

TOMORROW'S NEWS

Written by

Patrick Wijsman

writing.wijsman@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. MESSY APARTMENT - NIGHT

A dimmed room. The only light comes from the TV. There's nothing but static on the screen.

A couple of beer bottles and a half-eaten pizza on the table.

Jimmy AUSTIN (33) sleeps on the couch. Still wearing his clothes. Unshaven. Snoring.

Austin holds a beer bottle that slowly slips from his fingers. When it HITS the floor, he wakes up.

With a groan, he sits up and wipes his eyes.

Austin sees the half-eaten pizza and grabs a piece of it. He takes a bite, but immediately spits it out.

AUSTIN

Gross.

He closes the box and gets off the couch to throw the pizza in an already full trash can.

Wiping his fingers clean on his shirt, Austin ambles to the TV and turns it off. The static goes black.

He's about to leave the room when the TV turns itself on.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

What the...?

Austin walks back to the TV to shut it off again. This time he removes the plug from the socket.

Wanting to leave the room again, he hears the TV turn itself on. Austin is frozen in fear.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

I'm dreaming. I'm fucking dreaming.

He slowly turns his face to the TV. The screen goes from static to a news bulletin.

Anchorwoman MARIKO ABE (40) reads the news. She looks honest and trustworthy. Her name at the bottom of the screen.

MARIKO

...and now, back to the local news.

Austin watches her mesmerized and sits down.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

A ten a.m. fire in a three-story apartment building caused heavy damages to the building and left three families in need of shelter, according to a fire official.

Austin is captivated by Mariko, but can't fight the sleep. He nods his head and slowly dozes off.

MARIKO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Captain Mike Burnett of the Greenfield Fire Department said no one was injured in the home, but the building received heavy fire, smoke and water damage.

INT. MESSY APARTMENT - MORNING

Austin lays on the couch, asleep. The TV is off.

Outside, a passing fire truck BLARES its siren. Austin jumps awake. The siren disappears in the distance.

Austin grunts and stretches his body. He spots the clock and sees it's ten a.m.

MARIKO (V.O.)

A ten a.m. fire in a three-story apartment building caused heavy...

Austin looks at the TV. It's plugged in. He frowns, then shakes his head.

AUSTIN

Just a fucking dream.

He gets off the couch and leaves the room. When he passes the trash can, we can see the half-eaten pizza in it.

INT. MESSY APARTMENT - EVENING

Austin goes through the channels. He looks uninterested.

The screen goes static. Austin presses buttons of the remote control, but it doesn't have any effect.

AUSTIN

Son of a...

Reluctantly, he gets off the couch. Austin walks to the TV, but before he can do something, Mariko appears on the screen.

MARIKO
*Greenfield police are investigating
 a robbery at The Looking Glass
 Jewelry that happened shortly after
 5 p.m. today.*

Austin kneels in front of the TV. He smiles at her affectionately.

MARIKO (CONT'D)
*Commander Arnav Bajaj said that a
 man entered the store at the moment
 the owner had sent away the
 security. Bajaj said that no one
 was injured, and the robber never
 produced a weapon.*

INT. MESSY APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Austin enters the room. He goes through the mail and throws the envelopes one by one on the table.

The different envelopes have one thing in common. All of them have his name, J. AUSTIN, and PAYMENT DUE written on it.

Austin sits on the couch. Hands in his hair. Defeated.

He looks up again and spots the clock. It's fifteen minutes before five. Austin thinks.

MARIKO
*...a robbery at The Looking Glass
 Jewelry that happened shortly after
 5 p.m. today.*

Austin shakes his head.

AUSTIN
 I'm getting nuts.

He looks at the payment dues on the table. Austin is obviously doubting.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
 The hell with it.

He gets up and leaves the room.

INT. MESSY APARTMENT - EVENING

Austin returns in his apartment. He's panting and wipes junk off the table to make space for the BRIEFCASE he's holding.

Austin takes off his jacket. He grabs a BALACLAVA from the inside pocket and throws it in the already full thrash can.

He walks through the apartment in disbelief.

AUSTIN

What have I done? What have I
fucking done?

He looks at the briefcase. Austin hesitates, but eventually walks to the briefcase and opens it.

The panic on his face disappears when he looks inside the briefcase. Austin smiles.

The TV turns itself on. Startled by the sound, Austin closes the briefcase.

The static on the TV quickly goes over to Mariko.

MARIKO

*So far, no arrests have been made,
but Commander Arnav Bajaj has
confirmed that the masked man, in
fact, is civilian Jimmy Austin.*

Austin freezes. He walks closer to the TV. A picture of him appears on the screen.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

*Police has searched Austin's
apartment, but haven't found a clue
about his whereabouts, nor the
stolen content.*

Austin touches the screen. It is as if he touches her cheek.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

*Greenfield Police are continuing
the investigation. Anyone with
information is asked to contact the
police.*

INT. MESSY APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is deserted. We hear TWO MUFFLED VOICES followed by a silence.

Commander ARNAV BAJAJ (39) creeps into the room. He holds a GUN and scans the room. He spots the black screen of the TV.

ARNAV BAJAJ

Clear!

A POLICE OFFICER enters. Also armed, but he holds his gun down.

POLICE OFFICER
I checked the other rooms. No sign of the suspect, Commander. Seems like he has left. Would you like to put out a warrant?

Arnav sighs. He looks away and sees that the TV is on.

The news is on, but without Mariko. Instead, a MALE is reading the news.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Bajaj?

The Police Officer follows Arnav's look.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Mariko left the news? Ah, man. I'll miss her.

Arnav shakes his head and spots the trash can. He walks to it and kneels to study the balaclava.

ARNAV BAJAJ
We should bag this.
(he gets up)
And I want that warrant out. Right now.

POLICE OFFICER
Yes, Sir.

The Police Officer nods and leaves the room.

Arnav walks to the TV. He's about to turn it off, but the screen goes to static. Arnav frowns.

A new image appears on the screen: Austin and Mariko are enjoying a sunny day, while laying on the green grass.

They talk. They laugh. They are in love.

Then, Austin reveals an EXPENSIVE RING and gives it to Mariko. She accepts the gift with awe.

Austin and Mariko gaze into each other's eye. They finally kiss...

...and the TV screen turns black.

THE END