

ABOVE THE LINE

Written by

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BLACK

INSERT: VIATOREM PRODUCTIONS LOGO

We hear a **DRAMATIC IMPACT SOUND**.

CUT ON NOISE TO:

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

The scene is shot in 2.35:1 Widescreen, contrasting the rest of the films 16:9 aspect ratio with its letterboxing black bars at the top and bottom of the screen. The cinematography is reminiscent of the Tarantino films of the 90s.

The soundtrack plays in the background.

LUTHER, BRUNI, MARX and **LOCKE**. All four are dressed smartly in suit, shirt, belt and formal shoes are in a stand off, guns drawn. Marx has his gun pointed firmly at Bruni, who in turn points theirs at Luther who targets Locke while she aims at Marx.

We hold on the tension.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Cut!

The aspect ratio slowly expands to 16:9, the letterboxing bars transitioning away.

The actors break character, smiling and happy with the take they've just done, all the tension from the scene is gone.

CHRIS walks into frame.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

That was awesome. Love it. We're gonna do one more just for safety but keep that intensity.

He looks to Marx.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

When you do the move, gun out it's gotta be -

Chris mimes holding a gun and smacking his hands together to shoot. We hear the sound of a **GUN SHOT** as his hands connect.

CUT ON NOISE TO:

BLACK

SUPERIMPOSE: 'A VIATOREM PRODUCTIONS FILM'

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCERS LIVING ROOM - DAY

In 16:9 aspect ratio, the image fills the screen.

The soundtrack stops.

An orange STRESS BALL is thrown up in the air by a figure laying on the couch.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: 'FROM PRODUCER JOSHUA TAYLOR-DAVIES'

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The ball is flung up into the air again.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: 'AND DIRECTOR GOVIND CHANDRAN'

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

And again...

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: 'STARRING:...'

with the principal cast names listed.

EVE (V.O.)
Can I ask you not to do that?

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A hand catches the ball.

Lounging on the sofa, throwing the stress ball is **CHRIS** - a person of colour / minority in his mid-to-late 20s. His lack of interest or engagement is beyond obvious.

Across from him, with her laptop open on the coffee table between them, is **EVE** - an archetypical 'white middle class' woman, also in her mid-to-late 20s.

CHRIS

Fine.

He stops throwing the stress ball.

EVE

We need to make some decisions here.

Chris does not make eye contact with Eve, he's being childish.

CHRIS

I have made decisions - you disagreed with them Eve.

Eve takes a beat, keeping her cool.

EVE

Some of them.

CHRIS

They're key roles.

EVE

I agree.

CHRIS

The entire film fucking lives or dies based on these roles.

He throws the stress ball up again and catches it. Eve glares.

EVE

I agree. Which is why I am trying to help you make the right decisions Chris.

Chris sits up, finally facing Eve and placing the stress ball on the coffee table.

CHRIS

So you think my casting choices are wrong?

EVE
I didn't say that.

CHRIS
But you implied it.

EVE
I didn't imply it.

CHRIS
Really?

EVE
Yes.

Chris stares at her for a moment, then gets up. He paces. Eve takes in his latest mood.

EVE (CONT'D)
Look Chris, you're a good director.
But, I'm a good producer - one you
chose by the way for this project -
and all I'm saying is: I can help
you with this.

The pacing Chris is unresponsive, but stops moving.

EVE (CONT'D)
I actually agree with your decision
to cast Simon Mitchell -

CHRIS
- And Harry.

EVE
Harry Coen yeah. They're both great
actors, and Harry's got a lot of
experience but comes in cheap.
You'd probably recognize him as
'that guy from that film' but never
quite remember his name. Sorta like
Paul Dano but twenty or thirty
years older.

CHRIS
Who?

EVE
Exactly. And Simon, he's at that
stage of being 'good but not got a
big break yet' so again, cheap.

Chris sits back down.

CHRIS
They're good choices.

EVE
Yeah, I agree.

Chris draws in a deep sigh.

CHRIS
If we're gonna work together can
you please stop saying 'I agree'
every freaking -

EVE
- What would you like me to say
then?

CHRIS
Anything else. Literally, anything
else.

EVE
Fine.

CHRIS
(nodding)
Just the two lead roles then.

EVE
Bruni and Locke.

There is a seeming calm between them for the first time.

CHRIS
I liked Helen's audition.

EVE
Logistically, I'm not so sure about
her.

CHRIS
Logistically?

EVE
She lives far away. We'd have to
put her up even for rehearsals, let
alone her travel expenses -

CHRIS
You're saying you don't want the
best actor for the role... because
they live far away?

EVE

I'm saying we have a budget Chris.
And it's not a big budget, so yeah
we need to factor this stuff into
it.

Chris slowly collapses his head into his hands out of stress.

CHRIS

Are you kidding me?

EVE

We saw a lot of good actors this
isn't the worst thing in the -

CHRIS

You know what really bugs me Eve?

EVE

What?

CHRIS

I saw that last short you produced,
the one that screened at like every
festival last year.

EVE

What about it?

CHRIS

Well as we've been casting all the
other roles for this film I just
kept wondering... did you give that
director such a fucking hard time
too? Or did you let him do his
thing? Did you support him? Or did
he have to put up with this sh-

EVE

- That's not fair. And if you want
an answer: yeah, we got on. I
supported him and his vision, the
same way I'm supporting you and
your vision.

Chris scoffs and rolls his eyes.

EVE (CONT'D)

But hey since we're being honest -
how many other Producers did you go
to first?

Chris moves to answer but Eve cuts him off.

EVE (CONT'D)

And how many of those kept talking once you said the premise "a Brechtian, Tarantino style film in the woke 'cancel culture' era".

There's a silence between them.

Neither is the other's first choice here. Eve turns the laptop to face Chris, our view of the screen obstructed.

EVE (CONT'D)

What about them - they'll bring in the left-wing 'woke' critical praise you so desperately want.

CHRIS

No.

EVE

It makes sense to cast-

CHRIS

- It's tokenism. No. There's no point ticking a box to tick a box - we cast the person that's best for the role and character regardless of anything else.

Eve clicks though to another actor.

EVE

Her. You liked her in the audition and we can get her. She's young, she's talented...

Chris looks Eve directly in the eyes for a moment, then gazes down to the laptop.

CHRIS

Yeah.

(beat)

She was good.

Chris picks the stress ball up off the table and collapses back into the sofa.

Eve shrugs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Alright then. Who's next?

He throws the ball up in the air.

CUT TO BLACK.

SIMON (V.O.)
(loudly whispered)
I remember you from the table read
yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

SIMON MITCHELL, in his early 20s with the look of a classical Hollywood 'leading man', is stood with **JADE WINDSLOW**, in her early-to-mid 20s with sharp features and a strong sense of confidence to her.

Sat rather awkwardly nearby is **OLIVIA JOHNSON**, a young actress of colour / minority in her late teens to early 20s whose lack of presence contrasts distinctly with the two others.

Not too far off from them sits **HARRY COEN**, in his 50's and a man seemingly unburdened by any pretense or bravado.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE:

CHAPTER ONE
Movies are like an expensive form
of therapy.
- Tim Burton

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

SIMON
Yeah you're... Erm...

He snaps his fingers trying to remember.

JADE
Jade Windslow.

SIMON
(chuckles)
No, I mean yes you are obviously,
but I meant your character.

JADE

Bruni.

SIMON

Yeah see I was just, getting confused who was Bruni and who was Locke. Like, I read the script and I thought 'Ok these names are gonna fucking confuse me - it's two women but with male names?'.

JADE

It's not the characters real names they're code names. Based of philosophers.

SIMON

Well you know, still could be something more... you're a woman so something more feminine.

JADE

Well in my characters case it doesn't really matter, they're gender fluid. It's a commentary.

SIMON

(chuckling)

I mean what isn't these days right.

OLIVIA (O.C.)

I think it's nice.

They look to Olivia, who's been listening to the discussion.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Like the story's a bit muddled in some areas but I think we could say something quite... important. Gender politics has always been difficult to tackle-

JADE

- Exactly. See I see it as a challenge. Directors got a great track record. So worst case, I've got some unique and different scenes for my showreel. Showing my range.

SIMON

You not worried you'll get slagged off for, not being gender fluid yourself?

Harry looks over towards the trio, not getting involved, but listening in to see their responses.

Jade frowns towards Simon.

JADE

You do know what an actor is right?

OLIVIA

There is a debate to be had though.

JADE

Really?

Simon smiles.

OLIVIA

I'm not saying you shouldn't play the role I just mean, yeah there's a larger conversation about representation.

SIMON

Oh yes, let's talk about representation!

JADE

(bluntly to Simon)

I'm confused if you're agreeing or disagreeing here.

SIMON

Well we're making a movie that 5 years ago, and five years from now, nobody will give a shit about. Cause right now its the 'in' thing right - let's make everything female-centric, with some diversity thrown in because if you have a penis, and if it's white: fuck you.

Jade and Olivia look at Simon in shock.

SIMON (CONT'D)

But it's cool cause, I apparently had a 100 years of privilege - I wasn't born for most of it but now it's not about who's talented, who worked for it or who's right for it. Lets just bend to societal pressure.

JADE
(beat)
Are you actually for real?

SIMON
What I can't have my own opinion?

Jade looks to Olivia then Harry.

JADE
This isn't a prank show or something, you genuinely think it's bad that white male actors aren't getting the privilege they once had?

SIMON
That's not what I said.

JADE
And you thought the best place to bring it up is at the rehearsal for a film that's trying to say something about that?

SIMON
(mockingly)
The film is trying to say that white men suck?

Harry looks beyond the cast, and notices **CHRIS** has entered the space. He smiles and gets up. Patting Simon on the shoulder as he joins the group.

HARRY
That'll do boy. You can dig that grave later.

Chris grabs a chair and comes up to the group.

CHRIS
Welcome, everyone. If you'd like to erm...

He gestures to the nearby chairs and the cast all grab a chair each.

JADE
(loudly whispering to Simon)
Were you this big a dick at the table read?

Simon laughs, and the actors all form a seated circle with Chris. Jade is to his left, followed by Harry, then Olivia, with Simon sat by his right.

The director smiles.

CHRIS

So, day one.

(he looks around)

I think everyone vaguely know's
each other from the table read -

Everyone nods, except Harry.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

- but, being the key cast, I do
think a lot of the film and its
believability - it's authenticity
- comes from these relationships.

(beat)

So... erm, yeah... being the key
cast I thought we should have a few
sessions, just the five of us.
We'll get to know each other,
rehearse, feel comfortable with the
whole process and all that.

Silence. They all look to him to continue.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So.

(chuckles)

Lets go around the group and just a
quick - who you are, what role
you're playing and maybe something
about your background.

Simon adjusts himself in his seat, ready to engage.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Lets start with you.

He gestures to Jade, who gives off a hint of a smile at being selected instead of Simon.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Oh and if you can; what would you
like to get out of the role or why
you're on board with this.

Jade looks him in the eye, takes a moment then nods. She looks to the group.

JADE

(smiling)

Well I'm Jade Windslow, I've done a few shorts before - this would be really my first feature role - and I guess like a lot of others I've got a part time job but of course hoping to move out of that as soon as I can.

Chris nods, and Olivia looks at her intently.

JADE (CONT'D)

As far as this production goes... I really liked the script, I'm a huge fan of the genre but it's definitely one that needs 'updating' and yeah I'm hoping this will do that.

CHRIS

That's, awesome. We're happy to have you on board. And you...

He gestures to Harry, who takes a deep breath in then:

HARRY

I'm Harry, Coen. I spent my youth doing a lot more theatre, got into films and I've done... well I've lost track but it's mostly been in the more, dramatic side of things style wise so this is a nice departure from that.

CHRIS

(nodding)

Alright, alright. And Olivia.

OLIVIA

Erm... I'm Olivia Johnson and... I don't really have a background this is my first 'non student film' really.

Silence.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I guess, what I want out of this... the experience?

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I mean I liked the script, like women in this genre tend to end up in 'men did me wrong I must get revenge and kill men' film and I liked that this wasn't really that and that there's a chance to just be... a hired hit-person, and then explore their lives and what happens when things go...

SIMON

Tits up?

Everyone laughs.

OLIVIA

Exactly.

Olivia laughs with them.

SIMON

Well, I'm Simon. I've done a few award winning shorts - actually won some Best Actor awards in the process - and most recently finished a small role in a Netflix series that's out later this year.

Jade rolls her eyes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

And I'm here because...

He looks around to the other actors, smiling slyly.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You know you've got a great track record as a director, it's quite a unique project and will give me a chance to, show my range, and really make a statement about diversity and representation.

Harry stifles a laugh as Jade and Olivia look to each other. Chris seems impressed.

CHRIS

Love it. So, look when we're rehearsing I'm probably going to instinctively call you by the characters names, I think it also will help you responding to it so...

(to Jade)

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Bruni,
 (to Harry)
Luther,
 (to Olivia)
Locke,
 (to Simon)
And Marx.

The actors each acknowledge Chris with a nod as he lists their characters names, except Harry who gives a passive thumbs up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

They're all Hitmen-

SIMON

- I think we say 'Hit People' now.

CHRIS

Right, yes of course, hit people. Assassins. Our opening scene is the four of you together in a car on your way to a job for 'the boss'. I think it's an important scene - we really get to know their dynamic, their history as people and how they feel about each other, and also quite importantly how they feel about their job. So that whole first part really sets things up that will pay off as you get to know each of the characters more and more. It's a lot of dialogue and I want it to feel like a natural conversation rather than the classic 'exposition dump'.

As Chris talks, **EVE** has entered the building and walks up to the group. She pulls up a chair and the others adjust themselves to make room as she sits to the directors right.

Chris glares at her.

EVE

Please, ignore me. Continue.

CHRIS

(deep breath)

You all know our producer, Eve.

The cast acknowledge her.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Didn't know you were joining us
today.

EVE
Just being part of the process.
Please, pretend I'm not here.

Chris looks at the cast and then back to Eve.

CHRIS
Ok.
(back to the cast)
So today we're just going to focus
on that first scene really. We'll
run it through, workshop it and
really try get a feel for each
other.
(beat)
Right.

He jumps up off the chair, ready to work, and cracks his
wrists.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Lets get to work. If you can...

He gestures to the chairs, and the actors all get up and
start to rearrange the chairs

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Four chairs, two in front and two
in the back, our makeshift car for
the day.

Eve repositions herself and her chair behind where Chris
stands while the actors get set up.

Harry sits in the front right, the drivers seat, with Jade in
the front passenger seat next to him. Behind her is Simon,
with Olivia next to him behind the driver.

Of all of them, Olivia is the only one with a script to hand.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Everyone happy to be off book?

SIMON
Yeah let's go for it.

Jade nods, and Harry gives another thumbs up.

CHRIS
Olivia?

OLIVIA
Yeah, of course.

She places the script down by the side of her chair.

CHRIS
Ok then. Lets give it a run through
and go from there.

Simon stretches out, preparing for his performance. Harry clears his throat and Olivia adjusts her seating as Jade glares at Simon's prep then slips into character herself.

Chris puts his arms out, mimicking a camera as he frames them up. He puts his hands down and smiles.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
And.... ACTION!

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE:

CHAPTER TWO
Take notes. Everything is copy.
- Nora Ephron

We hear...

SIMON (V.O.)
Do you mean it's a short fight, or
short people fighting?

JADE (V.O.)
What?

CUT TO:

INT. LUTHER'S CAR - DAY

We return to the 2.35:1 Widescreen aspect ratio look of the film world.

Our cast are in character. Sat in the car, exactly in the positions they had in rehearsal are **LUTHER** (Harry), **BRUNI** (Jade), **MARX** (Simon) and **LOCKE** (Olivia).

The soundtrack returns.

All four are dressed as they were in the opening scene. Marx sits leaning forward, in conversation with Jade who is slumped back casually in the front passenger seat.

MARX / SIMON
You know, like little people.
(beat)
Midgets.

BRUNI / JADE
For fucks sake.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Yeah I don't think you can say that
word.

MARX / SIMON
Oh come on! What am I supposed to
say then. Dwarf?

BRUNI / JADE
Little person.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Or you know, just 'person'.

LUTHER / HARRY
Is this really an important
conversation to be having right
now?

MARX / SIMON
Yeah cause if I'm going to be
vilified for using a word, I wanna
know what word I should be using
instead.

LUTHER / HARRY
And that can't wait till after the
job?

MARX / SIMON
And what if there's a midget-dwarf-
little-person type person when we
get there? I'll look like an
asshole if I call them the wrong
thing.

BRUNI / JADE
Seriously?

MARX / SIMON
I'm just trying to be the good guy
here.

Bruni shakes her head and takes a deep breathe in.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
The boss said its just one mark.

BRUNI / JADE
Yeah, that's why he sent four of us.

MARX / SIMON
With one friggin magazine each.

BRUNI / JADE
Bullets don't come cheap.

MARX / SIMON
They do in America.

BRUNI / JADE
Then go to America.

LUTHER / HARRY
I can let you two out here if you've got better things to do.

BRUNI / JADE
(beat)
We're good.

Luther shakes his head.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Cut!

CUT TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Back to the real world - the actors freeze in place: **JADE, HARRY, SIMON** and **OLIVIA** all exactly as there characters last were, yet now sat on the chairs in rehearsal in their casual wear.

The soundtrack stops.

CHRIS walks over to them and kneels down to their level. In the background, **EVE** watches on.

CHRIS
I love it. I'm really liking the general vibe of the characters, Simon and Harry I think you guys just... nailed it.
(turning to Olivia)
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Olivia I like it but maybe, a bit more uncomfortableness on her end. Locke is the youngest, the least experience so she's the most inquisitive about everything.

OLIVIA

Yeah I can do that.

CHRIS

Awesome.

(to Jade)

Jade...

JADE

I think I under played Bruni.

CHRIS

Yeah?

JADE

Yeah I think they could be more assertive.

CHRIS

(mulling it over)

Mmm, I think you did well with that part. The key thing is... remember all four of you are on a job for 'the boss' BUT, each one of you has a secret assignment the others don't know about. So when Bruni says 'thats why he sent four of us'... you know it's not cause of 'the job' cause of the 'other job' - which Bruni knows is to kill Harry's character, Luther. So there's some sarcasm to the line, but also in that exchange we've got to feel that... tension.

He points to Harry.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

This is a man, you're going to kill within the next hour. That's your M.O, your goal. So that last bit of conversation has to have all that subtext.

(back to Olivia)

I think Olivia, you got it right with the looks you were giving Marx. He didn't notice you look, but we, the audience, we saw it.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

And you know, your job is to kill him. So yeah, tension.

JADE

Yeah. I'm not 100% on the lines though.

CHRIS

Oh?

Eve leans in, listening intently from the back.

JADE

Like, the conversation about...

Beat.

SIMON

Midgets.

Jade glares at him, then back to Chris.

JADE

That. I get that the scene is about them getting to the job and setting up tension but... it feels uncomfortable saying it.

CHRIS

It's not you saying it, it's a natural conversation for those characters.

EVE (O.C.)

She does have a point though.

Chris turns to see Eve walk towards them, joining in the discussion.

EVE (CONT'D)

It does risk alienating some audiences. Potentially offending some.

CHRIS

I think you're missing the point here.

(sternly)

We're not using the word and saying 'hey this word is funny, use it' we're actually saying 'its the wrong word to use'.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Would you have said to someone
filming Schindlers List that 'hey
use of the term Jew like that might
offend someone'. It's part of the
film.

EVE

I'm just saying there might be ways
we can explore-

She notices Chris mood turning.

EVE (CONT'D)

- look its your script I'm not
critiquing. But if the actors
uncomfortable -

JADE

- well, I don't have an issue with
the scene just I'd personally feel
uncomfortable saying it.

HARRY

I think that comes with being an
actor doesn't it. There will always
be that scene or that line that you
don't quite feel great doing or
saying but if it works for the
character...

JADE

Yeah and it does.

CHRIS

Excellent. Thanks.
(to Eve)
You ok?

EVE

Yeah. Just... trying to help.

Eve takes a few steps back and Chris' attention returns to
the cast.

CHRIS

Right, where were we?

SIMON

You wanted the scene to have
tension.

CHRIS

Yes.

(beat)

Tension.

Cue the **MUSIC**.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE:

CHAPTER THREE

**Being an artist means not having to
avert one's eyes.**

- Akira Kurosawa

CUT TO:

INT. LUTHER'S CAR - DAY

We return to the 2.35:1 Widescreen aspect ratio of the film world.

LUTHER (Harry), is in the drivers seat savoring every bite of a burger, clearly enjoying it. He lets out a soft moan of pleasure as he does so.

The passenger back door opens, but he doesn't move - continuing to eat the burger.

LUTHER / HARRY

Can't even enjoy a good meal these
days without there being a catch.

The soundtrack kicks in.

LOCKE (Olivia), still well dressed but missing the suit she once had, sits in the back seat of the car.

LOCKE / OLIVIA

It's the red meat. It kills.

She leans back, relaxed. Behind Luther's seat, she has a gun - silencer equipped - pointed at him. Her gaze is fixed on him, but he continues to go about his meal.

LUTHER / HARRY

So does stress.

LOCKE / OLIVIA

I'm not stressed.

LUTHER / HARRY
Stress can really compromise your
immune system. Leads to a lot of...
bad things.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Do I look stressed to you Luther?

He stops eating and looks at her through the rear view
mirror.

LUTHER / HARRY
You know there is a version of this
where everyone just sails off into
the sunset... alive.

He extends one of the fries out to Locke who takes it. She
grimaces.

OLIVIA
Needs more salt.

*The camera very slowly tracks in on both as we cut between
them.*

LUTHER / HARRY
So, you're gonna kill me... don't
you even want to know my real name?

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Why would I?

LUTHER / HARRY
Of course. Keeps it impersonal. No
emotions.

He looks back to his food and continues to eat.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Anything you'd like to... get off
your chest? Any past regrets?

LUTHER / HARRY
I've always said, 'the past is a
rabbit hole' and its one I don't
intend to go down.

Locke examines his demeanor, intrigued by him.

LUTHER / HARRY (CONT'D)
You know they say anger is just the
memory of pain in the past, re-
manifested.
(beat)
(MORE)

LUTHER / HARRY (CONT'D)
I guess that makes anxiety, the
anticipation of pain in the future.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Is that so?

He finishes the burger. We hear another moan of appreciation.

LOCKE / OLIVIA (CONT'D)
You not gonna fight me? Pull your
gun... argue why you shouldn't
die...

LUTHER / HARRY
You really shouldn't be so stressed
at your age.
(beat)
Yoga. I think that could do wonders
for you.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Has anyone ever told you about the
concept of 'mansplaining'?

Luther smiles.

LUTHER / HARRY
Personally I don't think that's it
but Marx would probably ask if you
wanted it explained to you.

Locke smiles.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Any last words?

Beat.

The camera stops tracking in.

LUTHER / HARRY
(smiling to himself)
It was a hell of a burger.

Luther looks off into the distance and we hear the sound of a
silenced **GUNSHOT**.

CUT TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

CLOSE UP on **CHRIS**'s face, as we hear the sound from the
gunshot carry through.

Back in the real world, the soundtrack ends.

CHRIS
Yes. I love it.

In the real world, **HARRY** and **OLIVIA** are in the centre of the space, performing in a make shift version of the scene, again using chairs as a stand in for the car. **SIMON** and **JADE** are sat on either side of Chris, with **EVE** once again in the background. All are in different clothes from before.

Time has passed.

Chris gets up and walks towards the actors in the centre.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
That... just that chemistry. Yes.

Both actors look pleased. The director turns around, facing the other two.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Simon!

That got his attention.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What Olivia was doing there, how she... how she engaged and reacted with Harry - that's what I need from you. That...

Chris gesticulates, awkwardly.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
...reactiveness. You can tell, she's thinking.

Jade laughs.

JADE
Thinking... you're screwed Simon.

Simon laughs it off, but is clearly offended. In the background, another actor **SAMANTHA** has entered the space and is walking over to them at the stage. Chris notices her, as does Eve who reacts negatively.

CHRIS
(as he walks back to his seat)
Lets change it up. Sam's here so Jade, lets do your scene.

JADE

Sure.

Jade gets up and walks past Chris to set up as Samantha joins her. Before Chris can sit down though he makes eye contact with Eve who signals him over.

CHRIS

(to the actors)

You two get warmed up, just give me one sec. Harry that's you for the day - catch you at the next session.

HARRY

Thanks chief.

Harry gathers his things to exit and Chris walks over to Eve.

EVE

You didn't tell me you asked Samantha to come in today?

CHRIS

Yeah I called her last night.

EVE

Ok I don't want to make it a thing but just, give me a heads up in future. Health and safety, all that stuff. Like it's fine, just... lets be on the same page.

CHRIS

Yeah, sure.

He turns to leave.

EVE

Erm...

He turns back.

CHRIS

There a problem?

EVE

How much of the scenes with the two of them are you rehearsing?

CHRIS

What do you mean?

EVE

I mean are you doing... that scene?

CHRIS

(offended)

No, obviously not. I'm not an idiot. We're going to talk about that bit at some point -

EVE

- Yeah we'll set up a session with the intimacy coordinator -

CHRIS

- No.

(beat)

I'm not having another influence on our rehearsals. No. Everything they're going to do... I can do. There is literally, no point to bringing them in so... no.

EVE

This is not a discussion. I'm being understanding, about everything else but this... it's happening. The film won't get insurance for the shoot, if we don't have a licensed person, a licensed professional, signing off on this so get on board.

Beat.

Chris looks back to the stage and the waiting actors then back at Eve. He turns and heads back to the stage.

CHRIS

(raised voice)

Right lets run it through!

Eve smiles, she won this round.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUNI'S FLAT - DAY

We return to the 2.35:1 Widescreen aspect ratio of the film world.

BRUNI (Jade) enters the flat. There are a few blood splatters across their suit and shirt, with a rip on the left sleeve where a bullet grazed them. They look very disheveled.

The camera stays stationary.

The door in the background, Bruni pauses at the open door, catching their breath. They limp awkwardly through the flat, closing the door behind them and moving into a CLOSE UP in the foreground of the camera.

CHRIS (V.O.)

No! No!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

CHRIS hastily paces over **JADE**.

CHRIS

It's gotta be... more! We have to feel the mental state Bruni is in when they come in that door. Right now it's... exhaustion.

JADE

Yeah, I'm thinking they've finally made it home after what's happened to them so... exhaustion.

In the background, Simon seems to be enjoying seeing Jade put on the spot.

CHRIS

Yeah but lets layer that. Exhaustion is just one thing they're experiencing, I think we gotta dig deeper. They're exhausted but they're also exasperated and urgent and flustered...

SIMON

And angry.

CHRIS

(pointing to Simon)

Yes!

(back to Jade)

They're also angry. It was a job, it went sideways and remember - at this point they know their boss fucked them over by telling each person to kill another so they're pissed.

JADE
(nodding)
Alright let's go again.

CHRIS
Yeah?

JADE
(determined)
Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUNI'S FLAT - DAY

Back to the film world and the same stationary shot.

BRUNI (Jade) enters the flat, swinging the door open forcefully and stumbling into the room. They are breathing heavily and slam the door shut behind them. They limp in, pausing for a moment and exhaling loudly, their anger very evident.

They look around, then move into a CLOSE UP in the foreground of the camera. *The single shot ends here.*

Heading into the kitchen, Bruni frantically opens a few drawers before they find bandages and medical supplies. Removing the suit, they attempt - poorly - to bandage the wound on their arm.

Once bandaged they remove their gun and detach the magazine from it.

BRUNI / JADE
Fuck.

It's empty.

CARLY / SAMANTHA (O.C.)
Oh my god!

CARLY (Samantha) rushes over to Bruni and starts examining the wounds and blood splatter.

CARLY / SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
What the fuck happened to you?

BRUNI / JADE
It's nothing.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
'Nothing' is what you said this job
would be and you've been fucking
shot.

(beat)
You need to clean the wound first.

She opens one of the cabinets and takes out some medical
grade cleaning alcohol and cloth.

BRUNI / JADE
You got anymore mags?

Bruni places the gun on the counter top nearby.

BRUNI / JADE (CONT'D)
I'm out of bullets.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
Sorry. Not my area anymore.

Bruni removes the bandages from their arm as Carly applies
the alcohol to the cloth and presses it to the wound.

Bruni flinches and grimaces at the touch.

Carly looks her straight in the eyes.

CARLY / SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Seriously. This is why I got out.
(beat)
This is why you should get out.

There's a pause between them as they keep eye contact with
each other before Carly moves to the sink with the bloody
cloth.

BRUNI / JADE
Well it looks like I'm not really
being given a choice in the matter
now.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
What do you mean?

Carly returns to Bruni and slowly, gently, bandages their
arm.

BRUNI / JADE
They're cleaning house. We were
each told to kill another person on
the team.

There's a glance from Carly, but she continues what she's doing.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
Did you call The Boss?

BRUNI / JADE
Yeah.

The arm is now well bandaged. Bruni flexes a bit, moving the arm and testing it's functionality.

BRUNI / JADE (CONT'D)
He said it's up to us - he's only keeping one so... 'the winner takes it all'.

A MESSAGE TONE beeps. Carly glances at her phone, reading the message while continuing the conversation.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
Well that's just fucked up.

The phone goes back into her pocket.

BRUNI / JADE
I'm sorry, you got something more important than me being hunted and killed going on there?

Carly laughs and moves intimately close to Bruni.

The soundtrack begins, building on their intimacy.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
(playfully)
Nothing that can't wait.

Both lean in for the kiss, and as their lips are about to meet-

EVE (V.O.)
Cut!

The music ends and we...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

EVE storms over to **CHRIS** and the actors. **JADE** and **SAMANTHA** are in position whilst, **OLIVIA**, and **SIMON** watch from the sides.

EVE

Chris, you can't - the conversation
we literally just had.

CHRIS

What actors can't kiss in a
rehearsal now?

EVE

A kiss that leads to them making
out -

CHRIS

- it's an intimate expression of -

EVE

- they make out, Chris. Just call
it what it is.

CHRIS

And that's a problem because...

EVE

Like I explained to you, there is a
process.

CHRIS

I'm the director. It's my fucking
process Eve.

The actors are visibly uncomfortable with the conflict being
aired out in front of them. Eve notices this.

EVE

Can we...

She gestures for them to speak away from the group. Chris
nods and the two walk off together.

SIMON

(slowly)

Fuccckkkk. That can't be good.

Beat.

OLIVIA

Good scene though.

JADE

Thanks...

CUT TO:

INT. JUST OUTSIDE THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Both **EVE** and **CHRIS** walk out together and Chris quickly turns to speak to Eve as soon as they're out of earshot of the cast.

CHRIS

You do not undermine me in front of the cast. I don't care that you're the producer. I don't care that you found the funding for all this and I don't care what any fucking contracts say - if you ever do that again I will make sure this is the last film you ever produce. I will get you blacklisted from every possible job and you will regret trying to fuck up my film.

(beat)

Is that clear?

Eve takes a moment, calmly staring at Chris.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

JADE and **SAMANTHA** have joined **OLIVIA**, and **SIMON** hanging around the stage area waiting for Chris and Eve to return.

SIMON

I gotta ask -

Jade laughs, and Olivia smiles and shakes her head. Simon points to Jade and Samantha.

SIMON (CONT'D)

- do you two have an issue rehearsing the scene, making out and all that.

SAMANTHA

No, I've done a lot of theatre and you rehearse any kisses or whatever so its no big deal.

OLIVA

Although I guess this gets a bit more intimate than just kissing there's...

(beat)

... groping? You know what I mean.

SAMANTHA

Doesn't bug me really. If it's what
the character and scene needs.

Olivia nods, understanding Samantha's perspective, as does
Simon.

SIMON

And you Jade?

Jade takes a moment, collecting her thoughts.

EVE (V.O.)

Beyond that, I feel like I've been
trying -

CUT TO:

INT. JUST OUTSIDE THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

We pick up with **EVE** and **CHRIS**'s disagreement.

EVE

- really hard with you, despite
your complete shut down of any view
point that isn't your own.

CHRIS

I collaborate creatively with my
cinematographer, my art designer,
my actors -

EVE

- then why not with me?

CHRIS

Because you're putting logistics
and rules over creativity and
authenticity.

EVE

That's not fair.

CHRIS

It's how I feel. This scene and
this... issue, it's just one
example.

(beat)

I'm in charge.

Beat.

EVE
No.
(beat)
You're not.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

JADE
I'm fine with the scene I just
think having someone come in who
specializes in intimacy will help
us do it better and feel less
uncomfortable about it.

SIMON
So you do feel uncomfortable about
it.

JADE
That's not what I said.

SIMON
I mean you just -

JADE
- I said, someone can help make it
better.

SIMON
You also said 'less uncomfortable
about it'.

JADE
I did and you know what, I don't
have to explain myself to you.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JUST OUTSIDE THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

CHRIS leans back against a nearby wall some distance from
EVE.

CHRIS
So where does this leave us?

Neither are looking at each other.

EVE
 It's your choice. Work with me -
 respectfully, collaboratively - on
 the project and let the intimacy
 coordinator work with you to
 develop that scene, or...

CHRIS
 Or...

EVE
 (sighs)
 Honestly?
 (beat)
 I don't know.

Silence. Chris looks at Eve.

CHRIS
 Tell the cast we're done for today.

With that, Chris walks out the door as Eve watches on...

EVE
 (beat)
 Damn it.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE:

CHAPTER FOUR
 Before you say 'cut', wait five
 more seconds.
 - Wim Wenders

CUT TO:

INT. BRUNI'S FLAT - DAY

We return to the film world.

CARLY (Samantha) lets her head drop back on the floor where she lies, breathing heavily. Though her bottoms are still on she is (implied) topless. Next to her, also breathing heavily, is **BRUNI** (Jade), her top unbuttoned but still on, revealing a wrap around her chest, binding her breasts to mask her gender.

BRUNI / JADE
 (between breaths)
 That was...

CARLY / SAMANTHA
(between breaths)
Yeah...

Catching her breath, Carly gets up and walks to the kitchen, picking up and putting on the shirt strewn nearby. She opens a cabinet, taking out a glass and pouring herself a glass of water.

BRUNI / JADE
Not that I'm complaining but, what brought that on?

CARLY / SAMANTHA
What do you mean?

Bruni props themselves up a bit, still on the floor as Carly drinks from the glass. She slowly buttons her top back up.

BRUNI / JADE
I know a bloody arm is sexy and all that but you were... Enthusiastic.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
(chuckling)
And I'm not usually?

BRUNI / JADE
Well...

Carly laughs and takes another sip from the glass.

BRUNI / JADE (CONT'D)
You've been a bit, subdued, since you quit-

The term annoys Carly.

BRUNI / JADE (CONT'D)
- Sorry, since you got out.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
That's fair.

She puts the glass in the sink and pulls open a drawer.

CARLY / SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
But I think in life...
(beat)
You're never really out.

In a lightning fast move she pulls a knife from the open drawer and throws it at Bruni who reacts just as quickly, rolling to her side to get out of the way and jumping to her feet.

As the knife hits the floor, the soundtrack kicks in.

BRUNI / JADE
Are you actually kidding me Carly?!

CARLY / SAMANTHA
Sorry hun.

Carly's hand hovers near the drawer and Bruni eyes the knife on the floor, then makes direct eye contact with Carly.

BRUNI / JADE
The text earlier.

CARLY / SAMANTHA
(smug)
When you said 'Winner Takes It All'... that's a lot of money.

BRUNI / JADE
So you're back in huh?

CARLY / SAMANTHA
I like you, but...

BRUNI / JADE
Yeah.

In an instant Bruni goes for the knife and Carly grabs another, lunging at her now former lover. Bruni goes for the head and...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. STUNT CHOREOGRAPHERS STUDIO - DAY

We follow **JADE** as she attacks **SAMANTHA**, transitioning from the film world back into a rehearsal.

The two women are in a open studio space, crash mats placed around the area by them and a gym bag full of practice weapons nearby. Not far from them, stands the **STUNT CHOREOGRAPHER**.

Jade takes a couple more swipes at her opponent who ducks then slashes back before going for an elbow to her arm. Jade recoils back, acting in pain.

The Stunt Choreographer CLAPS.

STUNT CHOREOGRAPHER
That is good! Really good ladies.

The two women catch their breath and look to him. Both are dripping with sweat.

STUNT CHOREOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
You got it in you to keep going?

	JADE		SAMANTHA
Yeah		Yeah	

STUNT CHOREOGRAPHER
Alright then.

He smacks his hands together.

STUNT CHOREOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Both Jade and Samantha take their places across from each other.

JADE
3... 2... 1

Jade goes for the head.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS BEDROOM - DAY

CHRIS is laying back on this bed, eyes wide open.

His room is, sparse. A few classic film posters populate the walls in a room that gives of a distinctly 'rented cheap property' feel.

Dejected, he looks to one of the posters - *Je Vous Presente Pamela (Meet Pamela)*, the fictional film-within-a-film from Francois Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973). Across from it is a poster for *Nebraska Jim*, featuring Rick Dalton.

Getting up, he walks to his laptop and moves the mouse before clicking in. He walks back to the bed and sits down, closing his eyes. A calming, slow and soothing voice plays from the laptop, with peaceful music in the background.

VIDEO SPEAKER (V.O.)

In life, we must be cognizant of stress as an abundance of stress can lead to many bad things - from high blood pressure to disease and even difficulties in forming relationships in social situations...

Chris takes a deep breath in, and then out.

VIDEO SPEAKER (V.O.)

Remember that much stress in our lives comes from anger or anxiety.

(beat)

And what is anger? Anger is just the memory of pain in the past.

(beat)

And what is anxiety? Anxiety is just the anticipation of pain in the future...

He breathes deeply again.

VIDEO SPEAKER (V.O.)

Now let us try a small exercise. Close your eyes. Think of a moment from your past that brought you great joy. Great happiness.

(beat)

Now, remember those feelings. Remember how your body feels. The energy that flows through you.

(beat)

Hold on to this feeling. Now I want you to think of whatever it is that is causing you stress. But when you do remember it, bring back those feelings from your happy memory. Bring back how your body felt. I'm going to give you a moment to try this.

The peaceful music plays. We hold for about 5 seconds before...

Chris explodes. He yells. Getting up he violently and aggressively takes out his frustration as the music peacefully plays in the background.

That done, he sits back down.

VIDEO SPEAKER (V.O.)
There. Doesn't that feel better?

CUT TO:

INT. BRUNI'S FLAT - DAY

We return to the film world - music and all.

BRUNI (Jade) recoils back in pain having been elbowed on their injured arm by **CARLY** (Samantha). The two warriors continue to exchange blows with each other.

The exchange between them is violent and brutal.

Ultimately, Bruni is able to knock the knife from Carly's hand, and land a killing blow to her gut. Bruni looks their former lover directly in the eyes, not breaking eye contact for even a moment as the life slips from Carly's face.

Defeated, she falls to the floor as Bruni stands tall looking down on her.

RING.

The soundtrack ends and the sound of the phone goes.

RING RING.

Bruni does not flinch though, their gaze still on Carly's lifeless corpse.

RING RING.

Now, they look to the phone. Slowly Bruni walks over to it and picks it up.

BRUNI / JADE
Hello?
(beat)
I'll be there.

She puts the phone down, takes a moment then picks up the gun by the counter top. Again, she checks the magazine.

Empty.

BRUNI / JADE (CONT'D)
Yeah...

CUT TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

SIMON, is sat on stage with **EVE**. Also with them is **MICHELLE**, another actor.

It's awkward.

EVE
Look the scene you're doing today -

SIMON
Oh it's fine.

He gestures to Michelle and himself.

SIMON (CONT'D)
We've sorta talked it through and mapped out stuff.

Eve looks at Michelle.

EVE
Yeah?

MICHELLE
Yeah. There's some physicality to it but that's fine as Simon says.

She realises the pun and gives a soft laugh.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Sorry, unintentional.

SIMON
It's cool.

EVE
As long as you're both fine with it.

MICHELLE
Yup.

SIMON
Yup.

Beat.

SIMON (CONT'D)
So... do we know if Chris is coming?

MICHELLE
Why wouldn't he?

EVE

He should be yeah. I mean, I assume
he is.

MICHELLE

Is there a problem?

SIMON

It's just I know you guys had the
erm...

He gestures towards the exit, where Chris and Eve argued.

EVE

No it's fine. Things get heated in
the moment, creatively, but its all
fine. He should be -

We hear the sound of the DOORS OPENING.

EVE (CONT'D)

- there he is.

Chris enters the space and walks over to the stage. Michelle
mouths 'What happened' to Simon who brushes it off. Almost
instinctively, Eve stands up and moves towards him.

CHRIS

(to Simon)

Hey

EVE

Chris do you mind if we -

CHRIS

- how about after? I assume you're
staying for the rehearsal?

EVE

I am yes.

CHRIS

Cool, then we'll talk after.

He turns back to Simon and Michelle.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(energized)

Ok! Marx! Sarah!

Chris takes a seat on the chair formerly occupied by Eve, who
now retreats off stage to her previous position in the
background. Simon cracks his fingers, ready to go.

SIMON

Yes!

CHRIS

So with Marx, at first glance, he's an asshole. But... there's more to it. More to him

SIMON

The way I've read him, I guess, is that he's really doing what he does - he joined 'the biz' - out of love. All of his choices aren't clear to us but once you see the whole picture you realise that.

CHRIS

Oh 100%. And he never directly says the words - there are some hints about it in some scenes and you can draw conclusions but its like... any of these characters could lead their own film but this isn't that film this is 'moments when these people have been brought together' - so it's not Bruni: The Movie or Marx: The Movie.

This gets a chuckle from Simon.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So we don't fully explore their backstories but we know them and put enough of it in there for the audience to sympathize or empathize with them and sometimes draw their own conclusions.

SIMON

Yeah I totally get what you mean.

CHRIS

And like - the scene we'll run through today... it's essentially about his state of mind after things have gone down the way they have and it's showing... that other side of him.

Through this whole process, Eve watches them intently.

SIMON

Yeah he's physically and emotionally... exhausted.

CHRIS
Long day at the office.

Simon smiles and nods.

SIMON
Yeah I think I know what you mean.

CHRIS
And everything from that first
moment in the car to now... it's so
important that we capture his
mindset.

Simon gets up, stretching as he prepares to act.

MICHELLE
Erm....

She raises her hand nervously. Simon goes to get a couple of
mats - the same ones used as crash mats previously.

CHRIS
Yeah?

MICHELLE
So how would you describe Sarah and
Marx relationship?

CUT TO:

INT. MARX FLAT, ENTRANCE - DAY

MARX (Simon) enters his sparse flat. He looks exhausted, and
walks with the pace of a man who's lost sense of motivation.
His face and the top half of his outfit are covered in blood.

He takes out a zippo lighter from his pocket and places it on
a nearby counter top. He looks at it intently for a moment
then places a gun next to it.

He heads upstairs.

INT. MARX FLAT, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and **MARX** (Simon) enters.

Laying on the bed, is **SARAH** (Michelle). Marx stays on the far
side of the room.

The shot is reminiscent of one from Pulp Fiction when Bruce Willis character returns home. This is followed by a close up of him then her.

He looks at her, taking in the view then walks to the adjacent bathroom and washes his face.

She stirs, and looks up at him.

SARAH / MICHELLE

Hey you.

Beat.

He looks up into the mirror.

MARX / SIMON

Hey.

We hold on the wide shot.

SARAH / MICHELLE

Hard day at the office?

MARX / SIMON

Pretty hard. Got in a fight.

SARAH / MICHELLE

Poor baby.

Slowly, he returns to the room and takes off his jacket then sits on the side of the bed and removes his shoes. He then lays behind Sarah, spooning her from behind.

We slow track in to a mid-shot.

SARAH / MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Did everything go as planned?

MARX / SIMON

Not exactly.

SARAH / MICHELLE

Did you win?

MARX / SIMON

Yeah. I won.

SARAH / MICHELLE

Are you still retiring?

MARX / SIMON

(beat)

I don't know. We're not at the
finish yet...

Sarah rolls over on her back and Marx gets on top of her.
They kiss.

SARAH / MICHELLE

We're in a lot of danger aren't we?

Marx nods his head: Yes.

CUT TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

SIMON, is picking up the matts off the floor and putting them
away. **MICHELLE**, has gathered her things and walks past **CHRIS**.

CHRIS

That was great.

MICHELLE

Thanks. Can't wait till we shoot
it.

Chris smiles gives her a thumbs up as she walks off and out
of the space. **EVE** walks over.

EVE

Listen Chris -

CHRIS

- I don't wanna get into it Eve.
You wanna have the biggest dick in
the room, fine you've got the
biggest dick. I'm not gonna get
into this power play bullshit.

He starts to walk away. Simon is clearly uncomfortable in the
background near them.

EVE

Power play?

Chris stops and turns around, approaching Eve.

CHRIS

All that nonsense about 'supporting
me and my vision', gotta be honest
here... I'm not feeling it Eve.

EVE
You think I'm enjoying this
dynamic? I'm trying Chris but
you're being...

CHRIS
Being what?

EVE
A dick. You're being a dick.

Chris looks at Simon.

CHRIS
I'm not even gonna...

He starts to walk off again. Eve looks at Simon,
contemplating not reacting in front of him, but then...

EVE
(calling out after Chris)
You don't have final cut.

That stops Chris dead in his tracks, but he doesn't look
back.

EVE (CONT'D)
I checked your contract.
(beat)
You own the rights, but you don't
have final cut. So I can't
distribute the film without your
sign off, but you can't do shit
without my sign off either so we
can measure dicks if you want
but...

Chris thinks for a moment.

He turns around and walks over to Eve, a bit too close,
physically imposing himself.

CHRIS
You know what... you're right.
Let's do it your way.

He smiles, then turns and walks off hastily. Again, Eve
watches him leave.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE:

CHAPTER FIVE

I'm always interested in how people
use language to not say what they
mean.

- Greta Gerwig

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Personally I studied Meisner.

CUT TO:

INT. THE REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

JADE is stood with OLIVIA. HARRY is sat on a chair nearby,
doing a sudoku puzzle.

Another rehearsal day.

With them on stage are multiple mobile clothes rails with
various outfits on them.

JADE
Oh nice. I find some actors have
very... odd rehearsal techniques
and sometimes it just doesn't mesh.

The door to the space opens and SIMON walks in.

OLIVIA
Oh totally.

GREG, a young man in his 20's runs in after Simon. Jade keeps
her focus on them.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I've even worked with a few people
who didn't like or want to rehearse
at all.

Jade watches, as Greg hands Simon a phone. They kiss
tenderly, and Greg heads back out as Simon joins his fellow
actors on stage.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
But obviously I'm all about Meisner
so... repetition, repetition,
repletion.

Simon walks past, joining in.

SIMON
Repetition.

OLIVIA

(laughing)

Exactly. For me it works, I feel like I really get to tap into the underlying emotion of the character.

JADE

It's about authenticity.

Olivia points to her, a 'You got it!' moment.

JADE (CONT'D)

I know a lot of actors who say they find it liberating.

OLIVIA

You don't use Meisner techniques though?

JADE

Not really, I did drama school but it was very much Strasberg - memory recall stuff - so that works for me.

Simon nods.

OLIVIA

What about you Simon?

SIMON

No acting school for me. Photography degree actually.

OLIVIA

Oh cool what sort of photography?

JADE

So you don't use any methods or techniques when you're preparing for a role?

SIMON

(beat)

Well, I don't know if it's a specific style... I read the script, figure out my take on the character, talk to the director then... do whatever works.

JADE

So do you draw on your own life experiences? Memory techniques?

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)
Do some hot-seating? Rehearse in
front of a mirror?

Simon turns to Olivia.

SIMON
Still-life photography mostly.

Jade rolls her eyes. We hear the sound of the DOOR OPENING.
EVE, CHRIS and the **PRODUCTION DESIGNER - ALEX** enter together
and walk up to the stage - except for Eve who stops in the
background, giving Chris his space.

CHRIS
Costume tests! Everyone this is
Alex our production designer who's
gonna talk you through your
character's wardrobe. Alex, this is
Simon, Jade, Olivia and Harry.

They all acknowledge each other.

ALEX
(using the clothes on the
rails)
Ok Simon - that's Marx - you're
over here.
(to Olivia)
Olivia - Locke - I've got you right
here.
(to Jade)
Jade - Bruni - this is yours.
(to Harry)
And, Harry - right over here for
Luther.

Everyone goes to get their items off the rails. Simon starts
to remove his shirt.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Er...
(chuckling)
There's changing areas in the back.

SIMON
It's no big deal I'm...

The rest start to head to the changing area. Simon re-buttons
his shirt.

SIMON (CONT'D)
... I'm gonna go to the back.

He laughs if off and joins the other actors in the back. Alex and Chris walk over to each other. Alex looks over Chris shoulder to Eve.

ALEX
(discreetly)
So that's the producer you're
having issues with huh.

CHRIS
Yeah honestly she's driving me
nuts.

ALEX
You got a thing for her?

CHRIS
What? No. She is the death of
creativity here.

Alex stares at Chris a moment.

ALEX
I've known you a long time Chris -

CHRIS
- 7, 8 short films we've done
together.

ALEX
I was thinking in years but yeah,
my point is, I know you and I know
when you're in the zone and focused
on what you wanna achieve.

CHRIS
And?

ALEX
And if this tension isn't cause
you're into her or cause she did
you physical harm, then fucking get
over it.

CHRIS
Hurting my film, is hurting me.

ALEX
I'm just saying what I see. From
what I hear she's been great with
the crew - she's kept them in the
loop, talked budgets with every
department, there's some push back
on both sides but that's normal.

Chris looks back at Eve for a moment.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You told me about her trying to
bring in the erm...

CHRIS
Intimacy Coordinator

ALEX
That's it yeah. How is that any
different to me with production
design.

CHRIS
I was a part of the design process.

ALEX
And you wouldn't be with the...

CHRIS
Intimacy Coordinator

Alex raises an eyebrow at Chris.

ALEX
I'm guessing you didn't ask.

Simon walks back in, talking to Olivia. Both now in costume.

SIMON
Yeah it just wasn't for me - it's
all about creative expression
but... I sucked at the tech.

OLIVIA
I'm with you. Even recording self
tapes is bad enough.

Alex and Chris move apart, and look at the two actors.

CHRIS
Brilliant.

ALEX
I know you were taking inspiration
from Reservoir Dogs - and you look
at that film and there's a
uniformity but also an
individuality to each character so
we really tried to keep to that
idea here.

CHRIS
Yeah it's great.

Jade and Harry re-enter as well in costume.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Looking good!

JADE
I'm wondering if we're not doing enough.

CHRIS
What do you mean?

JADE
Well Bruni is meant to be gender fluid, but since we're not making that a plot point aren't people just going to think the character is a lesbian?

SIMON
Gender and sexuality aren't the same thing.

JADE
I know that - surprised you do - but should we be doing more to you know...

ALEX
I get what you mean. From a design point of view - having another character like Locke, who's a woman, also dressed in more traditional male suit wear actually helps because we get to see her retain a lot of classically 'female qualities' but for you - for Bruni - we'll ensure hair, make up, everything shifts to that more neutral fluid... spectrum.

JADE
I like that.

CHRIS
Yeah I don't want gender or sexuality to be something that 'thats what the character is' cause then its tokenism I just want it to be, represented.

HARRY

I think its an opportunity for actors to bring out a lot in their performance.

CHRIS

Exactly. Right, if everything fits we can swap back to normal clothes...

The others start to move but Jade lingers.

JADE

Erm...

CHRIS

Everything alright?

JADE

I wanted to talk about the, intimate scene. Obviously we didn't end up rehearsing it.

CHRIS

Yeah, sorry about that.

JADE

No it's fine I just... I wanted to say I think I'd be a lot more comfortable if we did use an intimacy coordinator.

CHRIS

Oh.

JADE

I've had alright experiences with scenes like that before, and I've also had bad experiences so I just think... yeah it's just a comfort thing.

(beat)

Like I think I assumed when I read the script that it wouldn't be, as... heavy as it is? I thought they'd kiss then sorta cut away and cut to after. I don't fully get why we need to see the whole thing...

CHRIS

Well it's to really establish their relationship. To show their passion for each other -

JADE

- No I get all that. Personally I just think it can work not shown.
(course correcting)
But I'm ok doing it, I just want to put it out there that yeah if you can get someone in to help coordinate that... I'd appreciate it.

CHRIS

(hesitant)
Yeah.
(beat)
I'll talk with Eve. Don't worry about it. We'll sort it out.

JADE

Thanks.

She joins the other actors backstage to change out of costume.

Chris looks at Eve sat back in the audience area, then to Alex, and back to Eve.

CHRIS

Your influence?

Eve stays seated.

EVE

This is not about me.

CHRIS

I mean this wasn't an issue at the table read. This wasn't an issue when we cast her but - what it's a coincidence that an actor now suddenly is totally on point with you?

EVE

You cannot make an actor feel pressured, or uncomfortable.

CHRIS

That is not what is going on here.

EVE

Yes. It is. And you can repackage that however you want but that is exactly what it is.

CHRIS

I am happy to work with her on the scene. To spend time, to talk it through but you're just jumping at any opportunity to interfere.

Chris paces on the stage, then turns back to Eve.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You ever hear the story of the scorpion and the frog? A scorpion and a frog meet on the bank of stream. The scorpion can't cross the stream so it asks the frog to carry him across on it's back. But the frog... it asks 'How do I know you won't sting me?' - and the scorpion replies 'Because if I do, I will die too'.

(beat)

Sounds reasonable doesn't it.

(beat)

So the frog believes the scorpion.

(beat)

He lets it on his back. But half way across the stream... the scorpion stings the frog in the middle of its back. As the frog sinks it asks... Why?

(beat)

And the scorpion replies...

(beat)

It's in my nature.

(beat)

So yeah, you're a scorpion.

ALEX

Chris-

CHRIS

- Stay out of it Alex.

Eve looks at Chris. She remains seated.

EVE

I'm the scorpion in this story? Me? No its you, and your damn ego.

CHRIS

My ego?

ALEX

Chris...

EVE

Yeah. Your ego. It's your project right. Your idea. Your movie. Your everything. Except it's not.

She stands, and slowly walks to Chris.

EVE (CONT'D)

You can't make it without the cast. Without the crew. Without the financing - which you didn't get, I did - and you don't have final cut on the project so even if you starred, scored, and shot the whole damn thing as a one man show... it would mean precisely fuck all.

She is now directly squared up to him.

EVE (CONT'D)

So you can play the *auteur* card all you want. The artist. But what exactly is it that you do that makes you so special? What makes you think there aren't hundreds or thousands of other people out there... just like you. Just as creative. Maybe more creative.

(beat)

So what do you do that makes you so special Chris?

Silence.

EVE (CONT'D)

We're done. This - putting up with you, putting up with your ego - it's not worth it. We're done.

She turns to walk away but swings back again.

EVE (CONT'D)

I wanted to work with you. I saw these, great, interesting films you'd done and thought wow - I get it. What a collaboration we could have.

(beat)

It's disappointing... when you hold out hope for something and what you get is... this. You. A scorpion who stings the frog that's helping it because it's own ego can't comprehend not being the hero.

She walks off.

Chris waits silently till she's left, and the door shuts.

CHRIS
What an absolute b-

ALEX
- No.

Chris looks at Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You fucked up.

Alex goes to sort out the clothing rails, leaving Chris to his thoughts. The actors walk past him, having returned their costumes to Alex, and head for the exit.

It dawns on Chris, they heard everything.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANOR HOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY

CLINK. The distinct sound of a zippo lighter as it flicks open. **BRUNI** (JADE) brings it to the cigarette pressed against their lips and lights it. She takes a drag and exhales slowly.

They are leaning against the pillars by the entrance to a large old manor house. They take another drag from the cigarette, calming their nerves. Turning their head, they see **MARX** (Simon) approaching.

Bruni drops the cigarette to the floor, smothering it with their foot.

BRUNI / JADE
That's close enough.

They turn to face Marx, casually drawing the gun from the suit and holding it towards him.

MARX / SIMON
This how you greet a friend?

BRUNI / JADE
You were going to kill me.

MARX / SIMON
(smirking)
In fairness, we were all gonna kill
each other.

Marx makes himself comfortable despite the gun pointed at him.

BRUNI / JADE
Still, friends is a stretch.

MARX / SIMON
That's fair. Workplace
acquaintance? Colleagues?

BRUNI / JADE
We probably have more important
things to discuss?

With lightning fast moves, Marx draws his gun and points it at Bruni.

MARX / SIMON
When you're right, you're right.

Bruni is tense.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)
Gotta say, I thought you'd be
quicker with the trigger finger.

He smiles.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)
How's the arm?

BRUNI / JADE
Fuck you Marx.

MARX / SIMON
Now that's no way to talk to a
workplace acquaintance.

BRUNI / JADE
What is it you want?

Marx takes a moment.

BRUNI / JADE (CONT'D)
Hey, you called me.

After a brief moment, Marx moves his gun away from Bruni - though they keep theirs pointed at him. He gestures past them but Bruni doesn't flinch.

MARX / SIMON

You're the one still holding the gun.

Gun still drawn, Bruni uses it to gesture that Marx should walk first. He does so, and they both move to the side of the building where an outdoor patio has a couple of chairs and nice table overlooking a park area.

Marx sits down, and Bruni follows suit.

He goes to reach in his suit but Bruni clears their throat.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)

Gesture of good faith.

BRUNI / JADE

Slowly.

Slowly, he takes the gun from his suit and places it on the table, midway between them both. Looking at the gun, Bruni lowers hers, and places it next to his. Marx leans back, but Bruni remains tensely leaned forward.

Calmly, Marx reaches back into his suit and this time removes a cigarette pack. He takes a single cigarette out and puts the pack but into his suit, pulling out a cheap lighter.

He lights the cigarette.

MARX / SIMON

You don't like me do you. Never have.

BRUNI / JADE

It's not exactly a secret.

MARX / SIMON

Well we don't really know each other. Nothing personal anyway. Hell you don't even know my real name.

BRUNI / JADE

Comes with the job.

MARX / SIMON

Exactly. Except... I know you and Rousseau - whatever her real name is - started seeing each other once she left the biz.

Bruni is uncomfortable.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)

I know you care about her.

(beat)

Which got me thinking...

(beat)

What if you wanted out too?

BRUNI / JADE

(caught off guard)

What?

MARX / SIMON

You leave... alive, and... sail off
into the sunset with her.

BRUNI / JADE

I could just kill you and do that
anyway, a few million richer.

Marx laughs and takes a final drag from the cigarette.

MARX / SIMON

You could...

Bruni eyes the two guns on the table. They know theirs is
empty, but his is equally within reach...

Marx leans forward.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)

And you see... I got family. Family
I'd rather see stay alive... and
the way this works... well lets
just say I got dealt a shit hand on
this one.

BRUNI / JADE

Poor you. Still not sure how this
is my problem.

MARX / SIMON

Alright I'll cut to it. You let us
walk away - you tell the boss man
we're dead - you kill Locke, the
prissy uptight bitch - and you get
the money.

BRUNI / JADE

Who's 'us'?

He takes a moment.

MARX / SIMON

Me, and Luther.

BRUNI / JADE
Why the fuck do you care about
Lu...
(beat)
Fuck me.

Bruni chuckles.

BRUNI / JADE (CONT'D)
You don't look alike.

Marx is as serious as he's ever been.

MARX / SIMON
What can I say. My mums the pretty
one.

He leans over the table.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)
Do we have a deal?

Bruni waits a moment, then leans in as well, their eyes
locked on his.

In a split second, Bruni picks up a gun - Marx gun - stands
up and points it straight at him.

BRUNI / JADE
Sorry, but no.

Marx looks at the gun left on the table and then the one in
her hand. Slowly, he stands up.

MARX / SIMON
Just so I'm clear... why the fuck
not?

BRUNI / JADE
You think I wanna risk the boss
knowing I let you go? You think I
trust you to actually stay the fuck
away?

MARX / SIMON
(nodding)
That's a fair point.

BRUNI / JADE
Sorry Marx.
(beat)
Game over.

She pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

The sound of an empty gun barrel.

Marx smiles and raises his hands in a shrug.

MARX / SIMON
What can I say - I was outta
bullets.

Bruni frowns and throws the gun at Marx, striking him in the face. They turn and run up a nearby slope towards the back of the manor house.

Marx, bleeding from the cut, picks up Bruni's gun from the table and shoots at her.

CLICK.

Like his, the gun was empty.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)
Are you kidding me?!

He grabs both guns and gives chase. The two find themselves at the exterior back corridor of the manor house, with pillars on either side.

Bruni stops, and **pulls out a knife** - the same knife used to kill Carly. Marx stops dead in his tracks. He flips the guns around in his hands, using them like Tonfa's, the bulk of the gun protecting his hands.

A close combat melee fight ensures between them, with Marx using the guns to block the knife attacks. Initially he is able to gain the upper hand, hitting them back a few times but Bruni is able to knock him down and pin him down, holding the knife to his throat.

Bruni holds it there for a moment, pressed to his jugular as they catch their breath.

We hold on a close up of Bruni's face for a moment, then hold on Marx...

BANG.

Blood splatters across Marx face.

Bruni's lifeless body collapses onto him. Marx breathes a heavy sigh of relief.

We hold on his reaction.

After a few moments he moves himself free of the body. Across the corridor, **LUTHER** (Harry) stands, gun drawn.

Marx looks to him and nods. Luther nods back.

The younger man then reaches into Bruni's suit pockets and pulls out their zippo lighter. He leaves both his guns by the corpse and sits down by the nearby steps, his face still covered in Bruni's blood as he lights up a cigarette. Luther walks over, and sits beside him.

MARX / SIMON (CONT'D)

Took your time.

LUTHER / HARRY

Always with the impatience.

Luther never looks directly at Marx, he just looks out at the park in front of them.

LUTHER / HARRY (CONT'D)

I did warn you it was a bad idea.

Marx takes another puff.

LUTHER / HARRY (CONT'D)

You know it's not over yet.

Marx remains quiet.

LUTHER / HARRY (CONT'D)

Why did you become a hitman?

(beat)

Do you know?

Nothing.

LUTHER / HARRY (CONT'D)

Well I know. You became a hitman because, ever since you were that high I made you want to become one.

(beat)

It was a life I chose for me. Maybe I made it seem like it would be a good life for you. Maybe I even thought it would be.

(beat)

Now I don't know.

(beat)

We don't... think alike you and I.

(beat)

I don't really know you.

Marx looks to him, then back out to the park. His face is stoic, trying but failing to hold back the emotion.

MARX / SIMON

So what now?

LUTHER / HARRY

You do what you gotta do. Get the money, live a good life.

(beat)

Just make sure it's one you're happy with.

(beat)

No regrets.

MARX / SIMON

You got any... regrets?

Luther says nothing for a moment, then offers his gun to the younger man.

LUTHER / HARRY

I take it you ran out of bullets.

(beat)

Should still be one in there.

Marx looks off in the distance, away from Luther, and ignoring the gun offer.

LUTHER / HARRY (CONT'D)

I know this place nearby... And I could really use a good burger.

Luther gets up and walks off.

We stay fixed on Marx.

MARX / SIMON

When will I see you next?

LUTHER / HARRY (O.C.)

You won't.

Marx sits, smoking his cigarette, alone. He notices Luther has left his gun behind.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE:

CHAPTER SIX
Write about yourself and what you
know.

- Spike Lee

CUT TO:

EXT. JADES HOUSE - DAY

A hand knocks on the door. After a moment, **JADE** opens the door. In front of her, stands **CHRIS**.

CHRIS

Hey.

Beat.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You look disappointed to see me.

JADE

Well I ordered some food so,
thought that had arrived.

CHRIS

(chuckling)

Right...

Beat.

JADE

What are you doing here Chris?

CHRIS

I was nearby when I got your
message so...

(beat)

You wanna talk about it?

JADE

There's really nothing to talk
about. I've talked it through with
my agent and... I'm not going to be
in the film anymore.

CHRIS

That's what I wanna talk about -

Jade starts to close the door

JADE

- And I don't. Goodbye Chris.

Chris reaches his hand out and stops the door from fully closing, pushing it back open a bit, but not too aggressively.

CHRIS
If this is because the character's
gender fluid...

JADE
I don't have an issue with that.

CHRIS
Cause I get the argument about
casting a non cis-gender actor in
kind of role - and obviously
you're...

He moves on from the awkward position he's put himself in.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
But we held an open casting and we
cast the best actor, period. And
you knew the character when you
signed on...

JADE
- I know it was an open casting,
that's not -

CHRIS
- If you're worried about people's
reaction to -

JADE
- Chris! Stop... cutting me off.

Chris finally stops dead mid conversation and his hand falls back to his side off the door.

JADE (CONT'D)
You want honesty? Ok, I don't know
if people would have a problem with
me playing that role. Like you said
- you did an open casting and I'm
sure if someone was better for the
character you would have cast them.
That's not why I'm leaving... you
are.

In a bit of shock, Chris goes to speak, but is cut off by Jade.

JADE (CONT'D)

You don't listen, and honestly...
you don't see things either. I felt
safe and comfortable with Eve
around because she saw, everything
you didn't.

CHRIS

We can bring in another producer.

JADE

And you can bring in another actor,
because I don't feel comfortable
without her involved.

CHRIS

We can make changes and I can-

JADE

Look Chris, I could say again and
hope you hear what I'm saying
but...

She moves the door to shut it, then stops for a moment and
looks Chris in the eye.

JADE (CONT'D)

You know the next time you show up
at someones door, at least have the
decency to bring some food.

With that, she shuts the door, leaving the director on his
own.

The song **Bobby McFerrin - Don't Worry, Be Happy** starts to
play.

CUT TO:

INT. MARX FLAT - EVENING

The flat door opens quietly and **LOCKE** (Olivia) enters the
flat. The song continues resonating from another room. On the
nearby counter top she sees a zippo lighter and gun.

In an adjoining room, **MARX** (Simon) dances to the music - clad
in a soft pink shirt and 'tighty-whities', reminiscent of the
infamous scene from the film *Risky Business* (1983).

Marx continues to dance to the music as Locke slowly moves to
the room entrance and takes aim.

Don't worry... be happy.

In dance, Marx turns and see's Locke, gun in left hand, pointed directly at him.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Honestly, I had you pegged as more
of a boxers guy.

MARX / SIMON
Listen...

CLICK.

Marx grimaces, then looks at her - realising, she was out of bullets. He smiles, and laughs.

Locke smiles.

She pulls out a second gun and shoots him dead. The gun from the counter top.

Blood is splattered all across the room and walls.

A LOUD SCREAM is heard.

SARAH (Michelle) has heard the gunshot and run down the stairs, now in shock and hysterics seeing Marx body.

The music plays: **Don't worry... Be Happy.**

She rushes over to the body, still in a state of hysteria.

Locke turns and walks away towards the door. She stops for a moment, turning to Sarah.

LOCKE / OLIVIA
Sorry.

Turning back to the door, she spots the zippo lighter on the counter top and picks it up. She exits the flat.

Sarah continues to cry over the body of Marx.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRODUCERS HOUSE - DAY

A hand knocks on the door.

The music stops.

After a moment, **EVE** opens the door. In front of her, stands **CHRIS**.

CHRIS

Hey.

EVE

Hey.

Chris holds up a BIG KAHUNA BURGER bag.

CHRIS

I brought food.

Unamused, Eve looks at him, then the burgers, then back to him.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCERS HOUSE - DAY

A hand catches the orange STRESS BALL mid air.

EVE is pacing slowly behind the sofa, throwing the ball and catching while **CHRIS** sits across from her, their positions very much reversed from when we first saw them.

On the coffee table are two uneaten burgers.

CHRIS

Can you not?

Eve sardonically looks at Chris, but stops pacing. She throws the stress ball to him and he catches it.

EVE

Fine.

Chris smiles.

CHRIS

We need to make some decisions here.

Beat.

EVE

No.

CHRIS

I'm sorry?

EVE

Are you?

Chris looks at her, confused.

EVE (CONT'D)
Sorry - are you sorry? Or are you
here because you're, defeated.
Because you have no other option,
because this is the best way to
'save' your film.

Beat.

CHRIS
I regret how I handled things.

EVE
That's a fucking cop out Chris.

CHRIS
It's genuine.

EVE
In so far as you wish you weren't
in the situation you've made for
yourself - yeah that's genuine
but...

She starts pacing again. Chris watches her, and after a
moment...

EVE (CONT'D)
You can't... comprehend, the
situation you're in.

CHRIS
I'm admitting that I -

EVE
- Not this situation. No. You can't
comprehend not being you. You can't
understand really, outside of your
bubble of who you are and how the
world is to you.

Eve sits down on the sofa.

CHRIS
I disagree.

Unsurprised, Eve leans back into the sofa, her arms up in a
shrug.

EVE
Please...
(gesturing to him)
Do tell.

CHRIS

Well...

(beat)

I'm a writer. I explore other viewpoints through characters and to do that I have to consider their perspective, their point of view, their influences -

EVE

- But that's still you. It's still a character, a point of view, a perspective - that is interpreted through you.

CHRIS

So what: Sarah Connor isn't a genuine woman? She's not a real female character because James Cameron is a man?

EVE

You're missing the point.

CHRIS

No - Alien, Atomic Blonde, Thelma and Louise, The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo...Three Billboards -

EVE

- I get your point. I do, but that's not what I'm saying. I'm saying when James Cameron rights Sarah Connor, it's still got parts of James Cameron in it. I'm saying that about every writer... doesn't matter your gender. But even that is off topic because you didn't let me finish - you jumped in and derailed my point.

CHRIS

Ok then. I'm gonna...

He mimes zipping his mouth shut. Eve takes a moment to consider how she feels about that reaction, but ultimately continues with her conversation.

EVE

I said you can't really understand outside of your bubble of who you are and how the world is to you... and the important part there is that 'how the world is to you'.

(MORE)

EVE (CONT'D)

(beat)

You and I live in and experience a very different industry. As a man -

CHRIS

- I'm sorry but no. Our issues have nothing to do with gender. You could have been male or female and we'd still have had the same conflicts. It was about the film, it was about creative choices, it was not to do with gender and it's fucking... Offensive, that you're taking it there.

EVE

What happened to...

She mimes zipping her mouth shut. Chris relents.

EVE (CONT'D)

It's a different experience being a man and being a woman. It means you can afford to behave a certain way, or make certain choices that I know, that women know, we can't.

(beat)

And don't play the 'now men are being victimized and discriminated against' card. No. The root issues we were in conflict about were not gender based no, but you were aggressive, rude and were able to do everything that you did from a comfortable position of privilege.

(beat)

If I behaved anywhere near the way you did...

Eve exhales deeply.

There's a, satisfaction, from saying it out loud. She smiles to herself, and reaches for the burger - taking a bite.

EVE (CONT'D)

You can disagree. We actually don't have to agree on that to work together, we're both entitled to our views.

Another bite of the burger.

EVE (CONT'D)
But the way I see it... if it's not
privilege... you're just a dick.

Another bite.

EVE (CONT'D)
Or maybe it's both. Who knows.

She puts the burger back down and stares at it for a moment.

EVE (CONT'D)
Hell of a burger.

Silence.

Chris lets everything sink in then, calmly...

CHRIS
Halloumi.

EVE
What?

CHRIS
It's the extra patty of Halloumi
Cheese.
(beat)
Really does wonders for the burger.

Beat.

Eve bursts out laughing, and Chris follows suit. For a moment, the two share in the levity of the things as the tension is broken.

As the laughter dies down, Chris is the first to speak.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
When I said I regret how I handled
things... I regret being a dick. I
was a dick. I've been a dick to
you, and I know it's not as simple
as saying that, or saying sorry
even but as a start - on that
front; I am sorry.

*The musical score softly supports the scene. This is the
first time the score creeps into the real world scenes.*

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I felt pressure to, be me. To prove
that 'me' was good at what I do.
That I haven't...
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)
wasted my life trying to write,
direct... trying to make something
that will never be as good as I
want it to be. As good as people
expect of me.

*We cut to a visual montage of moments with Chris and the
actors behind the scenes from various points earlier in the
film as the musical score becomes more prominent.*

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I make films because I have a story
to tell.

We return to the room and see Chris and Eve in close ups.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I know we are all really the
protagonist of our own stories but
I don't feel like one. I never
have.

*It cuts to scenes from the film itself... We see Bruni,
struggling against Carly during their fight.*

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm not the lead character.

We see Luther, sat across from Locke, enjoying his meal.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm not the mentor.

Marx smirks in the back of the car on the way to the job.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm not the sidekick or comic
relief.

Carly embraces Bruni.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm not the love interest.

Locke watches as the others argue in the car.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm not even the good-guy.

We return to the room with Chris and Eve.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm the storyteller.
(beat)
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

And if I can't, get that right...

(beat)

Then what am I?

Eve looks at him intensely.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So I'm a dick, because I'm afraid.

It's silent, but also clear that both feel good having said everything they wanted to - having verbalized their burdens.

Chris throws the stress ball back to Eve, who catches it. She looks at it.

EVE

I think people forget - you don't really become a producer; not on indie films, because you like crunching numbers or project management and finances... You do it cause you fucking love films. Cause you wanna tell stories.

Chris looks at her, his eyes fixed on every word she says.

EVE (CONT'D)

I am a storyteller... and I think we can tell a good story, together. Don't sideline me, don't pigeonhole me as the suit or someone you have to keep things from.

(beat)

We can make a fucking good movie together - if we're honest with each other.

(beat)

Every fear you've got... Chris... I'm right there with you.

CHRIS

Thanks.

EVE

We're not going to solve every problem. I think there's still gonna be some tension with this cast.

CHRIS

And we're not going to agree on everything.

EVE
Of course not. Just, you know...

CHRIS
Don't be a dick.

EVE
(smiling)
Exactly.

Eve throws the stress ball back to Chris, who catches it.
It's a moment between them.

CHRIS
So what next?

Eve takes a breath.

EVE
Now we call Jade and talk to her.

Eve takes out her mobile phone and puts through a call.
Chris smiles as we hear the soft tone of Eve's phone making the call.

EVE (CONT'D)
More accurately-

She hands the phone to Chris.

EVE (CONT'D)
- You, talk to her.

JADE (V.O.)
Hello?

Beat.

CHRIS
Hey. I'm sorry.

We hear the diegetic sounds of a film set creep in, building up to a visual transition...

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

The Film Set.

The **Cast and Crew** are all shuffling around getting ready. The cinematographer and camera department are doing their final adjustments and the actors are in the car, which in turn is surrounded by an external portable green-screen.

SIMON and **JADE** are talking about something or other as **OLIVIA** reviews her lines on a script and **HARRY** waits patiently.

A camera assistant is scribbling something down on the clapperboard. **CHRIS** watches everything unfold around him.

He looks around as everyone is almost ready. Stood slightly apart from the busy crew, is **EVE**. She says nothing, but gives him a thumbs up.

He smiles and nods, then looks ahead.

CAMERA ASSISTANT (O.S.)
Picture's up! Roll sound, roll
camera.

Through the screen on the camera, we see the camera assistant hold up the clapperboard.

CINEMATOGRAPHER (O.S.)
Camera rolling.

SOUND RECORDIST (O.S.)
Sound speed.

CAMERA ASSISTANT
Scene 1, Take 1, Slate 1!

He slaps the clapperboard shut.

We see a medium close up track in on Chris.

CHRIS
And..... Action!

CUT TO BLACK.

*A version of **Funky Fanfare** by Keith Mansfield plays, the classic 'Our Feature Presentation' tune.*

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE:

ABOVE THE LINE

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END