

Premonition of life

Bernard Mersier

"You should never have regrets about the choices you made. If you have regrets, then why did you go along with your actions?"

Bernard Mersier

FADE IN:

INT. THE CHURCH - NIGHT

Sitting on a pew in the empty church is CORTEZ, mid-twenties. Dressed in his black suit, somber is perspiring from his brown face as he wipes it down, sighing deep, looking down at the bible resting on his lap.

From the looks of it, this is the first time the handsome young man has endured this much pain in his life.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Do you wanna know what's funny about life? Once you begin learning...that's the exact moment you begin planning your life. Now, here's the kicker. You can plan everyday all day, but life will throw you all types of temptations to deter you.

Closing his eyes, he leans his head back in deep thought.

CUT TO:

INT. YOUNG CORTEZ BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

The room is pristine. There's a nice size bed, bookshelves along the walls filled with different books. A computer desk is against the wall with an open laptop, and the screensaver is showing some dancing clowns.

On the bed propped up against the headboard with pillows behind his head is eight-year-old Young Cortez.

He's a handsome young man, wearing a shirt and shorts. It appears he's enjoying the book he's reading.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

You can be focused solely on broadening your knowledge, determined on being somebody important in life. And what does life do?

CUT TO:

INT. CORTEZ'S FATHER'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The living room gives off the appearance of a person who lives a lavish lifestyle, but we're more focused on Young Cortez standing beside the table and what he's looking at.

On the table there's all kinds of expensive jewelry, piles of money, a blue bandana and two glock 40's with a ton of clips.

Just as Young Cortez gets ready to pick up one of the guns, the front door comes open and in walks his father.

The first thought you would get from his attire, tattoos, the physique shown through his fitted beater, and what's on the table, you would say he's a heartless gangster.

Young Cortez looks at his father afraid, but his father gives him the nod of approval to pick the gun up.

With a smile, Young Cortez picks up the gun, aiming it at the wall.

His father looks on with a smile.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Life says "Come have a look at the street life." It catches the eyes of most because of the glorious things that come with it, making you believe this is the route you should take.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

We see the students in the classroom doing projects at their desks, while the teacher looks on.

Now, we turn our attention to Young Cortez who has his attention on a pretty little light skin girl with long hair sitting a few rows away from him.

He looks down at his desk with confidence as he folds a piece of paper, and then taps the student next to him in the other row extending the paper.

The student takes the paper, and then the note gets passed along until it reaches the girl he was staring at.

When she receives it, he quickly lowers his head so she doesn't notice him.

Still with his head down, the student next to him slides the note back on his desk.

He opens it, and apparently he's in-love with what he sees, looking over at the girl, and she's looking at him with the same love in her eyes.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Crushes can turn into marriage when you lay your eyes on the one, and you know they feel the same way about you. When you reach this conclusion, you'll do your best to make sure you'll never lose them.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

We see Young Cortez surrounded by the other girls in his classroom. All of them are laughing and talking, having fun.

We turn our attention to the benches where we see the girl he gave the note to sitting alone crying, trying not to look over at Young Cortez because every time she does, the tears flow stronger.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

But when life shows you the various varieties it has to offer, all of them with different perks...the one you swore was the one becomes nothing more than a memory, if that. Once again, life dismantled your plan, replacing it with what it feels is best for you.

EXT. THE PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

We come in on what appears to be a fight ready to start, but Young Cortez quickly jumps between the two boys trying to defuse the situation, while the other kids become upset.

After a few minutes, the two that were about to fight come to an agreement, and everyone starts clearing out.

Young Cortez and one of the boys who was about to fight walk off to the benches talking.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

You can decide on being non-violent, wanting everyone to get

along without the use of guns or fighting, helping them find a peaceful resolution to situations.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

We see the same boy Young Cortez was talking with on the benches, along with the boy he was about to fight and a gang of other kids beating up Young Cortez.

He's on the ground balled up in pain as they stomp away at him. After a few more seconds they stop, and then they all walk away laughing.

We can be certain the pain he's in is unbearable, but Young Cortez stands up bruised and bloody, staring at the kids with hate in his eyes.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Here comes life putting hands on you in the worst way possible. This makes you become something you didn't have plans on becoming, and in some cases, it can make you racists, suicidal or forever filled with hate.

CUT TO:

INT. CORTEZ'S FATHER'S BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

Pre-teen Cortez is on the bench cranking out with a nice amount of weights on the bar. He does six more reps, and then places the bar down.

He sits up with sweat pouring down his toned body as he reaches on the side for his water bottle.

Opening the bottle, he takes a healthy sip, and then places it back down.

He works his muscles out before lying back down on the bench ready to get started again.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Drugs and alcohol is the furthest thing from your mind, craving a healthy body and physique for your own reasons. Or it could be for sports or to attract women. No matter the reason

why, that's the choice you decided
you'll stick with.

EXT. CORTEZ'S FATHER'S BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

We come in on a barbecue that looks like everyone is having a good time. There's very few children running around, and there's a DJ by the opened garage filled with some eye-catching custom cars.

Moving around the backyard, we also see different tables with adults playing cards or dominos.

A loud ruckus is heard.

We move to the table where Cortez's father slaps down his last card winning a game of spades.

With a thunderous laugh, he reaches across the table giving his partner a play, and then he takes a sip from his cup.

Standing up from the table, he makes his way towards the grill, and that's when Pre-teen Cortez comes up to him.

They have a few words, and his father points towards his seat.

Pre-teen Cortez takes his father's seat looking around at the other adults laughing, talking and drinking, and then he turns his attention to his father's cup.

Pondering for a few seconds, he decides on picking it up to have a sip, and that's when his father comes beside him, placing a hand on his shoulder.

Pre-teen Cortez looks up at his father, and he's nervous about what could happen.

His father is looking down at him smiling, giving him the nod of approval with a cigarette hanging from his mouth.

Pre-teen Cortez smiles, and then takes a sip from the cup. When he swallows the liquor, he turns to the side ready to hurl, and all of the adults including his father look on laughing.

As he wipes his mouth, his father presents him with the lit cigarette.

Pre-teen Cortez takes the cigarette, and then looks up at his father.

His father gives him the okay to take a pull.

Pre-teen Cortez takes a pull, and that's all he needs to turn his head to the side bringing forth the hurl.

His father and the others at the table look on laughing.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

There's nothing wrong with experimenting, trying something you see everybody do. That's the line "Life" runs in your ear without telling you the consequences. So in this situation, who do you blame when you have a mind to think on your own?

CUT TO:

INT. THE SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

We see Teenage Cortez standing by the lockers with a bunch of his friends laughing, talking and pointing at the girls walking pass they feel are attractive.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Friends hold a special place in your heart if they show the same amount of loyalty you show them.

While they continue talking, Teenage Cortez's girlfriend comes up to him. He turns looking at his short, slim, pretty dark skin girlfriend with a smile, and then he gives her a kiss, wrapping his arm around her waist.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Teenage Cortez is coming out of the building with some of his friends. They're laughing and talking, until one of them taps Teenage Cortez, pointing down towards the street.

TEENAGE CORTEZ POV

We see his girlfriend talking with one of his friends, getting a little bit too friendly with each other. It appears as if they're exchanging numbers, and when they finish, she goes her separate way, while the friend looks back seeing Teenage Cortez.

The way he's motioning at his phone, and then towards Teenage

Cortez girlfriend walking away, it seems like he's trying to signal to him that she's no good.

Looking at Teenage Cortez, he doesn't seem bothered, staring at him with a slight smirk.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

This is where life opens your eyes for the good or bad, but you begin realizing those people you call "Friends" are the luggage holding you down or they're actually trying to help you weed out the fake ones. This part of life can only be understood depending on how you've been living. But they always say "In Life you get one, maybe two real friends."

CUT TO:

INT. TEENAGE CORTEZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room has a nice Teenage bachelor feel going on considering it's a simple apartment bedroom.

Teenage Cortez comes into the room looking exhausted from a hard day's work, taking a seat at his computer desk.

Taking a deep breath, he sighs in relief because he's no longer on the clock. He goes in his pocket, pulling out his wallet, opening it, taking the money out.

As he counts the money out, a smile is on his face, placing some of it to the side, and then he places the rest back in his wallet.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Money was something you learned to appreciate because that's one of the key things you need in life for survival. But you don't mind sharing since you know somehow you'll make it back, and helping others in need was something that lingered in your heart.

He reaches for a jar on his desk already filled with money. He opens the jar, and then places the money he placed to the side inside.

CLOSE UP - THE JAR

The label on the jar reads for the homeless.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

We come in on the gas station filled with cars and people either pumping their gas, standing around talking or coming out of the gas station.

Teenage Cortez comes out of the gas station drinking a slurpee with a look of arrogance on his face.

A homeless man comes up to him, and before the man can get a chance to speak, he splashes the slurpee in his face.

As the homeless man stands embarrassed, the people who witnessed it laughs, pointing over at Teenage Cortez giving him an encouraging round of applause.

Teenage Cortez looks on with a smile as he makes his way to his car.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

At this moment "Life" comes around massaging the thought of money should be the only thing you care about so you can be in a position of power. The massage feels so good, you believe what life is telling you. Now, whoever doesn't have the amount of money you have, they're beneath you. But in the same breath, you want everyone to respect and love you. There's some who do, but they're just as cruel as you, so that really doesn't count as you sit on top of the mountain alone.

CUT TO:

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

We see Teenage Cortez standing at the podium wearing his cap and gown. There's also other students on stage sitting down in their chairs.

Combining the emotion on his face while he speaks, along with the other students, whatever he's saying is touching them deeply.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Something in your heart could possibly be telling you to be a standup person, speaking for the little man making sure they get treated like everyone else. It's a brave step, but you don't care, accepting all of the backlash as long as people get a fair share.

CUT TO:

INT. THE STUDIO - NIGHT

We come in on Teenage Cortez in the booth. He places his headphones on, and then begins moving around hyping himself up.

He picks up his styrofoam cup, takes a nice sip, and then places it back down. Within seconds, he begins rapping, using all types of hand gestures displaying what he's rapping about.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Look how your good friend "Life" introduces you to "Contradiction" and my, oh my. Now, you're trying to have the best of both worlds, playing both sides of the field thinking there will be no consequences because you're agreeing with both sides, but you truly don't have a side. And therein lies the problem you may or may not find funny. But...what does it matter as long as nobody addresses you?

CUT TO:

INT. THE ALTAR - NIGHT

We come in on Cortez standing at the altar with his beautiful slim brown skin wife with curly natural hair.

The background from the ocean looks marvelous, almost bringing a tear to your eye mixing the matrimony with the setting.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

They say everybody wants to settle down, start a family and feel loved by that special one. You can have these same intentions, adding another

positive notch on your resume.

Cortez and his wife move in for a kiss, and the way their lips connect with the sun setting in the background is breathtaking.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF CORTEZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cortez is standing on the porch of his nice two-family flat house wearing some jogging pants, with the band of his boxers being exposed since he doesn't have a shirt on.

Standing in front of him is a mob of angry women, including the one he married. Some of them have children resting on their hips, and the others are just furious, getting held back by the ones who don't have children with them.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Here's where the infamous friend "Life" begs to differ. Look at you out here with multiple children, by multiple women, having no true bond with the mother or child. But, hey, life said this was the right move.

CUT TO:

INT. CORTEZ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cortez and the woman he married are sitting on the sofa in their well-put together-living room enjoying life, looking at their children enjoying what's on the television.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

This is the point in life you strived so hard to reach. A strong family. A good job you can retire from with enough money so you and your family can live a good life. All you wanna do now is relax, watch your children grow and reflect on the good life you lived.

Cortez and his wife give each other a quick kiss, right before their children rush over to the sofa pouncing on them with love.

The family sits laughing, enjoying the full connection and love between them.

CUT TO:**INT. CORTEZ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The wife and children are sitting on the living room sofa mourning, while looking at pictures of them and Cortez in a scrapbook.

On the glass table in front them propped up against a vase filled with roses is his obituary.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

Then again..."Life" comes back around reminding you even though you changed for the greater good, you still have to pay for the things you've done before the change. On that note, this is something only you and "Life" will know the outcome.

COME BACK TO:**INT. THE CHURCH - NIGHT**

Cortez lifts his head, and we can see the exhaustion written on his face.

Standing up on his feet, he stretches, and then takes a deep breath.

Clinching his bible tightly, he moves from the pew, and then makes his way to the front of the church.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

The path you decide to take should be what defines you as a person. Of course, you have people living through other people's lives, and I guess if you don't know who you are that's cool. It's not a route I would recommend, but who am I to tell somebody how to live their life?

He gets to the front of the church, and he pauses looking up at the cross.

CORTEZ (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Remember how I told you in the beginning that life is funny? Well, here's the kicker. Nobody knows when they'll die, and yes, some of us

involve ourselves in things that will speed up the process. Some of us die from natural causes. Now, here's the kicker.

He looks down at himself in the casket. His cause of death is unknown, but you can't deny he's very spiffy.

He reaches down, touching his face, and then...

BLACK SCREEN:

CORTEZ (V.O.)

I'm not one to speak on anybody's religion, you believe what you believe. Me...I believe as you live and breathe you're already in hell. I mean, everything they say about hell in the bible is what you see and live through everyday. And heaven...heaven is rewarded the moment you die. Everything else after death is unknown, which is another kicker. But, how about this?

INT. CORTEZ'S FATHER'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

We see the living room we saw earlier, minus all of the things that were on the table.

For the first time we get to see Cortez's mother. She's sitting on the sofa with Cortez's father.

She's a beautiful light skin woman, but from looking at her you would be confused as to why she would be with someone like Cortez's father.

The two are having a drink enjoying each other's company.

CORTEZ (V.O.)

What if the life you were living was just a glimpse showing you how things could go, and when you died for that moment of rest...when you reopened your eyes, this is when your life actually begins? Would you play out what you saw or would you change things? But truthfully, there's only one thing that needs to be answered.

While the two continue drinking and laughing, Young Cortez

comes into the room.

He walks up to the sofa and stops.

YOUNG CORTEZ
Mom, dad.

The two stop talking, giving him their attention.

CLOSE UP - YOUNG CORTEZ FACE

He's staring at them with a stone cold face.

YOUNG CORTEZ
Why are we alive?

CORTEZ (V.O.)
That's the only thing we need to know.

BLACK SCREEN:

"Knowledge means nothing if you don't properly use it."

Bernard Mersier