to stand before his father.

Arthur talks to him but stares at Bob.

He pats Steve on the back. Steve nods. Runs toward the ditch. Jumps in it.

JAKE

Put - - - the shotgun - - - down!

Arthur stands up. He's calm.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

Ray slowly walks toward the van. From there he can see everything.

Arthur standing before the police officers. Mike hiding behind a car. Pointing his gun at Jake, unaware of his presence.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

JAKE

Put - - - the shotgun - - - down!
You put the shotgun down and step
away!

Arthur points his shotgun at Bob.

Jake and Bob OPEN fire.

A rain of bullets. His body convulsing under the impacts. Collapses. Dead.

STEVE
DAD! DAD! NO!

Steve rushes out of the ditch to his father's dead corpse.

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

Time is dragging.

Steve reaches his father's dead corpse. Kneels down. Seizes his right hand. Crying.

Mike moves forward. Still aiming his shotgun at Jake.

Steve is directly in the line of fire.

Ray reacts. No time to think. Runs toward Steve.

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

Still the time is dragging.

The two cops surprised turn their head toward Ray.

Mike OPENS fire.

A harsh wind. A ROARING NOISE getting louder. A Tv news helicopter is hovering over the scene.

BOOM! The Van EXPLODES! It lifts up in the air.

The two cops leap away. Ray has just the time to cover Steve with his body. Both are swept away by the BLAST.

One of the van rear door flies away. It hits the car where Mike is hiding. Killing him on the spot.

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

- Same scene from above -

Still the time is dragging.

The Tv news helicopter is hovering over the van.

BOOM! The Van EXPLODES! It lifts up in the air.

The two cops leap away. Ray has just the time to cover Steve with his body. Both are swept away by the BLAST.

They can't hold each other.

Ray crashes into the windshield of the sport car, right beside the station wagon.

Steve is propelled back into the ditch.

One of the van rear door flies away. It hits the car where Mike is hiding. Killing him on the spot.

The shock wave of the BLAST BURSTS OUT to Ray's midsize car. The windshield explodes. Letting the fire spread out inside the vehicle.

BOOM! The midsize car EXPLODES! It flips into the air. Crashes into the station wagon. Windshield and front tires are destroyed.

The midsize car trunk lid is ripped off. Swirling. Ending its course in a fuel tank trailer. A thick white liquid spills out all over the freeway.

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

- Same scene -

Time goes back to normal.

Ray hits the back of his head on the windshield. Deep cuts on his face. Bleeding.

Behind the steering wheel of his partially destroyed sport car, the young guy is stunned.

Ray struggles to stand up. Badly injured.

He tumbles over. Stands up again. Limpes toward his car, now a smoking wreck.

At a very short distance he stops. Leans over. Has a look at the inside of the car. An unthinkable horror. Unreal.

Gasping in shock he kneels down. Crying. Shivering. Rubbing his bloody face back and forth.

After a short moment he stops. Without thinking he takes a look at his hands. Blood all over his palms.

Ray moves his head up. Dead inside. The pain is unbearable.

Behind him Steve is coming toward him. Destabilized. Confused.

After a few steps, Steve moves aside. Stands before Ray. Arthur's silver lightning bolt necklace in his right hand.

Ray can't look away. Staring at Steve.

INT. THE STATION WAGON - DAY

A part of Ray's midsize car is into the station wagon. A maze of metal, oil spilling, rubber parts...

Damien is dead, his body crushed under a flat tire.

Emilie for her part gets her legs stuck under a huge piece of metal. Unconscious.

She's coming back to her senses. Opens her eyes. Wincing in pain. Having breathing problems.

EMILIE

Damien? What has just happened?
What's going on? Are you --

She pats down her legs. Seized by panic.

EMILIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god! Damien! I can't... My
legs, Damien! I can't feel my legs!
Dam --

Panic is overthrown by an unbearable reality. Damien is dead.

Emilie can't do nothing except staring at his dead corpse.
Empty.

She moves her left hand. Touches Damien's right shoulder.

Emilie bursts into tears.

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

The fuel tank trailer is ripped open. A thick white liquid spilling out. Forming a puddle on the freeway. The midsize car trunk lid on the road, next to it.

The driver gets out of the truck. Smoking a Cuban cigar. He's MONSIEUR KLEIN (33).

He's holding a Walkie-talkie.

MONSIEUR KLEIN

(on the Walkie-talkie)
I'm listening.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(into the Walkie-talkie)
What happened Monsieur Klein?

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(on the Walkie-talkie)
The agreements have not been
respected, Ma'am.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(into the Walkie-talkie)
What are our options?

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(on the Walkie-talkie)
It's a total loss.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(into the Walkie-talkie)
What about a cover up?

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(on the Walkie-talkie)
The truck is stuck in the traffic.
Police officers were already here
before it happened. A Tv news
helicopter is hovering over the
scene.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(from the Walkie-talkie)
Thank you for your support. Our
collaborations ends here. You will
receive your payment in the usual
terms and conditions. We are taking
care of the situation from here and
we thank you again Mr Klein for
your participation to this project.

Monsieur Klein walks down the highway. He passes two cars.

He reaches a pick-up. Loud music playing.

The driver (20's) is bobbing his head to the music.

Monsieur Klein stops by the driver's side window.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
What are you doing?

The driver startles.

THE DRIVER

What... the... fuck? You scared the
shit out of me, man!

MONSIEUR KLEIN

Turn off the music. Now.

The driver is stunned.

Monsieur Klein goes around the car to the passenger side.

THE DRIVER

This guy is unreal.

Monsieur Klein opens the door. Gets in the car. Turns off the
music. Points his finger at the emergency lane.

The driver hesitates. Starts the car.

The pick-up makes a U-turn. Drives on the emergency lane.
Leaves.

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

Traffic jam in both directions.

The van is a smoking wreck in the center of a crater. The
midsize car and the station wagon are a maze of metal.

The two cops, Jake and Bob, are busy with the station wagon.
Bob is leaning inside the passenger's side window. Jake is
trying to open the driver's side door.

The Tv news helicopter is circling above the tragedy.

SIRENS ARE ECHOING in the distance. A convoy of fire trucks,
police cars and ambulances is driving on the emergency lane.
Going toward the scene of the accident.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY

BLACK SCREEN

SUPERIMPOSE : LOS-ANGELES, NOWADAYS - *"as detached as life"* -

FADE IN.

Traffic is moving freely.

A SUV with military license plates in the right lane. Right blinker flashing.

The SUV takes an exit with a sign saying : "Fort Parris"

EXT. FORT PARRIS / MAIN GATE - DAY

A military base.

The main entrance with a hut and two automatic rising arm barriers.

The SUV stops at the entrance.

EXT. FORT PARRIS / MAIN GATE - DAY

A SOLDIER (20's) gets out of the hut a note pad in his right hand. Goes to the driver side of the car.

The driver side power window goes down on Ray -now around age (55)-. Gives a proper army salute.

The soldier returns it.

THE SOLDIER

Colonel. You know the procedure.

RAY

Day two, same shit. The Us army, right?

The soldier smiles awkwardly.

Ray takes out his military ID card from his right jacket pocket. Holds it out to him.

The soldier seizes it. Takes a look at it. Checks his note pad.

He gives it back to Ray. Nods.

Another army salute between the two men.

The soldier waves at the hut.

THE SOLDIER

Have a nice day, Colonel.

The automatic rising arm barrier goes up.

Ray drives his car into the compound.

INT. FORT PARRIS / MAIN CORRIDOR - DAY

A polished corridor. A metal door. A MILITARY POLICE OFFICER (20's) sitting in a chair by the door. Reading a comic book.

Ray walks toward the officer. Determined.

The officer raises his eyes from the comic book. Sees Ray. Jumps to his feet.

Ray reaches the metal door. The officer salutes him. Ray returns it.

The officer detaches his belt key holder. Goes to the door. Unlocks it. Opens it. Salutes Ray.

Ray returns it. Grabs the chair. Moves down the corridor.

The officer closes the door behind him. Locks it.

INT. FORT PARRIS / MILITARY DETENTION CENTER - DAY

A confined corridor. Cells on each sides.

Only one of these cells is occupied. OLIVIA CARAZ (22) lying on her bed is smoking a cigarette. Her head leaning against the bars. Staring at the back wall of her cell.

Ray enters into the corridor. Walks toward Olivia's cell.

OLIVIA

How are you today?

(beat)

Colonel.

Ray places his chair right in front of the cell. Sits.

RAY

I'm fine, thank you.

(beat)

How did you --

OLIVIA

You have two titles, right? I was wondering, how is it working? Do you use both? Or is it just one at a time? Could we call you Sir Colonel Psychiatrist Ray Dimmers? Or is it just Colonel? Or maybe just psychiatrist? Doctor Colonel? Or even, since you are an important person : sir psychiatrist?

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Two sides of a coin, one person.

Olivia moves into a sitting position. Staring at Ray.

RAY

Call me Ray. Just Ray.

OLIVIA

Cliché.

RAY

Cliché?

OLIVIA

It's been only two days and you are already friendly. Just a psychiatrist doing his job. Nothing more.

(beat)

Boring.

RAY

May I ask you a question, Olivia?

OLIVIA

Go ahead.

RAY

How did you do that? You knew it was me. And you didn't even look at me.

OLIVIA

I'm certainly not clairvoyant.

RAY

Precisely.

OLIVIA

You need to stay calm Sir psychiatrist Colonel.

RAY

I... what?

OLIVIA

Oh but you know.

Olivia takes out a pack of cigarettes from her right front shirt pocket and a match. Lights a cigarette. Takes a puff.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Psychiatry. So fascinating.
(beat)
I was listening.

RAY
Listening?

OLIVIA
Everyone have the same cadence.
Everyone is walking the same way
with the same rhythm and weight in
the pace. We are in the US Army.
(beat)
For you it's different. You are
unbalanced. Taciturn. Not concerned
with the rest of the world. Why?
Because you are a victim. The
victim of an unbearable pain.
Literally controlled by his own
pain.

Ray frowns. Doing a head shake.

RAY
What's your point?

OLIVIA
Maybe you should stop denying the
obvious.

RAY
And you are not?

Olivia giggles. Throws away her cigarette.

RAY (CONT'D)
You are against the system. Against
all kind of system. In prison
because against the Us army system.
Why being so antisocial?

OLIVIA
I don't see myself as a prisoner.
I'm a free spirit. Isn't it the
most important thing in a man's
life? Freedom. Isn't it better to
be a free spirit behind bars rather
than to be held prisoner by his own
feelings?

RAY
What are you looking for, Olivia?

OLIVIA

I already proved myself. I perfectly know where I am, where I'm going, what I am doing. I'm in total control. You... You are not.

Ray smiles. So ironic.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time for you to put your feelings away. Or maybe you can't do that?

RAY

Why? Why do you need to stand in diametric opposition to everything?

OLIVIA

Very clever, Ray.

Olivia picks another cigarette. Lights it.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I can't stand the human nature within its own society, system. The injustice, the control over others, over the weak, the extremism without any mercy. Basically I can't live or adapt to a system I feel bad because of the human race. I can't accept such a system. And I react. I protest.

(beat)

There's a lot of things you want to talk about, but you don't. You don't, because you can't. You don't protest because you feel trapped. But you are not Ray. You can react.

RAY

Your provocative behavior doesn't serve you. You can't impose your values. I mean why should I listen to you? Even more why should I do what you tell me to do?

OLIVIA

You need help. You are hiding, Ray. You are in a great deal of pain. Why not releasing it and just live?

Olivia comes closer to the bars.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
What happened to you?
(beat)
Someone died, right? Someone close
to you. A sudden death.

Ray stands up. Grabs the chair.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Give yourself another chance.
Hiding is not the answer and you
know it.

Ray sighs. Exasperated.

RAY
This is not going anywhere.

He rearranges his clothes. Walks toward the exit.

OLIVIA
Stop pretending your life.

RAY
I see you next week Olivia.

Ray opens the door. Gets out of the military detention
center.

BLACK SCREEN

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN

LOUD MUSIC from a vintage radio cassette recorder.

Gloomy atmosphere.

A terrible mess. Clothes. Dishes. Computer parts. A lot of
empty liquor bottles.

Emilie -now around age (55)- sitting at a desk. Working on a
computer. Sipping from a bottle of vodka.

Job's done. Emilie shuts down her computer. Turns around.

BAM! Reality strikes. Emilie is in a wheelchair. Both her legs are amputated below the kneecap.

She's controlling her wheelchair with impressive dexterity. Goes toward the vintage radio cassette recorder. Turns off the music.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Someone's at the door.

EMILIE

Alright, alright. I'm coming!

Emilie moves toward the door. Opens it.

The geek KARIM EL HAMAOUI(23) is standing in the door frame. A plastic bag in the right hand.

EMILIE (CONT'D)

It's about time, Karim!

Karim comes in. Closes the door behind him.

KARIM

I'm fine. Thanks for asking.

EMILIE

Did you get it? Did you? Did you?

Karim opens the plastic bag. Takes out a keyboard. Hands it to Emilie.

KARIM

Do you know how many stores I had to go through to find it?

Emilie seizes the keyboard. Rushes to her computer.

KARIM (CONT'D)

An ergonomic keyboard.

Emilie unplugs the old keyboard. Throws it away without caring.

KARIM (CONT'D)

And it has to be this one. The special edition.

Emilie plugs in the new keyboard.

KARIM (CONT'D)

Thanks for the challenge. It was unfun, demanding and super annoying.

EMILIE

You keep complaining about everything, all the time. You're always in a bad mood. You --

KARIM

Seriously, Emilie?

(beat)

I don't think you realize how difficult it was to get this --

Karim sees an empty bottle of vodka among the mess. Grabs it.

EMILIE

I do and that's when the real fun began.

KARIM

Emilie, you can't drink alcohol and be a member of the "AA" at the same time. You just can't.

EMILIE

I don't drink.

KARIM

Well, I don't want to be rude but... what? What did you just say?

EMILIE

I don't drink.

KARIM

No, before that.

EMILIE

I chose the special edition keyboard because it was terribly difficult to find. The only reason.

KARIM

Really?

EMILIE

Yep.

KARIM

But why? Why?

EMILIE

I told you. For the fun of it. Just to see whether you would get it or not.

KARIM
Really?

EMILIE
Yep.

KARIM
So you don't really need the
special edition one?

EMILIE
It doesn't make any difference.
Well for my personal use.

KARIM
Wow! Thank you. What a --

EMILIE
Anytime, Karim.

KARIM
Emilie, you can't do that. You just
can't... You... damn.

EMILIE
Precisely.

Karim takes a few steps forward.

KARIM
You like that. Trolling people.
Testing them. You think you are...

Karim kicks the clothes around, empty bottles, empty fast
food packaging. Stands still.

KARIM (CONT'D)
You think you are better than
everyone else.

EMILIE
Nope. I'm just bored with life...
all the time.

KARIM
Alright. And what about that
unthinkable mess you call your
apartment?

EMILIE
It's not that bad.

KARIM
You'll feel better if you clean
your room.

EMILIE
Nope.

Emilie skims her fingers over the keyboard.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
The mother of all keyboards. A
prodigious technological advance.
See for yourself.

Emilie puts her hands on the keyboard. Smiles.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
And when you do that the ultimate
efficacy happens. You are faster,
better and obviously profitable.

KARIM
'Cause obviously I didn't know what
an ergonomic keyboard was.

EMILIE
Amateur.

KARIM
It was sarcasm.

EMILIE
Pointless.
(beat)
In other words I can make more
money.

KARIM
Seriously?

EMILIE
Yep.

KARIM
A little bit weird for someone who
is never spending a cent? I mean
just have a look around you. You
are more than wealthy and you are
living in this shit hole. Except
maybe for the alcohol, we can't say
you are a big spender.

EMILIE
I don't drink.

Karim shows her the bottle of Vodka.

KARIM
What is this?

EMILIE
A bottle of Vodka. It doesn't mean anything.

KARIM
You are... You are --

EMILIE
Yep.

KARIM
Stop doing that. You are always doing that.

DING! A ringing sound from the computer.

KARIM (CONT'D)
Oh. An e-mail? From?

EMILIE
I don't have any friends.

KARIM
Precisely.

EMILIE
And I'm not looking for any.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

Emilie uses her optical mouse. Clicks on the icon. Opens the e-mail folder.

It reads:

- Karim reads it aloud -

"Emilie,

Thank you for your effective collaboration in the Hamada Inc case. With all the material you provided to us we finally succeeded to conclude an agreement with Hamada Inc. All the arrangements will be settled in two days without any type of computer components as the japaneses request it in order to avoid any leak during the transactions. Since you are the project leader we are solliciting your presence. An airline ticket has been booked under your name. You can retrieve it at LAX before eight o'clock tomorrow, time of your departure.

Regards,

Abel Inc, New-York division.

*Ps : You need to know that for once the choice is not yours.
Just be there!"*

BACK TO SCENE

KARIM

Well, it was just a matter of time before it happens. Do you think you could bring me one of those little Statue of Liberty figurine?

Karim moves to the kitchenette.

KARIM (CONT'D)

Potato chips?

EMILIE

First cupboard. On your right.

KARIM

Sweet!

Karim opens the cupboard. Grabs a bag of potato chips. Unwraps it. Gobbles up a handful.

EMILIE

I won't go.

Karim suffocates. Spitting chips.

KARIM

What? Are you out of your mind?

(beat)

You have to go, Emilie. I mean you'll certainly lose your job if you don't go. That's --

EMILIE

So be it.

KARIM

Your job is your life. The only thing that still really matter to you.

(sighs)

What are you going to do without a job, anyway?

EMILIE

I don't know, Karim.

KARIM

And I do, and I hate the idea.

EMILIE

I tell you Karim, I can't do that.
I'm not strong enough. I can't go.

Karim goes toward Emilie. Crouches down in front of her.

KARIM

You were the one and only one to
believe in me five years ago?

EMILIE

And?

KARIM

It's the exact same shit.

EMILIE

No. Not at all.

KARIM

Really? You gave a junkie his
second chance when this junkie
didn't believe in life anymore. You
convinced him to embrace life.

EMILIE

And then?

KARIM

And then if you were strong enough
to do that, a simple travel to New-
York shouldn't be a problem.

EMILIE

It's different!

KARIM

No. It's not. What you need is
motivation. You need to believe in
yourself. Easy as pie.

EMILIE

No.

(beat)

I can't go. I just can't. I'm not --

KARIM

Why?

Karim stands up.

KARIM (CONT'D)

You are hiding from your past because you can't accept it. It's time for you to move forward, to make choices, to have the ability to make choices, to provoke changes, to bring me back one of those little Statue of Liberty figurine.

(beat)

It's more than time for you to move on.

EMILIE

Karim, it's not that easy.

KARIM

Yes it is. At least give it a try.

EMILIE

Well I --

KARIM

I'll go with you.

EMILIE

But you never... When it's about leaving your home you just --

KARIM

I'm going with you.

Emilie freezes. Stunned.

KARIM (CONT'D)

Emilie?

EMILIE

Ok. Alright. I guess I'm going.

Karim gives Emilie a strong hug.

INT. FORT PARRIS / ADMINISTRATION

The administration wing.

A long corridor. Offices on both side. Very busy.

An elevator at the end of the corridor.

DING! The doors open on Ray Dimmers holding a cup of coffee.

Ray walks down the corridor. Responding to soldier's salutes.

He reaches a door. The door name plate reads "*General Lointain*".

Without knocking, he opens the door. Gets in.

INT. WAITING ROOM / GENERAL LOINTAIN OFFICE - DAY

A waiting room. A leather couch. A near death houseplant.

Two doors. The main door and General Lointain office.

A reception desk. Behind it TYPHANIE (26) is talking in her headset.

TYPHANIE
(on the headset)
Yes Admiral. *(a time)* Certainly. *(a time)* You can be assure --

The main door swings open on Ray. Typhanie startles.

Ray comes in. Closes the door behind him. Winks at Typhanie.

TYPHANIE (CONT'D)
(on the headset)
It's alright. It's nothing. Nothing important. As I was saying you can be assure of his presence, Admiral. General Lointain will be there this time. *(a time)* Absolutely you can consider that as a fact not a probability. *(a time)* Thank you, Admiral. Have a good day.

Typhanie looks at Ray with disdain.

TYPHANIE (CONT'D)
Colonel Dimmers. Just to be clear you are not at home. You are in an office. A place, among others, where it is politically correct to have good manners. Good human beings are doing that.

RAY
I am here to see the boss and --

TYPHANIE
Obviously. How are you today?

Ray SIPS his coffee as an answer.

TYPHANIE (CONT'D)
 Right. Another day in your life.
 Anyway, if you want to have a seat,
 Colonel Dimmers, I'm calling him.

Ray doesn't make any movement still SIPPING.

TYPHANIE (CONT'D)
 Or just stay there on your feet and
 feel pleurably uncomfortable.

Typhanie pushes a button. Staring at Ray.

TYPHANIE (CONT'D)
 (on the headset)
 General. Colonel Dimmers is here.

Typhanie winces.

TYPHANIE (CONT'D)
 Well... He's waiting for you.

Ray swiftly goes to the door. Opens it. Gets in.

TYPHANIE (CONT'D)
 Your welcome.
 (beat)
 Ass.

Ray closes the door behind him.

INT. GENERAL LOINTAIN OFFICE - DAY

General Lointain (47) a physically well trained man.

Sitting behind his desk. A pile of file folders facing him.
 He's taking notes.

Ray goes to the only chair. Sits down.

General Lointain draws a line. Recaps his pen.

He looks at Ray. Pointing at the chair Ray is sitting in it.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
 Have a fucking seat... Colonel.
 (beat)
 What do you want?

RAY
 To leave.

General Lointain lets out a fake laugh.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
Your sense of humor sucks.

RAY
I'd like to be transferred.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
You are kidding, right? I spent
seventeen years trying to get ride
of you in any way possible and
today you came into my office
and...

(beat)
Why?

RAY
None of your business.

General Lointain opens a drawer. Takes out a form.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
You're right. And I don't care.
You just have to sign...

General Lointain pushes the form toward Ray. Points the
bottom of the document. Slides a pen across the desk.

GENERAL LOINTAIN (CONT'D)
...there. You see I filled it out a
long time ago. Just in case.

Ray signs the form.

RAY
Fort Calvi?

GENERAL LOINTAIN
A very small base on the east
coast. You know... as far from here
as possible.

RAY
It doesn't matter.

General Lointain seizes the form.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
Good.

General Lointain smiles awkwardly.

RAY
When should I leave?

GENERAL LOINTAIN
Next Monday.

RAY
This is... very soon.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
No worries. I'll make it happen.

General Lointain smiles awkwardly. Ray nods.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

BLACK SCREEN.

FADE IN.

Rush hour. The parking lot is full.

INT. LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Near the departure area. Overcrowded.

Check in counters. The first one is for New-York.

Private ALEX DUNN (21) is pushing his way through the crowd. Holding a wheeled suitcase. Ray on his tail.

A man brutally bumps into Ray's shoulder. He turns his head toward him. This is Monsieur Klein -now around 60-.

Monsieur Klein, a briefcase in his right hand, is in a rush. Walking fast.

He goes toward a coin operated newspaper rack. Inserts a coin. Opens it. Grabs the local newspaper.

Monsieur Klein goes toward the check in desk for New-York. Keeps walking. Bumping into several people. Bam! An unexpected obstacle. Monsieur Klein looks down...

...at Emilie on her wheelchair. Has no time to waste. Wades through the people.

Karim has trouble pushing the wheelchair. Too many people.

EMILIE
What an ass.

Monsieur Klein disappears into the crowd.

People are repeatedly bumping into Emilie's wheelchair.
Annoying.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
Karim please. Just let go.

KARIM
But Emilie... there's too many
people. You can't --

EMILIE
I'm better on my own.

KARIM
Ok. No use arguing with you
anyway... anyhow.

Emilie takes control of her wheelchair. Easily moving through
the tangled mass of people. Impressive.

Karim tries to keep up the pace. Bumping into people.

Private Alex Dunn is on their right side. Walking in the same
direction. Ray still on his tail. They are faster and Ray is
catching up with Emilie.

They reach the lineup at the check in counter for New-York.
Private Alex Dunn and Ray are right behind Emilie and Karim.

Karim has a look at his boarding pass.

KARIM (CONT'D)
Seat 10A and 10B. We are in the
front.

Ray is now on Emilie's right side.

EMILIE
Okey Dokey.

Ray instinctively turns his head in Emilie's direction. A
slap in the face. He's staring at her. Stunned.

Emilie catches Ray staring at her. Annoyed.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
What's your --

Emilie meets Ray's eyes. Emotional intensity is high.

They are staring at each other. Time is stopped. As deep as
everlasting.

A mutual feeling making them one.

Someone bumps into Emilie's wheelchair. Back to reality!

Ray gives to private Alex Dunn a stern look.

RAY

Private! Don't stand there like an idiot!

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN

Colonel my orders are to --

RAY

Do I need to repeat myself, private?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN

No sir.

Private Alex Dunn takes position behind the wheelchair.

EMILIE

Thank you Colonel. I really appreciate.

RAY

You are very welcome, Ma'am.

Karim leans over Emilie.

KARIM

Weren't you supposed to be better on your own?

EMILIE

Shut up, Karim.

KARIM

Sure.

The lineup is moving slowly.

At the check in counter Monsieur Klein is talking to the flight attendant.

RAY

May I accompany you until we board the airplane, ma'am?

EMILIE

Oh I don't want to bother you, Colonel. You should have --

RAY
You don't.

Private Alex Dunn leans closer to Ray.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
(whispering)
I'm sorry Colonel but my orders are
to --

RAY
Escort me to the airplane. And
that's exactly what you are doing.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
I... yes.

EMILIE
Is there a problem, Colonel?

RAY
Everything's perfectly fine.

Ray smiles. Unsure. Emilie smiles back.

Karim sighs. Annoyed.

KARIM
(to himself)
Boring.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

An airplane cabin. The front part.

A lineup in the aisle. People are boarding. Looking for their
seat. Storing their personal belongings in the overhead
compartment. Sitting.

The third row. Monsieur Klein is at his seat. Concentrating
on a digital tablet.

Ray enters the cabin. Carrying Emilie in his arms.

EMILIE
10A.

Ray puts her down in the front seat.

Karim and private Alex Dunn are waiting just behind.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
I don't know how to thank you.

Karim finds his way to the next seat, 10B.

RAY
It's a very long trip and well...
my seat is 11B. The one just --

Karim sits down.

EMILIE
Sure. You can switch places with
Karim.

Karim stands up.

KARIM DAMN. RAY EXCELLENT.

Ray sits next to Emilie.

Karim goes to the seat behind. Sits down.

Alex Dunn takes the seat next to him. Looking straight ahead.
Stern face.

Karim looks at him.

KARIM
DAMN.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The swelling roar of the engines. Sky and clouds through the
windows.

Karim is staring at private Alex Dunn. Sighs.

KARIM
So what can you tell me about our
beloved Us Army?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
Not much.

KARIM
Don't you have numerous great
stories or epic moments to share?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
Not really.

KARIM
Right... what about your life?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN

What about it?

KARIM

Well... is it tough? Is it... I don't know... boring... or I don't know? How is it?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN

It's ok.

KARIM

Right... anything else?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN

Not really.

KARIM

Obviously.

Greg nods to himself. Sighs.

We're moving to the two seats ahead. Ray and Emilie.

EMILIE

And your name is?

RAY

Colonel Ray Dimmers.

EMILIE

So "Colonel" is part of your name?

RAY

It depends on the situation.

EMILIE

What about now?

RAY

You can call me Ray.

EMILIE

Good. May I ask you a question, Colonel?

RAY

Sure, if you allow me to do the same.

EMILIE

Deal.

RAY
Shoot, then.

EMILIE
Why in the first place did you join
the Us army?

RAY
Well that's an easy one. The Us
Army gives me the assurance to keep
my job, to have a good career.

EMILIE
And your job is?

RAY
I'm a psychiatrist.

EMILIE
Which means that if I need to see
you, I have to be a soldier of some
sort?

RAY
Well...

EMILIE
No worries, Colonel.

RAY
Why? Do you need to --

EMILIE
And "bla bla bla"... I said no
worries, Colonel. Just forget it.

RAY
But --

EMILIE
And your question is?

RAY
Well... I --

EMILIE
Well, shoot then.

RAY
Ok, but... you have to know that
it's not my intention to offend
you. I don't want to hurt you and --

EMILIE

So even a Colonel can be shy.

Ray can't help it. Takes a look at her thighs. Not subtle.

RAY

I was wondering, how did you --

EMILIE

My job?

RAY

Your job? No, in fact... it was --

EMILIE

You don't want to know.

RAY

What? No. Yes. I --

EMILIE

Very good. I'm a computer engineer. I'm working for one of the most important company in the world. Its main purpose is to buy other companies and, depending on the situation, to reorganize them, and then make profit in selling them off, or to dismantle them and then make profit in selling the pieces. A very simple way to put it but that's basically how it works.

RAY

Impressive.

EMILIE

You are not very convincing.

RAY

To tell you the truth what I intended to --

EMILIE

My ordinary life is boring, right?

RAY

What? No, I'm afraid you misunderstood me. I --

EMILIE

Why don't you just ask the question? Stop fooling around.

RAY
I don't... You --

EMILIE
Ok, let's cut the crap here. The only thing you want to know is about my legs. How did I lose my legs. The only thing you are really, currently, definitely interested in.

RAY
Hey! I don't want to argue with you. It's not...
(beat)
It's not that important anyway.

EMILIE
Oh because you think this is not important to me?

RAY
What? No. I... I didn't say that.

EMILIE
So what exactly are you saying?

RAY
I... Just forget it.

EMILIE
Just forget it?

Emilie shows her thighs in an exaggerated way.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
How do I do that? Tell me.

RAY
Alright, time for me to see...

Ray stands up.

RAY (CONT'D)
...if I'm not over there.

EMILIE
Nope.

RAY
What?

EMILIE
You are not escaping. Too easy,
buddy.

Emilie smiles.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
Please, sit down.

Ray sighs. Evaluating. Nods.

RAY
(sitting)
Ok.

EMILIE
Thank you.

Emilie moves in her seat. Facing Ray.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
First of all you need to know this
event radically changed my life. I
know it sounds quite obvious but
it's not for me.

RAY
I'm a psychiatrist.

EMILIE
I know.
(beat)
A story no easy to tell.

RAY
I don't think so.

EMILIE
What?

RAY
We are talking about the basis of
human relations. Quite simple. You
don't know me. I don't know you. We
are supposed to behave, to be
polite, to keep a distance between
each other. We are hiding behind
good manners. Why? Because we,
humans, need to learn from each
other. A necessary step by step
relationship building that... you
have just ignored.

EMILIE

You were the one --

RAY

You don't want me to behave like a stranger. You don't want me to take my time with you. You want me to perfectly comprehend your feelings. So when I'm hesitating, when I'm behaving like a stranger will do, you just close the door with frustration. Black and white are the only colors of your own world. Gray doesn't exist. Therefore I can't be in the gray zone, you don't accept it, you can't accept it. It's unnatural. Why? Because of your urgent need. Because you have to tell me your story.

EMILIE

Obviously we --

RAY

Obviously we don't know each other. You don't know me. I don't know you. So let's start again. I'm going to hear your story and then you will let me give my opinion in the most enjoyable way possible.

EMILIE

You're right. I --

RAY

Thank you for admitting it.

EMILIE

I...

Ray smiles at Emilie.

Emilie sighs heavily.

EMILIE (CONT'D)

It was approximately twenty years ago. I don't exactly remember because I hate dates. Especially this one. Anyway, I was freshly graduated from Yale. I joined a big company, the one I'm working for right now, and was a workaholic, as I still am right now.

(MORE)

EMILIE (CONT'D)

Except for my job everything in my life was insignificant details. Success was my only fuel. Then, one day I met Damien. And then even if I kept going with my job, on the same basis, everything in my life was insignificant details... except for Damien. A successful job, perfect love at home, everything I was dreaming about when I was a young girl was then my reality. Then... it only took a few seconds. A few seconds to delete everything from the screen of my life. It was a fading dream, an accident, a violent blast. Today, the loss of my legs symbolizes that burden I'm carrying for the rest of my life. An heavy burden I must carry in my loneliness, in my steadiness.

(beat - tears in her eyes)

And here comes my job. That so important detail leading me through the day by day challenge making my routine.

RAY

Well...

EMILIE

Well?

RAY

Well I would lie to you if I told you that I could help you but I'm no stranger to your pain.

EMILIE

I see. The psychiatrist speech.

RAY

I'm talking about the way I'm trying to keep going through what is considered a normal life. Even if life is anything to me but normal. I'm talking about my wife who didn't have the sufficient energy to do so and...

Ray sighs. Frowning. Stares at Emilie.

RAY (CONT'D)
...decided to end her life one day
before the burial of my seven years
old son.
(beat)
I'm talking about surviving the
day.

Ray scratches his right hand nervously.

Emilie stares at him.

RAY (CONT'D)
I don't know why I'm sharing this
with you but...
(beat)
It weirdly sounds right.

Ray smiles awkwardly.

EMILIE
I --

RAY
What you are doing here?

EMILIE
Excuse me?

RAY
What is your destination?

EMILIE
I have consolidated one of the most
important case for the company I'm
working for.

RAY
So your boss asked you to be there?

EMILIE
She didn't give me much choice.

RAY
Because usually you are working
from home?

EMILIE
Loneliness and steadiness.
Remember?

RAY

I can't imagine how difficult it should be for you to be in that airplane.

EMILIE

I never leave my tiny apartment for any reason, not even for the groceries. Karim takes care of that kind of things for me.

RAY

Not the best time of your life then.

EMILIE

Either I was going to New-York or I was losing my job.

RAY

Indeed. Your boss didn't give you much choice. The daily life of soldiers.

Emilie giggles. Ray smiles.

And again Emilie stares at Ray. Patting her jacket pockets.

EMILIE

Do you think we can keep in touch? After this so long flight, I mean.

Emilie grabs a pen and a piece of paper.

RAY

You know --

EMILIE

Listen. You were right.

Emilie writes something down on the piece of paper.

RAY

About what?

EMILIE

I have the feeling that you are not stranger to my pain.

RAY

What about loneliness and steadiness?

EMILIE

Times change.

RAY

Since the accident, I have learned to be alone among people. What was a vital need for me, became a part of my personality. I don't think it would be a good idea to meet again. You would be disappointed.

Emilie hands the piece of paper to Ray.

EMILIE

Here's my new phone number. You can call me at any time. All that I'm asking is to meet again.

RAY

I can't give you my words but... I will try.

EMILIE

You get the card. The choice is yours.

Ray takes the piece of paper.

RAY

Not like in the army.

EMILIE

That's your call.

Ray nods. Emilie smiles.

INT. JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - EVENING

The airport is overcrowded.

The arrivals gate. Travelers rushing out.

Private Alex Dunn is pushing the wheelchair with Emilie in it. Ray walking next to it. Karim right behind them. Making their way toward the main exit.

An airport employee bumps into Ray. He's in a hurry.

THE AIRPORT EMPLOYEE

Sorry. Very sorry.

The airport employee is running toward the "Customer Service" counter.

An overweight man is gesticulating at the "Customer Service Representative". Angry.

THE OVERWEIGHT MAN

For the thousandth time, I didn't lose my cellphone. It had been stolen from me. My cellphone is more important than my wife. My cellphone is my life! How could I be so inattentive with something of such a high value?

The airport employee reaches the counter. Breathless.

THE AIRPORT EMPLOYEE

I looked everywhere. I didn't find it.

THE OVERWEIGHT MAN

Well young man it was fast. I'm pretty sure you didn't look everywhere. You've just missed it.

THE AIRPORT EMPLOYEE

What? I... I...

The airport employee confused stares at the representative.

THE CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

(shrugging)

Go back. Go back and look for it.

THE AIRPORT EMPLOYEE

Damn it.

The airport employee turns on his heel. Walks away.

He weaves through the crowd. Bumps into someone...

THE AIRPORT EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Sorry. Very sorry.

...Monsieur Klein. He doesn't pay attention.

Monsieur Klein is quietly walking toward the main exit. Talking on a cellphone.

MR KLEIN

(on the cell phone)

Absolutely, Ma'am. This line is secured. (a time) Everything's fine. We are in time. The stock is on his way.

(MORE)

MR KLEIN (CONT'D)
(a time) Thank you, Ma'am. I'll be
there. 8 o'clock tomorrow.

He turns off the cell phone. Throws it into a trash can.

Ray, Karim, private Alex Dunn and Emilie in her wheelchair
are gathered around it.

Emilie holds out her right hand to Ray. He seizes it.
Standing still.

EMILIE
Let's meet again, Ray.

In the background a junkie is walking toward the trash can.
Determined.

RAY
Well as I said --

EMILIE
I need to see you again.
(beat)
You need to see me again.

The junkie rummages through the trash can.

Emilie moves her wheelchair with a side glance at the junkie.

Karim looks at him. Shrugs.

RAY
Listen, Emilie, I know you are a
very determined person, but you
can't --

EMILIE
You will call me. Because you have
to.

The junkie grabs the cellphone. Smiles. Walks away.

Emilie lets go of Ray's hand. Turns her wheelchair toward
private Alex Dunn.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
Thanks for your help, soldier.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
My pleasure, Ma'am.

KARIM
God, it's about time. See you
fellas.

Karim pushes the wheelchair forward. Disappearing into the massive crowd.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
Colonel, may I remind you that we are expected at eight-zero-zero in Fort "Calvi"?

RAY
I need to go to the bathroom.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
You know we can't be late, Colonel.

RAY
And I need to go to the bathroom.

Private Alex Dunn shakes his head in disapproval.

They walk away.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM / JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - EVENING

The men's bathroom.

Two men (30's) are washing their hands.

In the back another man (50's) is taking a leak.

The main door swings open. Ray enters the bathroom. Private Alex Dunn is right behind him.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
I don't think we'll be in time, colonel. And being late is not an option as you --

Ray rushes at him. Pushes the soldier against the wall. Restraining him.

The two cowboys run outside.

The man in the back zips up in a hurry. Heads for the door, a wet stain on his crotch. Gets out.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN (CONT'D)
Colonel, what are you --

RAY
Listen very carefully. What I want you to --

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
I don't know what's happening here
but --

RAY
The only thing you have to know is
that you don't have any choice.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
What?

RAY
I'm sorry. On second thought you do
have a choice.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
What choice?

RAY
Of being gay, obviously. What else?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
But I'm not gay and I certainly
don't --

RAY
If you say so.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
What?

RAY
Whether you truly are or not, it
doesn't matter. What matters is
what others think about you.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
You can't be serious.

RAY
I am.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
This is pure madness.

Ray releases his grip.

RAY
What do you decide, Private?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
What do I decide? Honestly, what
kind of stupid question is that?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN.

The financial district. In the background the corner of Wall street and Broad street.

The place is crowded. Traffic is jammed.

A modern building.

A cab pulls out besides the building's main entrance.

The taxi driver gets out. Goes straight to the trunk of his car. Opens it. Pulls out a folding wheelchair.

Karim gets out of the cab. Leaves the door open.

The taxi driver reaches him. Unfolds the wheelchair.

Karim helps Emilie to get out of the cab. Assists her into her wheelchair.

Karim and Emilie go toward the main entrance. The taxi driver gets back into his car.

Another yellow cab stops behind the first one. Monsieur Klein gets out.

Karim and Emilie enter the building.

Monsieur Klein looks up at the building. Walks toward the main entrance.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

A luxurious waiting room. Two doors. The main door. A conference room door.

A reception desk. Behind it STACY (26). Working on her computer.

Nine japanese on a sofa. Eight of them turned toward the one in the middle, older. Whispering to him.

On the second sofa facing them three business men. GREENSTEIN (32), MACALISTER (34) and FINLEY (38).

The main door swings open. Emilie and Karim enter.

The nine japanese jump to their feet. Bow to Karim and Emilie.

Emilie nods. Karim smiles. Uneasy.

FINLEY

You should be Emilie Basile?

EMILIE

Are you expecting someone else in a wheelchair with no legs today?

FINLEY

Oh my... I see... I'm sorry, I shouldn't have --

EMILIE

Just forget it... And you are?

FINLEY

I'm Finley, financial transactions.

EMILIE

Finley, yes. We spoke on the phone, right?

FINLEY

Two months ago.

EMILIE

I see. Anyway, I like you Finley.

FINLEY

Oh, well, I --

EMILIE

Just forget it. And your two friends are?

FINLEY

(pointing at Greenstein)
Our lawyers, Greenstein.

GREENSTEIN.

Ma'am.

FINLEY

(pointing at Macalister)
Macalister.

MACALISTER

Ma'am.

EMILIE

No first name?

FINLEY

I'm sorry. What --

KARIM

I have one. I'm Karim.

Everyone's staring at Karim.

The conference room door swings open.

MICKAËL MACCAFINTS (42) stands in the doorway. In his back a conference room. Numerous chairs. A long table. At the end of it SHEELANDRA (54) standing before a wall of windows. Smoking a cigarette.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS

Gentlemen... and lady, if you please?

Emilie is the first one to enter the conference room.

Mickaël Maccafints gets in Karim's way. The Japanese are going into the room.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Who are you?

KARIM

I'm --

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS

I don't know you. Thank you for waiting outside.

Finley, Greenstein and Macalister enter the room.

Mickaël Maccafints smiles at Karim. Closes the door.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The Japanese are sitting on the right side of the table.

Emilie, Greenstein, Macalister and Finley are sitting opposite them.

Mickaël Maccafints is working on a laptop in a corner of the room.

Sheelandra is standing at the end of the table. Smoking.

SHEELANDRA

First, Emilie, I want to thank you for coming today. I know how challenging it could be for you to leave your house.

EMILIE

Thanks for having me.

Sheelandra nods. Smiling.

SHEELANDRA

Finley! Ready when you are.

Finley stands up. Opens a file folder.

FINLEY

Today is the beginning of a new era for you, for us, for --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FORT CALVI / MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN.

The front gates of a military base. Fort Calvi in large letters. A SECURITY GUARD (20's) at the checkpoint.

A taxi stops at the gates. Private Alex Dunn steps out of the car. The vehicle makes a U-turn. Leaves.

Private Alex Dunn is wearing Ray's uniform.

The security guard salutes private Alex Dunn. He returns the salute.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN

Colonel Ray Dimmers. I'm supposed to meet General Emberstow today at eight zero-zero.

THE SECURITY GUARD

Eight zero-zero was twenty minutes ago, Colonel.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN

I know. I had trouble getting a cab and --

THE SECURITY GUARD
No bag?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
No bag?

THE SECURITY GUARD
No personal belongings?

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
I... No.

THE SECURITY GUARD
ID please.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
ID. Yeah.

Private Alex Dunn pats his jacket pockets.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN (CONT'D)
(patting)
I'm pretty sure, I...

The security guard looks at him suspiciously.

Private Alex Dunn retrieves it from the upper right pocket.
Hands him the ID.

The security guard checks it. Gives it back to him.

THE SECURITY GUARD
Thank you. General Emberstow's
office is in the building A. The
first on your right.

He shows him the direction.

PRIVATE ALEX DUNN
Thank you.

Private Alex Dunn salutes the security guard. He returns the
salute.

Private Alex Dunn enters the base.

The security guard reaches for his walkie-talkie shoulder
speaker.

THE SOLDIER
(on the walkie-talkie)
Someone pretending to be Colonel
Ray Dimmers is coming to General
Emberstow's office.

MALE VOICE
(into the walkie-talkie)
10-4. We're on our way.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The swelling roar of the engines.

Ray is sitting next to a very old man sleeping. Snoring.

He's staring into space.

A CHILD'S LAUGHTER.

Ray draws himself up into his seat. Has a look at a seven years old child being teased by his father in the main corridor.

Ray sits back. Staring at his own hands.

Everything is fading away...

BLACK SCREEN

CROSSFADE TO :

EXT. A HIGHWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK

BLACK SCREEN

A bright light.

Things are taking shape. The ford van is a smoking wreck.

Steve (7) is walking erratically between the wrecked cars. In shock. Confused.

He stops. Raises his head. Meets Ray's eyes.

A sparkle effect draws Ray's attention to a necklace Steve is wearing. A silver lightning bolt necklace.

A burning wound is spreading out on Steve's face. Unnatural.

A bright light.

David (7), his son, is standing before him. Still wearing the silver lightning bolt necklace.

RAY
David? David?

David is standing still. A teardrop running down his right cheek. No facial expression.

David turns his back to Ray. Walks toward the van strangely intact.

RAY (CONT'D)
David! David! No! Don't --

The van EXPLODES. Ray hunkers down.

He stands up to see the van in flames. Gasoline is spilling out onto the road letting the fire spread all over the ground.

David is standing in the middle of the flames. Miraculously not hurt. He keeps walking. Disappears into the fire.

RAY (CONT'D)
David! David!

A bright light.

WHITE SCREEN

CROSSFADE TO :

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

WHITE SCREEN

FADE IN

David is SCREAMING IN PAIN. No. Just A CHILD'S LAUGHTER.

A LOUD SCREECHING NOISE. Ray startles.

The airplane is landing.

Ray turns his head toward the window. The lights of the Los-Angeles airport.

Ray adjust his private uniform.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is organizing his documents.

The Japanese are talking to each other.

Sheelandra is standing before the wall of windows. Smoking a cigarette.

Mickaël Maccafints closes his laptop lid. Walks toward the end of the table. Stands still.

He clears his throat.

The Japanese stop talking.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS

Ladies and Gentlemen, our agreement is signed and concluded. Thank you all for your participation.

Mickaël Maccafints goes to the door. Opens it.

The Japanese stand up. Heading for the door.

The oldest Japanese stops. Turns to face Sheelandra.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS (CONT'D)

(**in Japanese**)

Sir, the meeting is over. You --

THE OLD JAPANESE

Stop talking to me in that crappy Japanese.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS

Sir. I'm sorry but --

THE OLD JAPANESE

Sheelandra, one day you'll meet someone more powerful than you. One day the karma is going to hit --

SHEELANDRA

I destroyed you sir with such an accuracy, such a perfect method.

(beat)

You are no more. Nothing remains. That's what my company does, its sole purpose. Destroying other companies. My company doesn't know failure and will never do.

The old Japanese stands there. Staring at Sheelandra.

Sheelandra turns her back on him. Keeps smoking her cigarette.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS

Sir... I --

THE OLD JAPANESE

Yes, yes!

The old Japanese leaves the room.

The rest of the team stands up. Putting their things in order.

Emilie moves her wheelchair backward.

SHEELANDRA

Emilie!

EMILIE

Yes.

SHEELANDRA

Amazing job, here. Thanks again.

EMILIE

Well, you know --

SHEELANDRA

Indeed. I know. What about a raise? What do you think? I think you deserve one.

EMILIE

I really don't know what to say.

SHEELANDRA

You don't need to say anything. All I want now is for you to stay near your computer at home. We have a lot, a lot of work ahead of us. Especially with that case... I'll send you the files by e-mail, ok?

EMILIE

Sure.

Emilie moves her wheelchair toward the door.

SHEELANDRA

I'll catch you on the net, then.

EMILIE

I'm always on the net.

Emilie, Finley, Greenstein and Macalister get out of the conference room.

Mickaël Maccafints closes the door.

SHEELANDRA

Thank goodness Emilie was here.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS
I'm sorry, Ma'am I should have --

SHEELANDRA
You should have shut your mouth!

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS
I just tried to --

SHEELANDRA
Emilie fixed your mistake.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS
Oh, I see.

SHEELANDRA
You know how I deal with employees
making mistake in my company.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS
Yes but --

SHEELANDRA
Open the door, please. A qualified
employee is waiting for me.

MICKAEL MACCAFINTS
How do you know if someone --

SHEELANDRA
Open... the... fucking door.

Mickaël Maccafints rushes to the door. Opens it.

Monsieur Klein enters the conference room. Holding a
briefcase.

Mickaël Maccafints nods at him. Monsieur Klein doesn't pay
attention to him. Walking toward the table.

Mickaël Maccafints steps out of the conference room. Closes
the door behind him.

Monsieur Klein puts the briefcase on the table. Opens it.
Pulls out a form and a pen.

SHEELANDRA (CONT'D)
Monsieur Klein! Always on time.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
My job requires precision.
(beat)
I'm listening.

SHEELANDRA
We have another package.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
The weight?

SHEELANDRA
One hundred and forty three pounds.

Monsieur Klein writes down the information on his form.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
Destination?

SHEELANDRA
Our clients reside in Moscow.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(writing)
Rendezvous with the contact?

SHEELANDRA
At the airport.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(writing)
Deadline?

SHEELANDRA
From today you have one week.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(writing)
That's very short. Flight number?

Sheelandra reaches into her right front pant pocket. Pulls out her cellphone. Walks toward Monsieur Klein. Navigating on her phone screen.

SHEELANDRA
Monsieur Klein, failure is not an option.

Sheelandra puts her cellphone on the table. Right in front of him.

Monsieur Klein copies the informations from the phone screen.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(writing)
I see.

Monsieur Klein lifts up his eyes. Staring at Sheelandra.

MONSIEUR KLEIN (CONT'D)
We are not talking about a simple
package, are we?

SHEELANDRA
In 1993 you --

MONSIEUR KLEIN
I know the rules.

Monsieur Klein puts the form and the pen back into the
briefcase.

MONSIEUR KLEIN (CONT'D)
I've lost a lot back in 93.
(beat)
It won't happen again.

SHEELANDRA
I know.

Monsieur Klein closes his briefcase.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

Back to the financial district.

The place is crowded. Traffic jammed.

Emilie and Karim are making their way through the crowd.

KARIM
Wow! A raise? That's very good,
Emilie.

EMILIE
Yeah.

KARIM
Yeah? Just yeah?

EMILIE
Yeah.

KARIM
There's no shame in being proud of
yourself. You're a hard worker,
Emilie.

EMILIE
Why?

KARIM
What?

EMILIE
Why is that so important to you?

KARIM
Because I care.

EMILIE
About what?

KARIM
About you.

Emilie stops. Staring at Greg. The crowd moving around them.

EMILIE
Why?

KARIM
Because you are important to me.
Because you are family to me.
(beat)
Because... no one will, if I don't.

EMILIE
Karim. I... I --

KARIM
Yeah. You know.
(beat)
Let's go. We're running late.

Karim pushes Emilie's wheelchair.

EMILIE
Where are we going?

Karim hails a cab. The car pulls up next to him.

KARIM
An expensive restaurant.

The taxi driver gets out of his car. Walks directly toward Emilie and Karim.

KARIM (CONT'D)
To celebrate.

EMILIE
I --

KARIM
End of discussion.

Emilie smiles.

EXT. A WEALTHY SUBURB - DAY

Morning lights. A peaceful street.

A REVERSE BEEPING SOUND. A trash truck is moving backward.

INT. KITCHEN / RAY'S HOUSE - DAY

TRASH TRUCK NOISES.

Ray's wearing casual clothes. Holding a mug. Sipping coffee.

He's looking out the window. Watching the trash truck.

On the kitchen counter a picture of his son passed away,
David, car keys and Emilie's piece of paper.

The trash truck leaves.

Ray puts his mug in the sink. Grabs his car keys and...
freezes right in front of Emilie's piece of paper.

He seizes the card. Looking closely at it. Flipping it
between his fingers.

Ray puts the piece of paper in his right front pant pocket.
Moves out of the kitchen.

EXT. A FREEWAY - DAY

The traffic is moving freely.

Ray's SUV with military license plates in the right lane.
Right blinker flashing.

The car takes the "Fort Parris" exit.

EXT. FORT PARRIS / MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Ray's SUV stops at the entrance.

The soldier gets out of the hut a note pad in his right hand.
Goes to the driver side of the car.

The driver side power window goes down on Ray. Gives a proper army salute.

The soldier returns it.

THE SOLDIER
Colonel Dimmers.

RAY
I forgot some very important documents.

THE SOLDIER
Sure, Colonel. May I see your ID?

RAY
Well. No.

THE SOLDIER
I'm sorry, but --

RAY
You know me, right?

THE SOLDIER
Colonel, there's a procedure. I have orders. I just can't --

RAY
Why's that?

THE SOLDIER
Because I'm a soldier, Colonel.

RAY
Does it make sense to you?

THE SOLDIER
I follow orders. I don't ask questions or try to figure out the sense of anything.
(beat)
May I see your ID, Colonel Dimmers?

RAY
Only for a couple of minutes?

THE SOLDIER
May I see your ID, Colonel Dimmers?

Ray sighs.

THE SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Colonel if you don't --

RAY

Talk about your homosexuality and stuff like that... Everything's going to be fine, right?

(beat)

People love details.

THE SOLDIER

Wow!

RAY

Yeah, I know.

THE SOLDIER

How?

RAY

How?

THE SOLDIER

How do you know? Who told you that?

RAY

Oh.

THE SOLDIER

Oh?

RAY

I mean you are gay, right?

THE SOLDIER

I think you've made your point Colonel.

RAY

So you really are.

THE SOLDIER

What this is about?

RAY

It's about you not having problems with your little secret.

THE SOLDIER

Like I said. You've made your point Colonel.

The soldier goes back inside the hut.

RAY

Thank you, soldier.

The automatic rising arm barrier goes up.

Ray drives his car inside the compound.

INT. FORT PARRIS / MILITARY DETENTION CENTER - DAY

Back to the confined corridor. Cells on each sides.

Olivia lying on her bed. Smoking a cigarette.

Ray sitting on a chair in the corridor.

OLIVIA
Welcome back, Colonel Dimmers.

RAY
It's not what you are thinking.

Olivia moves. Sits on the edge of her bed.

OLIVIA
I heard you have been transferred?

RAY
Indeed.

OLIVIA
Congratulation. You are a strong-
minded human now.

RAY
Why are you saying that?

OLIVIA
Because you are right where you are
not supposed to be.

INT. GENERAL LOINTAIN OFFICE - DAY

Sitting behind his desk, General Lointain is talking on his phone.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
(on the phone)
This is reality, not a fantasy
world! And in this reality, in the
Us Army reality, the General has
the right to kick a private's ass.
Especially when this last one in
his own fantasy world allows
forbidden things to happen. Are we
on the same page, soldier?
(MORE)

GENERAL LOINTAIN (CONT'D)

(*a time*) Very good. Now I want you to bring me Colonel Dimmers' ass right here, in my office. (*a time*) You are certainly not in the position to bullshit me, soldier. Just execute the goddamn order. (*a time*) What? Of course that's an order! What do you think it is? A rhetorical idea? I'm not a rhetorical guy. I'm a General giving orders to soldiers, you idiot! (*a time*) JUST EXECUTE THE ORDER FOR CHRIST SAKES!

INT. FORT PARRIS / MILITARY DETENTION CENTER - DAY

Back to the military detention center.

OLIVIA

It's not only about you anymore.

RAY

Maybe we should switch places.

OLIVIA

Maybe we already have.

Ray rubs his face. Overwhelmed.

RAY

I met someone.

OLIVIA

Welcome to the real world.

RAY

She's confusing me.

(beat)

I'm... I --

OLIVIA

Love is a simple feeling.

RAY

What? No. It's not. It's --

OLIVIA

The human being has fun in making things more complicated than they need to be.

RAY

I won't say I'm in love. I mean...
I don't know.

OLIVIA

You don't need to know. I told you
love is a simple feeling.

(beat)

It's about your job.

RAY

My job? Non sense.

OLIVIA

How's that?

RAY

Right now I'm supposed to be in
Fort Calvi in New York, not here.
Right now, you can say that my job
is gone... forever.

OLIVIA

No. For sure you will be punished
in the pure Us Army tradition but
not that much and you will keep
your job. You really think the Us
Army has a ton of good
psychiatrists in their ranks.

RAY

Let's suppose you're right. I don't
see any connection between my state
of mind and my job.

OLIVIA

Your job is your life. Your only
motivation.

(beat)

Today you have to choose between
your job and a new life. You are
uncertain.

RAY

I don't feel insecure about my job.

OLIVIA

I didn't say that.

(beat)

Until now your job was your only
way to survive. And to justify your
so called confused state of mind
you are denying the truth.

(beat)

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 Make your decision, Ray. And
 there's not such thing as the wrong
 decision. But you already know
 that, don't you?

RAY
 Your are mixing things up.

OLIVIA
 Stop denying the truth.

RAY
 What truth? My job? Her? Me?
 There's no truth, just me in the
 middle of nowhere.

Olivia smiles. Compassionate.

OLIVIA
 Ray. Just free yourself.

RAY
 I...

MEMORY IMAGE : the ford van is a smoking wreck. David (7),
 his son, is standing before him.

Ray shakes his head. Troubled.

RAY (CONT'D)
 I --

OLIVIA
 That's your life, Ray. Live it.

RAY
 It's not that simple. I --

OLIVIA
 Turn your back on the past.

RAY
 I thought it was about my job.

OLIVIA
 You are facing a crossroad.

RAY
 Stop being so elusive.

OLIVIA
 Why?

RAY
What?

OLIVIA
You don't need to hear things you
already know.
(beat)
Don't be foolish.

RAY
I...

MEMORY IMAGE : David, his face covered with burn scars, is standing before him.

RAY (CONT'D)
You --

OLIVIA
Face your delusions. Put your trust
in the unknown.
(beat)
This woman is your salvation.

RAY
Olivia, I --

MEMORY IMAGE : Steve (7), his face covered with burn scars, is standing before him.

Ray jumps to his feet.

RAY (CONT'D)
I... don't know.

OLIVIA
You know.

RAY
Olivia...
(beat)
You are --

OLIVIA
It was a pleasure meeting you...
Ray.

Olivia lights a cigarette. Lies down on her bed.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I wish you all the best in your
life.

Humming a country song.

Ray nods. Leaves.

INT. FORT PARRIS / MAIN CORRIDOR - DAY

A polished corridor. A metal door.

The military police officer sitting in a chair by the door. Still reading a comic book.

A sudden AGITATION.

The officer jumps to his feet. The comic book slips off his lap. Standing at attention.

General Lointain, followed by two young soldiers, reaches him.

GENERAL LOINTAIN

We are here to apprehend Colonel Dimmers.

THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER

Colonel Dimmers?

GENERAL LOINTAIN

Yes, Colonel Dimmers.

THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER

But Colonel Dimmers is --

GENERAL LOINTAIN

But Colonel Dimmers is now considered a dangerous fugitive.

THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER

Really?

GENERAL LOINTAIN

What?

THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER

I didn't know that.

GENERAL LOINTAIN

Well I just told you, soldier.

THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER

And I didn't know that until now.

GENERAL LOINTAIN

Damn it.

(beat)

When?

THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER
I would say fifteen minutes ago,
General.

GENERAL LOINTAIN
Fuck that!

General Lointain gives a proper army salute.

The soldier returns it.

General Lointain turns around. Walks away, the two soldiers still right behind him.

INT. EMILIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Back to Emilie's apartment.

Everything's in order.

Emilie holding empty alcohol bottles is heading for the kitchenette.

The main door swings open. Karim holding a bottle of champagne comes in. Closes the door behind him. Goes directly toward Emilie. Puts the bottle down on the kitchenette counter.

Karim scans the room. Impressed.

KARIM
Oh. Wrong floor. Sorry.

EMILIE
Come on Karim. Just a little clean-up. No biggie.

KARIM
What happened?

EMILIE
Shut up.

KARIM
You're right. Whatever. And...
cheers!

Greg removes the foil capsule covering the champagne bottle.

EMILIE
Nope, no cheers. Thank you.

KARIM
What?

EMILIE
No champagne for me.

KARIM
Why?

EMILIE
I don't drink alcohol... anymore.

KARIM
Oh I see. Good. Very good.
(beat)
What's going on?

EMILIE
Nothing. I've made some decisions.
That's all.

KARIM
You've made some decisions, hun?
Just like that?

EMILIE
Yep.

KARIM
Thanks for bullshitting me.

Emilie's cellphone RINGS. She goes to her desk.

EMILIE
Give me a minute.

Grabs her cellphone. Answers.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Hi Ray. How are you? *(a time)*
Rather unexpected, yes. You didn't
sound very enthusiastic on the
plane. *(a time)* Alright. I was
wrong. *(a time)* Yep. That would be
fine. *(a time)* I'll be ready. Bye.

Emilie puts the phone down. Goes to the bathroom.

KARIM
And...?

EMILIE
What?

KARIM
Why did you make these --

EMILIE
You want to know about my phone
conversation.

KARIM
No.

EMILIE
It was Ray.

KARIM
Yes, I heard. What did he want?

EMILIE
Didn't you hear?

KARIM
Not that part.

EMILIE
You see.

KARIM
What?

EMILIE
You're talking about my phone
conversation with Ray. You don't
really care about me.

KARIM
You are so childish.

EMILIE
And then? This is where your fun
begins.

Emilie smiles.

KARIM
Well.
(beat)
Probably yes.

EMILIE
Ray's coming. He invited me out to
dinner.

Emilie closes the bathroom door.

Karim grabs the bottle of champagne.

KARIM

I don't even like champagne.

He puts the bottle down on the counter.

EXT. AN ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A cosy little restaurant.

Behind the bay window Ray and Emilie are sitting at a table. Eating, talking, laughing, smiling.

INT. AN ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ray and Emilie still sitting at a table. Enjoying their food.

EMILIE

And... it really looks like a very expensive place.

RAY

Who cares.

EMILIE

I do.

RAY

I'm inviting you.

EMILIE

Of course you are.

RAY

There's no need to worry, then.

EMILIE

There's no need to become penniless.

Ray chuckles.

RAY

I'll be alright.

Ray stares down at his plate. Awkward moment.

EMILIE

I quit smoking, I quit drinking and I quit messing around.

RAY

Big changes.

EMILIE

It was something I really wanted to do. Deeply. Like some kind of vital need. Somehow it's fun.

RAY

A new life.

EMILIE

Exactly. A new life.

RAY

I know the feeling.

EMILIE

Really?

RAY

I'm here, with you.

EMILIE

So... what is it?

RAY

Honestly? Well... I would say karma and fate.

Ray sighs. Nervously rubs his hands together.

RAY (CONT'D)

Do we really need each other?

EMILIE

Let's keep in touch.

RAY

And they lived happily ever after?

Emilie laughs.

EMILIE

Is it a deal?

RAY

It's a deal.

EMILIE

Just and only to see what's going on, right?

RAY

Sure. What else?

Emilie grabs her glass. Ray does the same. They clink their glasses.

EXT. AN ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Behind the bay window Ray and Emilie are still eating, talking, laughing, smiling.

RAY (V.O.)
 What is it? Are we talking about
 karma, fate, true random events,
 reality without logic? What do you
 think?

We can hear Ray and Emilie KISSING each other. The scene we are watching is not the one we are HEARING.

EMILIE (V.O.)
 Is it relevant? How it happened
 doesn't matter...

BLACK SCREEN

CUT TO:

INT. A MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

EMILIE (V.O.)
 ... What matters is what is
 happening to us right now...

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN :

A cheap hotel room.

Ray and Emilie are cuddling in bed. Next to them the wheelchair is buried under a pile of clothes mixing Ray's and Emilie's.

EMILIE
 ...because to know how it happened
 won't change what is happening.

RAY
 Good point.

They kiss again.

EMILIE

Are you the kind of guy to only have sex in a motel room?

RAY

What? No.

EMILIE

Well.

RAY

Oh because we are right now in a motel room, you think that --

EMILIE

Obviously.

RAY

Let's call it my "time to think and see what's coming next" home or if you prefer my temporary home.

EMILIE

What? You are living here?

RAY

Yes.

EMILIE

I don't get it. Aren't you in the army?

RAY

Let's say that I'm currently "in-between jobs".

EMILIE

You quit? You can't quit the army.

RAY

I didn't say that.

Emilie sighs. Frustrated.

EMILIE

Ray!

RAY

For the moment I'm considered as a "AWOL". But if they catch me, it will change for the term "deserter".

EMILIE

AWOL?

RAY

"Absent without leave" which clearly means "unauthorized absence".

EMILIE

Are you serious?

RAY

Absolutely young lady.

EMILIE

That's intense.

RAY

You... just happened in my life.

EMILIE

Happened...

Emilie smiles. Kisses Ray.

BLACK SCREEN.

CROSSFADE TO :

INT. EMILIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

KARIM (V.O.)

You can trust me. I'll do it.

BLACK SCREEN.

Back to Emilie's apartment.

Karim is playing a video game -a first person shooter- on Emilie's computer. Controlling his character through an apocalyptic landscape. He's part of a team.

He's using a headset to communicate via the internet system.

KARIM

(on the headset)

I tell you! I can do it!

On the desk Emilie's cellphone RINGS.

KARIM (CONT'D)

(on the headset)

Just my phone. *(a time)* Who cares!

(MORE)

KARIM (CONT'D)

Let's move on. *(a time)* Yep let's go inside that building. *(a time)* Stop trolling me with my phone for... Oh no, oh no! *(a time)* This is an ambush guys. Sniper on the roof! Shoot dammit! *(a time)* Fuck it!

Karim puts down his headset angrily. Answers the phone.

KARIM (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Yeah! *(a time-soothing)* Yep, Ray. One second.

Karim puts the cellphone on the desk.

KARIM (CONT'D)

Emilie! Ray's on the phone!

The bathroom door swings open. Emilie moves her wheelchair to the desk. Grabs her cellphone.

EMILIE

(on the phone)

Hi Ray. *(a time)* Sure. *(a time)* Yep, seven o'clock will be fine. *(a time)* I'll see you later then. Bye.

Emilie turns off her cellphone.

Karim puts his headset back on. Giving Emilie an accusatory look.

EMILIE (CONT'D)

What?

KARIM

Five days Emilie.

EMILIE

Five days? Five days what?

KARIM

It's been five days since the last time you get involved in your job.

EMILIE

I'm taking a break. What's wrong with that?

KARIM

You never take a break.

EMILIE

And then?

KARIM

Just saying.

(beat)

I don't want you to be
disappointed. That's all.

Emilie moves her wheelchair to the main door.

EMILIE

I need to go to the convenience
store.

KARIM

I know you Emilie.

Emilie freezes.

EMILIE

You know me? What the... What are
you talking about?

KARIM

Please be careful, ok?

EMILIE

Karim, you are my best friend. I
appreciate what you are trying to
do here, but let me being
disappointed if I have to.

(beat)

I'm happy, Karim. For the first
time in a long time I'm living in
the moment.

KARIM

But --

EMILIE

But I have to go to the convenience
store.

KARIM

Yep.

EMILIE

Excellent.

Emilie reaches the door. Opens it. Leaves.

Karim stares blankly at the main door.

On the computer screen behind him another character appears. Shooting at him.

Karim startles. Turns around just in time to witness his own character death.

KARIM

(on the headset)

I don't know! Some dude just killed me. *(a time)* No, no, it's not my fault. *(a time)* I know that I wasn't doing anything in-game. I had a very important conversation with my friend, and... *(a time)* What? Are you serious? You can't... *(a time)* Damn it!

Karim removes his headset. Frustrated. Turn off his computer.

KARIM (CONT'D)

It's all bullshit!

Karim stands up. Rushes to the door. Opens it. Gets out. Slamming the door behind him.

EXT. LOS-ANGELES / DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

A convenience store on the corner of two streets.

The owner (70's) is reading a magazine behind the counter.

Three gangsta, CARLOS COSTA (20), RAMON PERREIRA (20) and CAINE LAWSON (21) are walking down the street to the convenience store.

CAINE

Yo Carlos! What the fuck are we doin' here?

(beat)

I'm bored n' I'm pissed off, dawg!

CARLOS

What do we need?

RAMON

My bed, dawg. I'm so fuckin' tired. If I don't git my eight hours of sleep I can't --

CAINE

Shut the fuck up! Whiney fuck.

CARLOS
What the fuck! Chill out dawg.

CAINE
Fuck yo' Carlos.

Carlos pulls a gun out of his pants.

CARLOS
And what bout' dat, bitch!

CAINE
What the fuck!

RAMON
Wow! Nice piece, man! Can I touch it, man? I want to touch it. Dat's the cop's gun, right? I want to touch it! Let me handle it man! No, no, I want to pull the trigger, man! Oh my. Let me pull the trigger, man! Just let me --

CARLOS
Just shut the fuck up! Shut... the... fuck... up! You're fuckin' "stupid" or what!

CAINE
Ok we are three dudes with one gun. So who's "stupid"?

CARLOS
What? What did yo' say?

CAINE
Do you have a plan or somethin'? You have a gun, good for yo'. But what's the fuckin' idea? Why did you ask me and Ramon to come wit yo'? What's for?

CARLOS
Don't yo' git it, dawg! We need to prove Mr Vega dat he can trust us, yo' know what I'm sayin'?

CAINE
And we just have one gun?

CARLOS
We don't need more than one.

CAINE

Fo' what? To rob dat fuckin' convenience store? Yo' really thing it'll impressed Mr Vega? Dat's fuckin' stupid, bro!

Carlos points his gun at the convenience store.

CARLOS

Ova' there, muthafucka! With her money, it'll be enough to show Mr Vega how fuckin' leet we are!

Caine and Ramon look in the direction Carlos is showing.

Emilie is moving her wheelchair toward the front door of the convenience store.

CAINE

What? What's wrong wit yo'? She's a fuckin' cripple!

CARLOS

Now or never.

CAINE

What? What?

Carlos followed by Ramon runs toward Emilie.

CAINE (CONT'D)

Goddammit!

Caine rushes after them.

EXT. LOS-ANGELES / DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Emilie is heading for the front door of the convenience store. Reaches it.

A stampede behind her.

Emilie stops. Tries to turn her head. GETS HIT IN THE HEAD.

CARLOS

Don't fuckin' look at me! You fuckin' retarded!

Emilie rubs the back of her head. Blood.

She looks up at the gun pointed at her. Carlos is holding it. Ramon and Caine standing beside him.

Emilie sighs. Annoyed but not afraid.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
How can you look at yourself in a
fuckin' mirror and don't feel sick!

EMILIE
What about you fuck face?

Carlos hands Ramon his gun.

Ramon grabs the gun. Amazed.

CARLOS
What did you say? What you fuckin'
piece of shit have just said to me?

EMILIE
Well I --

Carlos HITS Emilie in the face. PUNCHING HER relentlessly.

CARLOS
So you want to die! Right, dat's
what you want, you fucking freak!

CAINE
Carlos!

Carlos stops. Turns to face Caine.

CARLOS
What? What Caine?

Emilie spits out some blood.

CAINE
What are yo' doin', man?

CARLOS
What's your fuckin' problem?

CAINE
Fuck man! Dat's fuckin' insane. Dat
woman --

CARLOS
What? A woman? Dis is not a fuckin'
woman!

CAINE
Fuck yo', dawg! I don't want to go
to jail.

CARLOS
Yo're a fuckin' pussy, Caine!

CAINE
Just take her fuckin' money.

Carlos stares at Caine. Irritated.

CAINE (CONT'D)
Come on, dawg!

CARLOS
(pointing his finger at
him)
You... you --

CAINE
Just fuckin' do it man.

Carlos searches her. Find her wallet.

EXT. LOS-ANGELES / DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Karim is walking down the street.

KARIM
Bullshit. All bullshit.

Karim turns around the corner of a building. The convenience store is just ahead.

KARIM (CONT'D)
God she's so stubborn sometimes.
That's so --

Karim freezes. Seeing Emilie surrounded by Ramon, Carlos and Caine. Her face is bloody and swollen.

Karim is horrified.

KARIM (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey!
(beat)
Stop!

Karim runs at them.

A GUNSHOT echoes in the night.

EXT. LOS-ANGELES / DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Back to Emilie's assault.

Carlos proudly shows Ramon and Caine the wallet.
Overexaggerated.

CARLOS
Who's the fuckin' boss here!

CAINE
Dat's just a fuckin' wallet, bro.

CARLOS
No, dat's how we're going to earn
Mr Vega's trust, dawg. Dat. Dat's
something!

CAINE
If you say so.

CARLOS
What?

CAINE
Dat's just a fuckin' wallet! Who
fuckin' cares?

CARLOS
Fuck yo'! Wit all the money we'll
get from the convenience store, Mr
Vega will --

KARIM (O.S.)
Hey! Hey!
(beat)
Stop!

Carlos, Caine and Ramon turn their head toward the new
uninvited guest. Karim is running at them.

CARLOS
What the --

BANG! A GUN SHOT!

Karim stops running. Hands over his chest. He collapses.

CAINE
What the fuck, Ramon! What the
fuck? Oh my god, you just... What's
wrong wit yo', man ? Why did you...
Oh my fuckin' god!

CARLOS
We are so fucked up now! Ramon, you
"stoopido"! "Stoopido"!

Ramon DROPS THE GUN.

RAMON

Sorry bro. I didn't mean to kill him.

CAINE

Shut the fuck up! Shut... the fuck... up, Ramon!

CARLOS

Caine. Bro. What do we do?

CAINE

Oh now you are fuckin' askin' for my fuckin' opinion!

The front door of the convenience BURSTS OPEN. The owner gets out with a shotgun. OPENS FIRE.

Ramon, Caine and Carlos run away as fast as they can.

The owner shoots Carlos in the back. He falls down.

EMILIE

Karim? Karim?

Carlos lays on the ground. Motionless. Eyes wide-open in terror.

CARLOS

What's the fuck goin' on? I can't feel my back. I can't feel my fuckin' legs! What's the fuck!

The owner of the shop walks toward Emilie.

THE OWNER

You piece of shit! You just shut up!

EMILIE

(crying)

Sir? Please. Can you tell me if my friend is ok? Is he ok? Please. Is he ok?

THE OWNER

I just called 911, Ma'am. They'll be here shortly.

EMILIE

(crying)

Please tell me that he is ok.

A short distance away is Karim's dead corpse. His eyes are glassy, lifeless.

EMILIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Please, sir. Is my friend ok? Is he ok?

Sirens are ECHOING through the streets.

BLACK SCREEN.

EMILIE (V.O.)
Please sir, tell me he's ok.
Please.

CROSSFADE TO:

INT. CORRIDOR / EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - DAY

BLACK SCREEN.

An ambulance's siren stops.

A corridor overflowing with patients and medical staff. Ray is working his way through the crowd.

Ray goes directly to a room. Room 1612.

He knocks at the door. Opens it. Enters.

INT. ROOM 1612 / EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - DAY

A hospital room.

Emilie is wearing a hospital gown. Sitting on her bed. Her face covered with stitches and bruises.

Two police officers in uniform. One holding a note-pad is taking notes.

Behind them the door is slowly opening. Ray enters the room.

THE POLICE OFFICER WITH A NOTE-PAD
Thank you Ma'am. We'll contact you
in a couple of days.

The two police officers leave.

Ray comes closer to the bed.

RAY
So. What's your decision?

EMILIE
What do you think?

RAY
It's your decision.

Tears are running down Emilie's cheeks. Blank expression.

RAY (CONT'D)
To express his feelings is a very good thing. Sometimes we, humans, need to let it all out.

EMILIE
Is it supposed to help me make the right decision?

RAY
Yes, most likely.

Emilie bursts into tears.

EMILIE
Hope doesn't exist, Ray. We all fail at some point in life. We all suffer.

RAY
And?

EMILIE
And I'm tired of falling down, Ray. I'm feeling... overwhelmed.

RAY
We all fall down. The whole world's falling down, right?

Emilie sighs.

EMILIE
I... I don't know.

RAY
Well, I would say it holds water.

EMILIE
What? Are you sarcastic?

RAY
Not at all. I totally agree with you.

EMILIE

But?

RAY

There's no "but". It's just how you see things.

EMILIE

What do you mean?

RAY

Very recently I realized what I was doing wrong for all these years. Even if I didn't believe in life, and that's still the case, I didn't live it.

EMILIE

What's the point?

RAY

There's no point but to live, whatever the way we interpret our lives or what we do or don't achieve. All that doesn't matter. It's just about living. The will to live.

EMILIE

The will to live.

Ray goes to the closet. Opens it. Grabs her clothes.

RAY

Let's go.

EMILIE

What?

RAY

We go to the airport, pick a flight to a random international destination and start a new life.

EMILIE

What?

RAY

It's our moment. It's now.

EMILIE

But aren't you a deserter?

RAY

Another good reason for leaving.

EMILIE
And what about the police?

RAY
Are you a criminal?

EMILIE
No, but --

RAY
None of your business then.

EMILIE
I'm not sure.

RAY
Our moment Emilie.
(beat)
Let's just make it happen.

EMILIE
Follow your heart, right?

BLACK SCREEN.

CROSSFADE TO:

EXT. LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

BLACK SCREEN.

SUPERIMPOSE : LOS-ANGELES, 2 days later *"as life is and as fate dictates"*

In the early morning hours. The parking lot is full.
Overcrowded.

Cabs lining up.

A SUV approaches. Stops at the end of the line.

INT. THE SUV - DAY

Three young "Neo-Nazi". Behind the wheel DAVON (35). Next to him STEVE -now around (30)- having the silver lightning bolt necklace from Ray's daydream. On the back seat DEXTER (32) wearing a baggage handler uniform, two suitcases at his feet.

STEVE
So you know exactly what to do
Dexter? Right? No improvisation on
the way... right?

DEXTER
What do you think, captain obvious!

STEVE
They gave us an opportunity. We
can't screw up.

DEXTER
And it has to be me? The stupid guy
ruining the whole plan?

STEVE
Definitely.

DEXTER
Fuck you Steve! I'm not a fucking
retard.

STEVE
Good. Good for you. Good for us.
You are the one delivering the
package. We are the ones creating a
diversion.
(beat)
Don't fuck up, Dexter.

DEXTER
What the fuck is --

DAVON
Don't fucking kill anyone, man.

STEVE
We are here only for business,
Dexter. Stick to the plan.

DEXTER
You don't trust me, do you, Steve?

STEVE
Which is precisely why we are
arguing right now.

DAVON
Listen man. You just don't fucking
kill anyone and everything's going
to be fine. Simple as that.

DEXTER
Fuck you too, Davon. You guys are
so...

Dexter sighs. Exasperated.

Dexter hastily grabs the two suitcases. Opens the door.
Storms out of the car.

DAVON

Let's hope he won't screw up.

STEVE

No one but him was available,
anyway. So...

A taxi cab passes by the SUV.

It moves in the free parking spot in front of the SUV.

The driver gets out of the vehicle. Ray's doing the same from
the right rear door.

The driver opens the trunk. Grabs Emilie's wheelchair.
Unfolds it.

Ray is helping Emilie out of the car.

The taxi driver goes around the cab. Gives Ray a helping
hand.

DAVON

Yeah. Too late anyway.

EXT. LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Ray and Emilie are moving toward the main entrance.

The taxi cab leaves.

The SUV moves into the empty space.

Steve and Davon get out of the car. Going toward the airport
main entrance.

Ray and Emilie reach the doors. Disappearing into the crowd.

INT. THE BAGGAGE HANDLING SYSTEM / LOS-ANGELES AIRPORT - DAY

The baggage handling system. Dozens of maintenance workers,
baggage cart over-stuffed... Super busy.

The first section. GUS (42) is all by himself. Operating a
dispatching machine.

Dexter, holding his two suitcases, is right behind him.
Walking toward him. Scowling at him.

Gus suddenly turns around.

Dexter stops. Smiles.

Gus turns off the machine.

GUS

Ah! The new guy. You're late, son.

DEXTER

Traffic jam.

GUS

Well, this is something you'll have to anticipate next time. Our boss hate late people.

DEXTER

Ok.

GUS

Alright. Now your job is to --

Gus interrupts himself. Noticing the two suitcases Dexter is holding.

DEXTER

To do... what?

GUS

Son...

(pointing at the
suitcases)

What is that?

DEXTER

Oh.

GUS

Why did you bring two suitcases to the job?

DEXTER

I don't think you told me your name.

GUS

Gus.

DEXTER

Gus you are asking too many questions.

GUS

What?

Dexter pulls out a gun. Points it at Gus.

DEXTER

Too bad.

Dexter goes to the dispatching machine.

GUS

Wait. What? No. That's insane. Are you really going to kill me because I noticed you were carrying two suitcases?

Dexter turns on the dispatching machine.

GUS (CONT'D)

Son, you don't have to --

A GUNSHOT. Muffled by the machine noises.

Gus falls down. Dead. A bullet wound in the forehead.

Dexter looks around. Anxious. Sees Monsieur Klein coming toward him. A gun in his right hand.

MONSIEUR KLEIN

I haven't killed anybody since 1984.

DEXTER

Wow! That was so... I like you already. You are my kind of --

MONSIEUR KLEIN

The suitcases?

DEXTER

Yep.

Dexter puts down the two suitcases.

MONSIEUR KLEIN

Good lord.

Monsieur Klein crouches down. Opens the one on his right. All packed with transparent bags filled with a thick blue powder.

MONSIEUR KLEIN (CONT'D)

These two suitcases are very noticeable.

He opens the one on his left. Same content.

MONSIEUR KLEIN (CONT'D)
I hate the idea of killing people.
Even if it's part of the job.

Monsieur Klein stands up.

DEXTER
Not really a big deal for me.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
Which is why I despise people like
you. Amateurs never last long.

DEXTER
What? What the fuck --

Monsieur Klein is a pro. A quick shot straight to the head.

Dexter falls down. Dead.

Standing between the two dead bodies, Monsieur Klein reaches into the inside pocket of his jacket. Takes out his cell phone.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
What a fucking mess.

He kicks Gus's dead body.

Monsieur Klein pushes a button on his cell phone.

MONSIEUR KLEIN (CONT'D)
(on the cell phone)
Yes Ma'am. I'm at the airport. *(a time)* Unprofessional. *(a time)* It's already done. I took care of it. I'll make sure the package reaches its final destination.
(beat)
That being said, if the diversion doesn't work out the whole plan is -
- *(a time)* Well, Ma'am there's a member of your team just in front of me and he's not in very good shape. We need to make sure everyone is doing their part. This is crucial for the success of -- *(a time)* Thank you.

Monsieur Klein turns off his cellphone.

He grabs Dexter's dead body under the armpits. Dragging it across the floor.

INT. LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Near the departure area. Overcrowded.

Two young police officers JIMMY (25) and SAM (28) are walking around.

JIMMY
What this is about?

SAM
What do you think genius?

JIMMY
Don't be so moody, man.

SAM
Are you for real?

Steve and Davon are walking hastily in Sam and Jimmy's direction.

Sam notices them.

SAM (CONT'D)
Moody?
(beat)
Who's using the word moody anyway?

JIMMY
Right.
(chuckles)
Anyway. What is it Sam?

SAM
I'm bored Jimmy. I need some action. We need some action.

JIMMY
I like it here. Why would I need --

SAM
Oh come on, Jimmy! Don't you want to go after real gangstas, drug dealers, car stealers and others shit heads?

JIMMY
No.
(sighs)
(MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)

This is annoying you know. You have to stop saying the same shit over and over again like a broken record. I mean we're working together man and --

Sam points his finger at Steve and Davon.

SAM

I don't like these guys.

Jimmy sighs. Exasperated.

JIMMY

Seriously?

(beat)

You can't just interrogate people because of their appearances. That's --

SAM

Jimmy, I have a feeling. These two guys, they just don't fit.

JIMMY

They just don't fit? The Military Police asked us to look for a deserter, not two skinheads or whoever they really are.

SAM

The MPs are everywhere in the airport, looking for this Colonel right now. And...

(beat)

I don't like them.

Behind them Ray and Emilie are moving toward a boarding area.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Steve and Davon)

Hey guys. Do you have a moment?

Steve and Davon walk toward the two police officers.

INT. LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT / SECURITY CHECKPOINT - DAY

Two military police officers are standing next to a security checkpoint.

People are lining up to enter the security-screening checkpoint. Holding their boarding pass.

Ray is standing right behind Emilie in her wheelchair. Travel documents in her hands.

They are in third position.

A BARKER (30's), a security person in fact, walks up and down the line BARKING INFORMATIONS.

THE BARKER

You should have your boarding pass and valid photo identification out and available for inspection. Your laptop, if you possess one, should be out of your bag for x-ray inspection. You are only entitled to pass through security with no more than 3oz of liquids in each container. These containers must be in one single one-quart bag. Only one bag per person.

The line moves forward. They are in second position. Not so far from the "ID CHECKER" GUY (30's).

EMILIE

You are stressed out. Don't stress out.

RAY

How in heaven do you know that? I'm standing right behind you.

EMILIE

It's discernible, and that's not good at all.

RAY

Two Military Police officers are standing in the left corner and the checkpoint is just ahead. I don't feel very comfy right now.

EMILIE

Look confident. Act confident. If you do so, Military Police won't recognize you. Trust me on that one. And for the checkpoint, I'm a formidable ID faker.

Ray sighs.

RAY

Ok.

EMILIE

And here we go.

The line moves forward. They are now standing in front of the "ID Checker" guy.

THE ID CHECKER

Sir, Ma'am. May I see your boarding pass, passport or driver's license and your travel documents?

Emilie hands him the travel documents.

The "ID checker" guys grabs them. Checks them. Looking at Emilie. Looking at Ray.

THE ID CHECKER (CONT'D)

Mister Flint under the special circumstances we are facing here, I will explain to you the way we will proceed for the inspection before you go aboard flight Q417 to Kingston Jamaica.

RAY

Ok.

The "ID checker" looks at Ray suspiciously.

THE ID CHECKER

It's not that complicated, Mister Flint.

RAY

Ok.

EMILIE

Breath and relax, mister Flint. Everything is going well so far.

INT. LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

The two police officers, Sam and Jimmy, are with Steve and Davon. Sam is verifying their identity.

He gives them back their passports.

SAM

So you two, "the super racist guys", are going to Kingston capital city of Jamaica?

STEVE

Yep. Absolutely.

DAVON

"Super racists guys"? Really? You are a cop. You can't --

STEVE

Time has passed and we have changed. Now we seek to redeem ourselves, to understand others point of view. And for that we are performing a pilgrimage. Our own pilgrimage.

SAM

Your own pilgrimage? Did you hear that Jimmy?

JIMMY

I did Sam.

SAM

So correct me if I'm wrong, but what you are saying here is that you two boneheads are not shithead racist piece of shit anymore, that you feel bad about all the stupid things you did in your miserable lives and need to wash your soul.

STEVE

Well you know --

SAM

I know that you are full of shit, bonehead. So what's going on here?

STEVE

And then?

SAM

What?

STEVE

Maybe you are right but you can't prove anything.

(beat)

Honestly what's the point?

SAM

Yeah. Whatever you are saying. I ain't fucking stupid. Something's --

STEVE

Can we go now? Are we done?

Sam stares at Steve. Irritated.

He nods in reluctant approval.

STEVE (CONT'D)

See you next life, buddy.

Steve and Davon walk away. Disappearing into the crowd.

SAM

They don't fit.

JIMMY

Kingston, Jamaica?

SAM

They don't fit.

INT. THE BAGGAGE HANDLING SYSTEM / LOS-ANGELES AIRPORT - DAY

Back to the baggage handling system. Another section.

A baggage carousel is running smoothly.

BEN (66) is driving a baggage tow tractor.

He catches a glimpse of something unusual. Stops. Gets off the tow tractor. Walks quickly.

BEN

(waving)

Hey! You!... Hey!

INT. THE BAGGAGE HANDLING SYSTEM / LOS-ANGELES AIRPORT - DAY

Monsieur Klein, wearing a baggage handler uniform, is standing over the open trunk of a luxury car. Two dead bodies inside it, Dexter's and Gus's. Twisted in an horrific position to fit into the small space.

At his feet the two suitcases with bag tags showing the flight identification : "K714 Moscow". Beside them two large bags with the "Air Jamaica" logo. One of them opened, reveals its content : two guns and a good amount of C4 plastic explosive.

Monsieur Klein zips the bag closed.

BEN (O.S.)
Hey! You!... Hey!

Monsieur Klein goes to the trunk. Closes it.

He turns around to face Ben coming at him. Furious.

BEN (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

Ben stops. Standing before Monsieur Klein.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
I beg your pardon?

BEN
This is a restricted area. You
can't be here! And you can't --

Ben notices Monsieur Klein's uniform.

BEN (CONT'D)
Oh. I didn't see your uniform. You
are the new guy, right?

MONSIEUR KLEIN
I am.

BEN
Fester.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
Dexter.

BEN
Alright. Dexter. Good.
(beat)
You can't park your car here,
Dexter.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
I was late and --

BEN
No. You have to move it to the
parking lot.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
Alright.

BEN
(pointing at the bags and
suitcases)
What's this?

Ben steps forward to take a closer look.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
I just found them and --

BEN
Oh my god! These bags are for the
flight personnel aboard the Q417
Kingston.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
And? Is it bad?

BEN
Well, they are loading it right
now.

Ben grabs the two bags.

BEN (CONT'D)
Ok. I'll bring them directly to the
aircraft. I may still have a
chance.

Ben turns around.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
What about the suitcases?

Ben sighs. Irritated.

BEN
They are supposed to go with the
K714 Moscow.

Ben puts the bags down. Comes back to Monsieur Klein.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
And?

Ben sighs. Defeated.

BEN
The K714 Moscow will take off right
after the Q417 Kingston. Which
means that we have no time with the
security procedures. I guess I'll
have to bring them with me as well.
Then drop them into the aircraft
hold. But then...
(beat)
God. There's no time.

MONSIEUR KLEIN

What?

BEN

We don't know what's inside. It's against --

MONSIEUR KLEIN

No worries. I've already checked them. Clothes and only clothes.

BEN

Really? You have opened them?

MONSIEUR KLEIN

I have a solid background. I'm the new guy, it's true. But I know my job.

BEN

Good. I have no choice but to trust you anyway. Ok, let me get the tow tractor.

MONSIEUR KLEIN

Sure.

Ben grabs the bags.

BEN

And move your car!

He walks away.

MONSIEUR KLEIN

Right now.

Monsieur Klein reaches into his right pants pocket. Pulls out his cellphone.

Walking toward his car.

AN ENGINE NOISE IS GETTING LOUDER.

INT. AIRPLANE / Q417 KINGSTON - DAY

The TURBOJET ENGINES NOISE.

An airplane cabin.

Through a window the airstrip is unfolding. Taking off.

By the window is Ray. Next to him, Emilie.

EMILIE

Self-confidence is the key. If you let people believe that you have perfect self-control, no-one is going to pay attention to you. That's how it is since the beginning of times, partner!

Ray chuckles.

RAY

Partner.

Ray kisses Emilie passionately. Pure love between them.

Someone bumps into Ray's shoulder.

Ray turns his head. Steve is rushing down the corridor. A FEMALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT (23) is running after him.

THE FEMALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sir! Sir you need to go back to your seat. Sir! Sir!

Steve stops. Looks around. Meets Ray's eyes.

Ray notices the silver lightning bolt necklace around Steve's neck. Staring at it.

MEMORY IMAGE : Steve (7), his face covered with burn scars, is standing before him. The silver lightning bolt necklace around his neck.

THE FEMALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Sir! Sir!

Steve frowns.

THE FEMALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

You need to go back to your seat!

Steve turns around. Resumes walking down the corridor. The female flight attendant right behind him.

RAY

It's over.

EMILIE

What?

Ray looks into Emilie's eyes. He's mentally defeated. She knows.

RAY
Death is upon us.

EMILIE
What? Is it a bad joke?

RAY
No, Emilie. It's not. It's full
circle.

Through the window, the airstrip is far below.

EXT. PARKING LOT / LOS-ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

The main parking lot.

Monsieur Klein is leaning against a hatchback.

An airplane flying away.

Monsieur Klein is holding his cellphone.

MONSIEUR KLEIN
(on the cellphone)
The package is on his way to
Moscow. *(a time)* Yes Ma'am. They
are right now, as we speak doing
their part on the flight to
Kingston. *(a time)* Yes. *(a time)*
You know how to contact me. As
usual, it has been a pleasure
working with you Ma'am.

Monsieur Klein looks up at the sky.

The airplane is no more than a small spot.

Monsieur Klein turns his attention back to his cellphone.
Writing an SMS.

INT. AIRPLANE / Q417 KINGSTON - DAY

Back to the flight Q417 to Kingston.

The cockpit door is open. Davon is standing in the doorway.
Pointing a gun at the two airline pilots.

At his feet a bag with the "Air Jamaica" logo. Wide open.
Full of C-4 plastic explosive.

Steve is holding the female flight attendant hostage.
Pointing a gun at her head.

DAVON

Damn man! How long is this going to take? Can we just --

STEVE

Wait.

DAVON

Come on man. Let's do our shit. I mean this is stupid. We have to --

A BEEPING SOUND. Steve reaches into his right pants pocket. Pulls out his cellphone. Looking at it.

He turns off his cellphone. Puts it back into his pocket.

Steve stares at Davon. Nods.

DAVON (CONT'D)

Finally.

Steve releases the female flight attendant.

Holding his gun in his right hand, he walks down the aisle.

STEVE

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please.

A WAVE OF PANIC sweeps through the cabin.

Steve stops. Standing next to Ray and Emilie's seats.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Here's what you people are dealing with.

Steve turns his head toward Ray. Staring at him.

EMILIE

Ray. What --

Steve points his gun at Ray.

EMILIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god! Don't shoot. Please. Just... Whatever you --

RAY

I'm sorry.

(beat)

I should have --

EMILIE
What?

STEVE
No.
(beat)
You're not sorry.

They are staring at each other. Time dragging.

EMILIE
You know this man? Ray? How do you -
-

STEVE
You don't know me.

RAY
You're right.
(beat)
I don't know you. I thought I did.

Steve OPENS fire. Shooting Ray in the head. Blood splattering all over Emilie's face.

Again a WAVE OF PANIC sweeps trough the cabin.

Emilie is in shock. Puts her right hand on Ray's left shoulder. Crying.

EMILIE
I love you. I...

Emilie looks up at Steve. Staring. Time dragging.

EMILIE (CONT'D)
Why?

Steve sighs. Scanning the cabin.

STEVE
Because that's who I am.

Steve meets Emilie's eyes. Points his gun at her.

BLACK SCREEN.

A GUNSHOT.

FADE OUT.

- THE END -

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

