

OPEN YOUR MIND

PROLOGUE

Written by
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FADE IN:

A WHITE CEILING...

... splattered with blood.

Droplets of blood fall down towards us... DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...

SUPER TITLE: OPEN YOUR MIND

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. STATE PENITENTIARY- DAY

An armed GUARD swings open heavy wooden doors.

RICK BRANNON, early forties, with unkempt graying hair steps out of the doorway and blinks into bright sunlight. His face is pale, his eyes deep and sunken. He wears loose slacks and a checked shirt.

A 1970s Cadillac is parked at the roadside. Beyond it, in a haze of heat, the rugged desert stretches as far as the eye can see.

LEX WILLARD, early 20s, leans against the bonnet of the car. Her slender frame accentuated by her languid stance. She wears a tight white t-shirt and a short denim skirt that shows off skinny white legs. A woolen hat covers most of her blonde shoulder-length hair.

She walks awkwardly towards Brannon.

LEX

Rick Brannon?

He nods. They shake hands.

LEX

I'm Lex.

Brannon looks at her curiously.

BRANNON

I wasn't expecting to be

picked up.

LEX
Rufus sent me.

BRANNON
Rufus?

LEX
You guys used to be friends,
right?

BRANNON
(laughs)
He told you we were friends?
That's rich.

LEX
Look, do you wanna ride or not? I
came a long way to come get you.

Brannon looks around at the barren terrain, then back at
Lex.

BRANNON
Sure beats walkin'.

INT. CADILLAC (DRIVING)- DAY

The Cadillac speeds along a desert road.

Brannon stares out at the desert, a distant look in his
eyes.

LEX
Fourteen years, huh?

Brannon snaps out of his trance, looks at her, nods.

LEX
Jesus, I was, what, seven years
old when you went inside?

Brannon looks away. A moment passes.

LEX

Rufus talks about you a lot,
y'know.

BRANNON

Funny how he never came to visit.

LEX

He wanted to, believe me. He
said you wouldn't want to see
him anyway.

BRANNON

You know how many visitors I had
in all those years? Not a single
one.

Lex laughs nervously. Brannon looks at her. Her face
flushes.

LEX

I'm sorry, it must have been awful.

BRANNON

I got used to it.

LEX

Feels good to be out though, right?

Brannon shrugs.

BRANNON

I had friends in there. Out
here... I got nothin'.

LEX

Rufus says he'll fix you up with
some work and a place to stay.
Says it's the least he can do.

BRANNON

What makes him think I want his
help?

LEX

He feels bad about what happened. A

lot's changed since you went away.
He's in a position to help you now.

BRANNON

Are we even talking about the
same guy?

LEX

Rufus has changed. He's a good
man. He helps people.

BRANNON

He was only ever interested in
helping himself. What does he
want from me?

LEX

To make amends, I guess. I
remember when we first met, he
changed my life. I'll never
forget that.

Brannon lets out a bitter laugh. Looks down at his needle-
scarred arm.

BRANNON

He changed my life too. It aint
nothin' to be proud of, kid.

LEX

You should have seen me back then.
I was... wild, reckless, I did a lot
of stupid things. Shit, I even
tried to kill myself. Rufus helped
me through it. I owe him everything.

BRANNON

Yeah, well I don't want his help.

Lex looks him up and down.

LEX

Trust me. You *need* his help.

BRANNON

Yeah, like a hole in the head.

Lex laughs.

EXT. HIGHWAY- DAY

The Cadillac pulls over into a lay by.

INT. CADILLAC

Lex kills the ignition, turns to Brannon and smiles.

BRANNON

What's this?

She reaches into his lap and unzips his fly. Brannon just looks at her.

LEX

It's 100 miles to Rufus' place
and I aint driving another inch
until you lighten up. So sit
back and relax, cowboy.

She thrusts her head into his lap.

Brannon is powerless to resist. He leans back and shuts his eyes. His face contorts in ecstasy as Lex's head rises and falls in his lap.

He opens his eyes and looks out the window. Focuses on a billboard at the side of the highway. It depicts a bikini-clad woman sunbathing on a tropical beach. The slogan reads "Open your mind to new horizons"

Brannon smiles and shuts his eyes.

EXT. HIGHWAY- LATER

The Cadillac speeds along the highway.

INT. CADILLAC

60'S ROCK MUSIC plays on the radio.

Lex smokes a joint, taps the steering wheel in time with the music.

Brannon sleeps. Lex looks at him and smiles.

A dazzling red and gold sunset fills the horizon.

INT. APARTMENT- NIGHT

A metal corkscrew twists into a bottle of wine. A hand yanks at the cork. POP!

RUFUS (50) pours red wine into three crystal glasses.

He's a tall, slender man dressed in a red velvet jacket and a Sherlock-Holmes-style deerstalker hat. His eyes are glazed over and his face fixed in a permanent grin.

Brannon sits on a red leather couch, Lex snuggles up next to him. Rufus hands them both a glass of wine.

Brannon sips his wine and looks around.

Red and gold Indian drapes hang from the ceiling. Multi-colored lights are embedded in the walls.

A grand piano stands against the far wall. On the piano stool sits a small black poodle wearing a deerstalker hat just like its owner's.

BRANNON

Nice place.

Rufus grins.

RUFUS

It's adequate, yes. Please feel free to make yourself at home. You are my guest of honor.

His laugh quickly fades when he sees Brannon's somber expression.

RUFUS

You resent me, don't you?

BRANNON

Why shouldn't I?

RUFUS

I cannot tell you how sorry I

am for what happened, Richard.
Your reluctance to talk was
appreciated more than you can
ever know. You're a man of
integrity. I admire you for that.

BRANNON

I'm not stupid, Rufus. If I'd
talked, you'd've had me killed.

Rufus thinks for a moment, smiles.

RUFUS

Yes, you're quite right. However,
I am still in your debt. Anything
you require, I shall endeavor to
supply.

BRANNON

If you owe me anything, Rufus,
it's an apology.

Rufus laughs wickedly.

RUFUS

Fourteen years inside and you
want an apology?

Rufus picks up a small ornately carved wooden box and
passes it to Brannon.

RUFUS

Consider this my apology.

Brannon opens the box to reveal a syringe, a silver spoon
and a bag of brown powder.

RUFUS

All those years of dirty prison-
grade smack must have taken their
toll. I assure you this product
will take you to new heights of
consciousness. If anything, it
will help you feel more at home.

He smiles and nods to Lex who takes the box and prepares a hit for Brannon.

Brannon sits back, sips his wine.

BRANNON
So how's business?

Rufus takes a seat opposite him in a rocking chair, drinks his wine, ponders.

RUFUS
Business... has changed.
Pharmaceuticals have become
somewhat... passé. We're
broadening our horizons. The
world is a very different
place to the one you remember.

Lex takes a leather strap and wraps it tightly around Brannon's bicep. She taps his needle-scarred arm to find a suitable vein.

RUFUS
You'll discover this for
yourself soon enough. For now,
sit back and enjoy your high.

Brannon gulps down the last of his wine and places his glass on the table.

Lex smiles at him, plants a kiss on his lips then flicks the needle with her finger and injects it into his arm.

LEX
(sultry)
See you on the other side,
cowboy.

She empties the syringe into his arm. Brannon's eyes roll back as the rush takes over. He sees Rufus' grinning face as we slowly...

FADE TO WHITE

DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...

FADE IN:

INT. CUBICLE

POV: Brannon's eyes open and he stares upwards. His eyes adjust to focus on a white ceiling, stained with dark splatters of blood.

Brannon jerks forward, realizes he's strapped to a chair. He thrashes wildly and struggles with the binds around his wrists.

He looks forward and sees himself reflected in a full-length mirror on the opposite wall.

The room is small, reminiscent of a prison cell. The walls and floor covered in white tiles. A stainless steel table stands at the wall behind him. He can't see what's on it.

Water DRIPS into a wash-basin on wheels to his left. To his right is a large wooden door.

Brannon struggles again but the chair is securely bolted to the floor.

The door swings open and Lex enters, dressed in a surgical gown. She wears thin latex gloves. She smiles at Brannon.

BRANNON

What the fuck is this?

Lex walks to the washbasin. Its wheels SQUEAK as she pushes it behind him.

LEX

Take it easy, cowboy. You're
in for the ride of your life.

She reaches a hand around his neck and takes hold of a strap attached to the chair. She pulls it hard around his throat and fastens it with a buckle.

Brannon kicks and struggles but his head is now firmly secured.

BRANNON

Fuck! Let me go! Let me

fucking go!

Lex leans in close and whispers into his ear.

LEX

Y'know, this'll be a whole lot easier if you just relax.

She slips her tongue into his ear. Brannon squirms. Lex pulls away and giggles to herself.

She dips her hands into the soapy water and picks up a sponge. She delicately rinses his hair and then pads it dry with a towel.

BRANNON

You fucking bitch! What do you want with me?

LEX

Why you gotta be such a prick about this? We want to help you, Brannon.

Brannon watches in the mirror as she walks to the table and picks up a small device. She plugs a cable into the socket on the wall.

An electronic BUZZ echoes around the room.

Brannon kicks and struggles.

BRANNON

Help! Someone fucking help me!

Lex laughs and walks over to him.

LEX

We are helping you.

She lifts her hand to his head and reveals the buzzing appliance to be an electric shaver.

Brannon's face washes with relief, soon replaced by anger.

Lex begins to shave his head.

LEX

You'll thank us for this. I know you will.

BRANNON

If you wanted to cut my hair, you could've just asked.

Lex chuckles.

LEX

I thought you'd need a little more persuasion than that. Besides, the haircut is just the beginning.

BRANNON

I figured that much out for myself. What the fuck is this? Where's Rufus?

LEX

He'll be here soon. Remember when I told you he changed my life?

BRANNON

You weren't kidding, huh?

LEX

(giggles)

Trust me, Brannon. You're gonna love this.

She puts the shaver down then rinses his bald head with the sponge and then wheels the basin over to the table.

She picks up a large syringe and fills it from a vial of clear liquid.

Brannon squirms in his chair as she approaches him once more.

LEX

If I were you, I'd hold still right about now.

She wipes his scalp with a cloth then clamps a palm around his forehead and holds his head firmly against the back of the chair.

She takes the needle and makes two injections in the top of his head.

Brannon watches her in the mirror as she returns to the table and puts the needle down.

BRANNON

What the fuck are you doing
to me?

RUFUS (O.S.)

We're going to open your mind.

Brannon stretches his neck to see Rufus enter the room, still wearing his deerstalker hat. He's accompanied by WOLFGANG, a short, bald, middle-aged man. he wears wrap-around goggles and a surgical gown. His mouth and nose are covered with a surgical mask.

Rufus looks at Brannon and smiles.

RUFUS

I trust Lex has been gentle
with you.

Lex saunters over to Rufus and plants a kiss on his cheek, whispers in his ear.

LEX

I think he's ready to go..

RUFUS

Good... good...

Lex slips off her gloves and drops them into the basin. She strokes Brannon on the top of his head then exits the room.

Rufus walks to the center of the room, face to face with Brannon.

BRANNON

You gonna kill me? Is that it?
You ungrateful son of a bitch.

RUFUS

(laughs)

We're not going to kill you,
Brannon. We're going to bring
you to life.

Brannon looks at him then at Wolfgang.

RUFUS

This is Wolfgang. He'll be
performing the procedure.
I can assure you, you're in
capable hands.

Wolfgang smiles and bows his head, allowing Brannon a clear
view of his severely dented scalp.

BRANNON

Jesus, what the fuck is this?

RUFUS

The surgery you are about to
receive has been practiced for
thousands of years. You are
about to experience pleasure
beyond your wildest dreams.
Consider it a privilege... My
apology, if you will.

Brannon looks at Wolfgang then strains his head to look at
the blood-stained ceiling.

He struggles violently but to no avail.

BRANNON

Let me go!

RUFUS

Don't fight it, Brannon.
Embrace it. Soon, all your
troubles will be washed away.

Rufus chuckles and exits the room.

Wolfgang picks up a tube of lotion and squirts some into
his hands then massages it into Brannon's scalp.

BRANNON

Don't fucking do this, man!
I swear I'll fucking kill you.

Wolfgang sighs and takes out a roll of silver duct tape. He tears off a strip and straps it around Brannon's mouth.

Brannon struggles more, his screams now muffled by the tape.

Wolfgang wheels a trolley over in front of Brannon. He opens an ancient wooden box containing medieval surgical tools. He takes out what looks like a small axe with a serrated edge.

WOLFGANG

(German accent)

If you struggle, you will die.
Do you understand?

Brannon's eyes widen in terror. He manages to nod.

Wolfgang smiles and walks around the back of him.

Brannon, frozen in his seat, watches in the mirror as Wolfgang meticulously slices through the skin on his scalp. There is surprisingly little blood.

Wolfgang puts the blade to one side and uses his fingers to unfold two rectangular flaps of skin on Brannon's head to expose an area of his skull.

Brannon can only watch in terror and disbelief as the man goes about his work.

Wolfgang then walks over to the box and pulls out another tool. It looks like an oversized corkscrew with a brass handle. On the end is a circular metal attachment with serrated jaws.

He walks over to Brannon once more and places the device on his skull. He makes eye contact with Brannon in the mirror and gives him a sly wink before pushing the serrated metal into his skull with a loud CRACK.

As he turns the handle, the device CRUNCHES and CRACKS through the bone and eventually breaks the surface.

A BUBBLING, SQUELCHING SOUND rises up from within Brannon's head. His eyes expand, almost bursting from his skull.

Wolfgang withdraws the device and steps back as a fountain of blood BURSTS from Brannon's head and SPLATTERS the ceiling.

Brannon's body shivers and quakes as the blood gushes down over his face.

The tide of blood subsides with a GURGLE before it rises up once more, coating Brannon's face with a fresh wave of blood. His body jerks around, his head tips back.

Wolfgang takes a surgical swab and covers the circular hole in Brannon's skull. He secures the swab with a bandage then wipes the blood from Brannon's face with a towel.

He reaches forward and rips the duct tape from Brannon's mouth.

BRANNON

Holy fuck!

Brannon gulps deep breaths of air, his head tilts forward and back.

BRANNON

Jesus... Rufus you son of a bitch!

A light flicks on behind the mirror to reveal Rufus and Lex watching from the adjacent room. They laugh and clap a silent applause.

Wolfgang walks over to the mirror and bows. He turns to Brannon.

WOLFGANG

Welcome to the club, Mr. Brannon. How does it feel?

Brannon's eyes are wide, his jaw hangs loose in a lazy grin.

BRANNON
It feels... fantastic.

Wolfgang smiles.

WOLFGANG
This is just the beginning.

FADE TO BLACK