CONSENSUS

written by

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REVISION 425

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CHANCE (V.O.)
Can I tell you a ghost story?

LILY (V.O.)
(Sniffles)
O-okay.

CHANCE (V.O.)
Once upon a time there was a little boy who disappeared in the woods behind his house. His parents gathered everyone in town, and for six days and six nights they searched everywhere for him. A month or so passed, then a year and they never found that little boy. So, the town agreed that the boy was dead.

FADE IN:

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT

in the kitchen LILY (25+) is bound to a chair with duct tape. Tears stripe mascara down her cheeks. CHANCE (25+) leans against the sink smoking.

CHANCE
You know what that means? It means if that little boy showed up at home tomorrow he'd be considered a ghost. Can you believe that?

Chance pulls a twenty dollar bill out of his pocket and holds it up.

CHANCE
What's this?

LILY
It's, it's twenty dollars?

CHANCE
Okay, and why?

LILY
Because it says twenty dollars on it?

Chance tears a paper towel from the roll. Folds it in half. With his pen he writes, "TWENTY DOLLARS," on the paper towel. He holds it up.
So, by your logic, is this worth twenty dollars then?

LILY
Obviously not.

See? It has absolutely nothing to do with writing or the colors does it?

He holds up the twenty bill.

This paper, is only worth twenty dollars because we all agree, that it is. Just like the town agrees that the boy is dead.

What do you want from me?

Chance thinks the question over with a drag from his cigarette.

Your vote.

Chance smirks.

And a cup of sugar.

Chance skips with a cup of sugar down the hall to the neighbors door.

and Chance waltzes in with the sugar. JOSH BAUER(30+) is taped and gagged in an arm chair.

Miss me? Josh? Josh speak up I can't hear you.

Chance laughs. He clasps the tape edge of the gag.

Remember now, we agreed that screaming is counter-productive. Right?

Josh's worried face nods. Chance peels the tape off.
JOSH
You're a fucking dead man.

Josh squirms, Chance dresses a cup of coffee with sugar.

CHANCE
I know, isn't it great? I mean the possibilities are endless.

Chance sips the coffee scratching his head.

CHANCE
So, I've talked it over with Lily and Catherine and they have both agreed that having a vote is the most sensible thing to do here.

JOSH
Listen, okay, just, I've got money, I, I-

CHANCE
-Shh.

Chance kneels down to Josphes level.

CHANCE
Josh. Look at me. Do you think I really came here for money? We're going to have a vote. This is still a democracy we're living in isn't it?

Chance smiles.

JOSH
You're out of your fucking mind you sick-!

Chance quickly tapes Josh's mouth again.

CHANCE
If I was you I'd be thinking about my platform.

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Chance dances his way to the third apartment.
INT. CATHERINE'S PLACE— NIGHT

and Chance pokes his head in.

CHANCE

Boo!

CATHERINE (25+) trembles flat on her back. She's taped to her kitchen table. He saunters over to her.

CHANCE

Hello my dear. Are you ready to meet the other candidates?

Chance has a seat at the table. Lights a smoke and presses play on a tape recorder.

CHANCE

Candidate number one, Mr. Josh Bauer.

JOSH (V.O.)

(Voice recording)
I'm unemployed right now okay, we're, we're in a recession what do you expect?

CHANCE (V.O.)

(Recording)
What did you do before you were unemployed?

JOSH (V.O.)

(Recording)
Assembled cars, what difference does it make?

CHANCE (V.O.)

(Recording)
You know, I'm wondering the same thing. Do you have any children Josh?

JOSH (V.O.)

(Recording)
No.

Chance presses stop on the recorder.

CHANCE

Unemployed and single, hm. What do you think Cathy? Ready to hear number two?
Catherine
What do you want from me?

Chances leans in close with a haunting grin.

Chance
Your undivided, attention.

He clicks play.

Lily (V.O.)
My name is L-Lily.

Chance (V.O.)
Pretty name.

Lily (V.O.)
Th-thanks.

Chance (V.O.)
And what have you made of yourself, Lily? Hm?

Lily (V.O.)
Uh, um, I, I'm a nurse.

Chance (V.O.)
Oh, how noble. You might prove to be useful yet. Do you have any children, nurse Lily?

Lily (V.O.)
Yes. Abigail. I have a six year old daughter.

Click! Chance stops the recording.

Chance
Well. The choice seems clear to me. Don't you think?

Int. Lily's Place - Night

Chance sits in a backwards chair facing Lily who is still bound in her chair own chair. He holds the tape recorder between them.

Chance
So we have Josh, the unemployed single guy with no prospects or plans for the future. Here is what Catherine had to say.

He presses play.
CHANCE (V.O.)
What do you do?

CATHERINE (V.O.)
I'm a waitress.

CHANCE (V.O.)
How inspirational. Any kids?

CATHERINE (V.O.)
No.

Click! He stops the recording.

CHANCE
Well, there you have it. I'll let you think about your vote.

LILY
No, please? Please?

Chance wipes the sweaty hair from her face softly.

CHANCE
Don't worry, I'll be right back.

INT. JOSH'S PLACE - NIGHT

Catherine, Lily and Josh are all bound to chairs in a semi circle. Chance paces smoking while fondling a large kitchen knife.

CHANCE
The votes are in folks. I've got to say, I'm not really surprised by the outcome. None the less it appears we've reached a consensus.

Chance presses play.

CHANCE (V.O.)
So Josh, who will it be?

JOSH (V.O.)
Catherine.

Catherine looks at Josh. Josh glares at the floor.

Chance presses fast forward then play.

CHANCE (V.O.)
Catherine?
CATHERINE(V.O.)
J-Josh.

Josh slowly aims his teary stare at Catherine, her vacant eyes gaze back.

CHANCE(V.O.)
Well Lily, who do you pick?

LILY(V.O.)
Fuck you.

CHANCE(V.O.)
Come on just give me one name and this can all be over.

LILY(V.O.)
I won't play your twisted fucking game.

CHANCE(V.O.)
That's too bad.

Chance presses stop.

CHANCE
Well.

Chance smiles.

CHANCE
It looks like we have a tie. I'm sorry Lily but you've been disqualified.

Chance paces to Lily and cuts her free.

JOSH
Wait. What are you doing?

CHANCE
I'm going to make some room, it's a bit stuffy in here.

Chance drags Lily out of the apartment.

JOSH
No, no wait. Stop!

CATHERINE
Lily! No! Help!

Click! The door shuts behind Chance.
JOSH
Fuck! No! Oh my God. Oh my God.

CATHERINE
I'm, I'm, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. She, she has a kid and-

JOSH
-It's okay, it's okay forget about it, listen, listen to me. I have a gun in the closet. This isn't how we die you hear me?

Catherine trembles a nod.

JOSH
Okay, now-

Josh wiggles in the binds edging his chair closer to Catherine's.

JOSH(CONT'D)
-you have to-

He gets his chair back to back with hers.

JOSH(CONT'D)
-untie me quick, quick! Come on Catherine, this is it wake up! Take control of your life while you still have a chance.

Catherine's shaky fingers work at the knots around his wrists.

JOSH
Come on, come on!

CATHERINE
(sobbing)
I don't want to die, I don't want to die.

JOSH
(Softly)
Just focus sweetie and everything will be okay. Okay?

CATHERINE
O-okay, okay, I got it, I got it, oh my God I got it your free your free!

Josh wriggles his hands free and bursts out of the chair.

Catherine shines a teary smile. Josh begins untying her.
CATHERINE
We're not going to die-

Click! Chance enters the room wielding the kitchen knife. Fresh blood glimmers on the blade.

CHANCE
-You two have been dead for years.

CATHERINE
Ah! You killed her? You killed her oh no, no he killed her. He fucking killed her Josh.

Josh postures up poised. Chance shuts the door and takes one step forward. Catherine shakes between them.

CHANCE
I did what was necessary. I'm doing what needs to be done. Don't you see it?

JOSH
Not another fucking step! You sick fucking freak.

CHANCE
You think I'm sick? What about you Joshua. You're about to turn thirty one and you've been unemployed for seven months. No girlfriend, no kids. What purpose do you serve exactly?

JOSH
I just want to live my life man, what the fuck is your problem-?

Chance takes a step forward.

CHANCE
-You've wasted your life. And you Catherine, when you were little girl did you used to dream about being a waitress? Hm?

Catherines eyes find the floor.

CHANCE
I didn't think so.

JOSH
What the fuck does this have to do with anything man-?

Catherine smiles to herself. She sniffs and her eyes have
accepted her fate.

CHANCE
- It has everything to do with everything! What are you going to Josh huh? Are you feeling brave.

CATHERINE
(exausted)
Go Josh.

JOSH
What?

CHANCE
She said go.

CATHERINE
It makes no sense for both of us to, to, just go. Do it.

CHANCE
Wow. His bravery or her sacrifice.

Josh backs towards the bedroom slowly while Chance moves towards Catherine. Josh stops. Chance stops.

JOSH
I can't.

CHANCE
For a twenty eight year old waitress? Why? She's going nowhere Josh.

JOSH
So am I!

CHANCE
Well that's true, but come on she doesn't even have any kids, no men on the horizon. Did you know she wanted to be chef?

JOSH
No I didn't.

CHANCE
Yeah. I bet she bores the shit out of her friends at work with talk of how one day you know, she's going to get out of this stinking bar and become this amazing cook. Sound familiar Cath'?

Catherine resigns her eyes.
JOSH
Leave her alone.

CATHERINE
He's right. I'm all talk.

JOSH
So am I okay? I was going to open my own custom car shop you know but then the recession hit and-

CHANCE
-Oh shut up with the recession Already. You worked there for eleven fucking years Josh. How many other excuses did you give yourself before the recession?

JOSH
No, you're right. That's why I want you to take me. I'm the oldest. She still has a chance.

CATHERINE
No Josh-.

Josh and Catherine lock eyes.

JOSH
Promise me you'll do something great.

CATHERINE
You can't do this. Go to your closet like you said remember.

JOSH
No, this makes sense to me now.

Chance pulls a snub nosed revolver from his pocket.

CHANCE
Let's go then Josh.

JOSH
My gun. You had it the whole time?

CHANCE
Let's go.

Josh follows Chance to the door out of the apartment.
CATHERINE
(sobbs)
No, no, no, no, Josh don't-

Josh stops and looks back at Catherine.

JOSH
Do something great kid. Promise me that.

CATHERINE
No, no, Josh, Josh please, please you can't-

JOSH
Promise me.

CATHERINE
O-kay, okay, I promise.

Josh turns and leaves followed at gun point by Chance who shuts the door behind him.

Catherine breaks down crying.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

In the back seat Chance lights a cigarette. He looks down at his right pant leg and rolls it up.

CHANCE
Ah.

His leg is sliced open and blood is smeared all over. We follow his leg as he lifts it onto a woman's lap beside him.

Two female hands gloved in latex begin cleaning the wound.

The hands belong to Lily. She and Chance share a smile. Her mascara still streaking her face.

CHANCE
Told you you'd prove to be useful.

LILY
Jeez babe why'd you cut so deep for?

CHANCE
I wanted that dark color, you know.
LILY
Silly. I'm going to have to stitch this up, a bandage won't do it.

CHANCE
Be gentle then sugar.

The drivers door opens and a Man gets in. The Man starts the car up and looks back. It's Josh.

JOSH
Oh, that's a nasty one buddy. How you feeling?

CHANCE
Fine.

Lily starts stitching the wound.

CHANCE
So, what do you think guys?

JOSH
I'd say it was a success.

CHANCE
Beautiful?

LILY
Honestly, I don't know. I think we need to start getting them to open up earlier.

JOSH
What do you mean? She fully admitted her apathy.

LILY
Okay, I don't know then. You had the last word this time, did it feel sincere?

JOSH
Yeah, totally.

CHANCE
It was really good babe, she meant it, I could feel it.

Lily finishes the stitching and ties the last knot.

LILY
Alright then, it was a success.
CHANCE
Well, we'll see I guess. Josh you planted the culinary school
applications right?

Lily starts wrapping the wound in a bandage.

JOSH
I did.

CHANCE
There you go. That's all we can do then the rest is up to her.

JOSH
Alright. Where to next?

CHANCE
There's a fella up in Canada who keeps telling everybody he's going
to be a writer. Let's go see if we can't inspire him a little.

JOSH
Alright, Canada, nice.

Josh turns around and buckles up. He starts driving. Lily rolls Chances pant leg down and then they lean in close.

LILY
(whispers)
You're doing a great thing my little ghost boy.

CHANCE
(whispers)
You're the great thing.

They smirk and then lock lips.

THE END
FADE OUT.