

SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED

By
Derek Connolly

WANTED: Somebody to go back in time with me. This is not a joke. P.O. Box 322, Oakview, CA 93022. You'll get paid after we get back. Must bring your own weapons. Safety not guaranteed. I have only done this once before.

OVER BLACK

DARIUS (FEMALE VO)
Well, from like the beginning.

INT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - 1995 - DAY

Kids run and play in a yard decorated for a little girl's birthday. Under a HAPPY 7th BIRTHDAY DARIUS banner we see MR. & MRS. BRITT looking around for their daughter. Isolated from the frolicking kids, a pair of little eyes peek through a slot in a large cardboard box.

DARIUS (VO)
Grew up in New Jersey - wait,
before that I guess, my parents
decided to give me a black man's
name. Which was awesome.

EXT. SUBURBAN CONSTRUCTION SITE - 1988 - DAY

Dad, circa 1988, smiles with unbridled excitement as he tours his new house-under-construction with pregnant Mom in an upper middle class suburb.

DARIUS (VO)
They always said they just thought
Darius sounded pretty but I think
they did it to deal with guilt.

Dad's smile turns awkward when he locks eyes with one of the BLACK WORKERS shoveling dirt under the brutal summer sun.

DARIUS (VO)
So, grew up there with them.

INT. BMW CONVERTIBLE - 2002 - DAY

13 year-old DARIUS BRITT'S long dark hair whips wildly in the backseat behind her parents in a convertible BMW.

DARIUS (VO)
They hit a really weak mid-life
crisis right when I hit middle
school. Again, awesome.

EXT. COFFEE HOUSE - 2002 - DAY

The BMW drives off as Darius, her hair now a wild afro, joins a motley group of AWKWARD FRIENDS.

DARIUS (VO)
Then my mom died and we moved to
New York.

EXT. BRITT HOUSE - 2003 - DAY

Dad makes uncomfortable eye contact with a BLACK MOVER carrying a heavy ass New York Jets-themed juke box.

ON AN EMPTY MOVING BOX

It stands up and walks away.

DARIUS (VO)
High school - whatever, then four,
not five, years of college. And
now, here I am.

INT. MACARONI GRILLE - DAY

DARIUS, 22, as pretty as a smart, funny girl can be, regards the tanned RESTAURANT MANAGER across the table from her in this gallery of forgettable birthday dinners.

DARIUS
Did that answer the question?

RESTAURANT MANAGER
(not amused)
Usually people just say where
they're from and where they worked
before.

DARIUS
Great. I'm already overqualified.

RESTAURANT MANAGER
So, in any of your previous jobs,
can you tell me one instance in
which you went above and beyond the
call of duty for a customer?

Darius lets a laugh slip out.

DARIUS
What would I be doing here?
Fighting fires and saving lives? I
thought this was for a waitress.

The Manager sweeps her application into a folder.

RESTAURANT MANAGER
I'm going to be honest. I'm not
sure your attitude fits what we
look for in customer service.

Darius gives him a wide eyed look. She looks prettiest when not on the offense.

DARIUS

Wait, I mean I could make something up. When I worked at Fridays I donated bone marrow once to a guy who got a Mr. Pibb instead of Coke.

RESTAURANT MANAGER

You think you're too good for this? Why are you even here?

DARIUS

I'm sorry. I really need the money. I work my ass off all day at an internship. I just need something to get by until I break in to the paid world.

RESTAURANT MANAGER

It's not going to work out here. I can tell your type. Difficult, bad attitude. You're just not a quality hire.

DARIUS

You're a fucking Macaroni Grille manager.

INT. FACSIMILE - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Darius struggles under a Costco megapack of toilet paper.

INT. FACSIMILE - ELEVATOR - DAY

The elevator doors press against the massive economy bundle, giving Darius time to squeeze into the crowded elevator.

DARIUS

Could someone push three?

Faces and shoulders are mashed by the squishy package as she tries to find a comfortable spot to stand in here. She settles, then makes eye contact with a hip, ATTRACTIVE GUY.

DARIUS

What's up.

INT. FACSIMILE - MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Darius lugs the asswipes through an office designed to look too casual to be an office. On a wall she passes are framed covers of Facsimile Magazine, which appears to blend tech and pop culture with an ironic spin into a monthly periodical.

INT. FACSIMILE - BRIDGETTE'S OFFICE - DAY

BRIDGETTE BAY, 34, a harshly beautiful editor with a visible hate for all women younger and/or more attractive, speaks on the phone with stress and urgency.

Darius leans the megapack on her desk while she fishes change and a receipt out of her purse.

BRIDGETTE
(hand over phone receiver)
Don't put that there.

Darius puts it on the ground.

BRIDGETTE
No! Put it in the utility closet
and fill all the bathrooms.

DARIUS
Yeah, I was just giving you this.

Bridgette, annoyed, waves the money away and glares at her desk, where Darius places the change. She removes a pack of tampons from a plastic bag.

DARIUS
I got your...stuff, too.

Bridgette scowls at her. The tampons go on the table and Darius kneels to power squat the economy pack back up.

BRIDGETTE
(into phone)
Yeah, an intern. They need
everything spelled out for them.

INT. FACSIMILE - BATHROOM - DAY

On her knees, Darius has to really lean and tilt her head dangerously close to the toilet bowl to get the empty paper roll unlocked. She straightens her head and frowns as she feels the wetness of her soaked hair.

DARIUS
Ohhhhh-kay.

INT. FACSIMILE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The blinds are closed as the whole office is gathered to listen to pitches accompanied by slides. Bridgette stands next to a projected slide of two cowgirls kissing on a stage.

BRIDGETTE

So the lesbian band story is in for next month.

JEFF SCHWENSEN, 29, has a slight Jersey accent and looks like he could be in a shirtless men's razor commercial.

JEFF

Wasn't one of the interns in one of those female bands? Who was that?

Jeff looks around and stops his eyes on Darius in the back of the room. She doesn't like being put on the spot.

JEFF

It was you, right?

DARIUS

Yep. Played bass. We weren't a les-band, though.

Jeff nods confusedly, sure up to now that she was a lesbian. Darius fills the silence.

DARIUS

We were called Period Pieces. Cause of the double entendre.

Now more silence.

BRIDGETTE

Okay. What else do we have?

Jeff looks over his notes.

JEFF

What about the time traveler ad?

A blown-up CLASSIFIED AD comes up on the Powerpoint screen. Darius is immediately intrigued by the words that appear.

WANTED: Someone to go back in time with me. This is not a joke. P.O. Box 322, Ocean View, NC 28469. You'll get paid after we get back. Must bring your own weapons. Safety not guaranteed.

Some LAUGHS around the room.

JEFF

So this is an ad someone e-mailed in, taken from the classifieds of a newspaper. I'm thinking kind of a funny piece about it, maybe a tongue-in-cheek investigation.

(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)
Who put it up? Is it real, a prank?
Come up with theories and whatnot.

BRIDGETTE
You want it? It's yours.

JEFF
Can I get a couple interns for
research?

Darius' eyes open. This is her chance to escape Bridgette.

DARIUS
Me. Please.

The socially awkward, prematurely balding 22 year-old next to her, ARNAU, doesn't take his eyes off of Darius' legs.

ARNAU
Me, too.

JEFF
Done.

INT. FACSIMILE - JEFF'S OFFICE - LATER

A small office. Darius and Arnau sit across a desk from a distracted Jeff, who eyes Bridgette through a window.

ARNAU
We sent a letter to the address in
the ad and asked them to get back
to us.

DARIUS
And I called the local paper but
they're all uptight and won't give
out the info on the people that
take out ads.

Jeff leans back and runs a hand through his hair.

JEFF
I fucked Bridgette.

DARIUS
Whoa.

Arnau's mouth freezes in the open position.

DARIUS
That's gross, kinda.

JEFF

I know. Sometimes someone pisses you off so much you just wanna -

DARIUS

Did she like boss you around and criticize your technique the whole time?

Bridgette makes quick eye contact with Jeff through the glass.

JEFF

We gotta get outta here. Go to Ocean View.

DARIUS

We?

JEFF

You don't want to go?

DARIUS

I don't know. You're not going to fuck me, are you? Like sneak attack style.

JEFF

What? No. What's wrong with you? Christ, the shit you say. You'd rather stay here and change the toilet paper?

The phone RINGS.

JEFF

We'll talk about it tonight. Are you going to the thing? For Marty's birthday?

DARIUS

No.

JEFF

Now you are. See you then.

ARNAU

What should I wear?

Jeff eyes Arnau and picks up the phone.

INT. BRITT HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER MONITOR

An internet viewing history window is open on the left, while the right window clicks through various pornographic pages.

DARIUS (OS)

My dad is sadly at the point where he's technologically sophisticated enough to find specialized niche internet porn but doesn't know how to clear the browsing history.

After a slew of teen-themed sites a couple preggo's go by.

INT. BRITT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Darius is at a living room computer in a sparse suburban home. A polite Algerian in a SUNY sweatshirt, FARID, 20's, sits on a couch behind her.

DARIUS

This is worse than watching beheading videos. Why do I do this?

FARID

Those are not mine, I promise.

DARIUS

I know. You would know how to cover your tracks, with all that experience you guys have scamming Americans on the internet from Algeria or Nigeria or wherever you're from.

Farid shakes his head patiently.

DARIUS

Don't play dumb, I watch Dateline.

Darius' father, MR. BRITT, 50, enters the room.

MR. BRITT

Dary, after dinner see if you can figure out why the computer's been so slow. Videos take forever.

Darius nods, blank faced.

MR. BRITT

Hey Farid, would one of those little mini laptops help out with your schoolwork?

FARID
No, Mr. Britt. You've been too generous, sir. Please.

INT. BRITT HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Darius eyes her father across the table. Farid happily eats.

DARIUS
Can I take the car? I'm going out.

MR. BRITT
Out out?

DARIUS
It's just this work thing.

MR. BRITT
That's great, Dary. You should be going out more. It'll help you out of your funk.

DARIUS
I have no funk. Totally funkless.

MR. BRITT
Something is wrong with you, honey. But getting out there, being social, it'll make you feel better.

DARIUS
This is, this is - okay, what? What is wrong with me?

MR. BRITT
You're sad. I don't know how to describe it. There's a cloud around you. You're very antisocial. And you're a virgin.

DARIUS
What.

FARID
What?

MR. BRITT
Honey, even in my day twenty-one was pretty old to be a virgin.

DARIUS
Oh my god, how do I eject? What makes you think? How would you even know?

MR. BRITT

Who would it be? I don't think I've ever seen you with a guy.

DARIUS

How do you know I'm not on Craigslist having casual encounters, F-4-M'ing it up out there? Or when I lived away in the dorms?

MR. BRITT

I talked to Amy.

DARIUS

Why are you talking to my college roommate?

MR. BRITT

We're friends on Facebook.

DARIUS

Ew. This is too much. I'm done. But I'm staying to finish because I'm hungry.

Darius silently eats her dinner. Mr. Britt pats Farid's back.

MR. BRITT

You gettin' enough, Farid? Let me grab you another steak.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

A corner booth at a loud dance club. Darius and Arnau are sandwiched between Jeff and ERIC and JON, two 25 year-old guys who spot each other at the gym and take care to avoid wearing the same Ed Hardy T-shirt when they go out. They listen to Jeff in awe.

JEFF

Dude, it was fucking insane. I knew from her friend that she had herpes but I wasn't supposed to know, her friend swore me not to say she told me, so I was in the fucking room with this girl all night trying to make up reasons why I didn't want to fuck her.

ERIC

Why didn't you just get the fuck out of there?

JEFF

She was fucking naked and looked super hot. It was a fucking quandary.

JON

What'd you tell her?

JEFF

I was saying all this shit like I didn't want to rush into anything and get hurt. Meanwhile she's like, "I want you to fuck my ass." And I'm like, you're the kind of girl I might fall in love with, let's take it slow.

The two dudes laugh hard. Darius observes like she's on a disgusting safari.

DARIUS

So excuse me for interrupting but were we supposed to talk about the story?

JEFF

Hold on, I'm gonna get a drink. Talk to my buddy, Eric.

Eric eyes Darius aggressively as he shouts to Jeff.

ERIC

Dude, your intern is sort of hot.

INT. CLUB - LATER

Jon gets nasty on the dance floor, grinding obscenely with a CHICK in a too-short skirt.

Darius ricochets her eyes away from the scene, still seated at the table. Eric brings her a drink. She watches his primitive grin as he takes in the debauchery on the dance floor. He turns his focus back to her.

ERIC

So do you watch Family Guy?

DARIUS

Yeah.

ERIC

That shit is hilarious.

Darius nods. He nods.

ERIC
So fucking funny.

He stares at her tits. She leans over to Jeff.

DARIUS
I'm gonna go home, since this is
pointless.

JEFF
What? Alright. Get ready for a ten
hour drive to Ocean View tomorrow.

Darius sits up and leans forward.

DARIUS
I want a shared credit. Let me help
write it. I need a break. Please?

JEFF
You're just hitting me up now cause
I'm drunk.

DARIUS
Yep.

JEFF
We'll see what you write. If it's
good I can get you in the by line.

Darius lights up a bit and stands up.

DARIUS
Alright. That's all I came for.

ERIC
It's so early.

Eric slides in front of Darius and speaks in a confident,
practiced tone.

ERIC
It would make me really happy if
you would not let this night end
and let me buy you one more drink.

DARIUS
No thanks.

He takes her hand, causing her to frown.

ERIC
You're gonna make me unhappy? I'll
be thinking about you all night.

Darius, confused, looks to Jeff.

DARIUS
Is this normal? What's he doing?

Eric takes her hand and places it on his chest.

ERIC
Can't you feel what you do to me?
What you do to my heart?

DARIUS
Oh my God, are you serious? He just
flexed his chest.

Darius removes her hand and gets up to leave.

ERIC
Aww! Why you gonna do that to me?
(points at Jon)
Dude! Taco Bell! Let's go! Right
now!

Darius hurries away.

EXT. BRITT HOUSE - MORNING

Darius escapes through the front door with a packed travel bag in the groggy, dim pre-morning hour.

INT. ARNAU'S HOUSE - MORNING

Arnau plays a massively multiplayer online game set in the pirate world. He jams his swarthy pirate into some game glitch that results in the character jittering up and down repetitively while an endless shower of experience points and gold rains down into his cache.

Arnau checks his watch, leaves the game on, and takes off.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN:

Arnau's pixel pirate, still in seizure, is approached by a fat pirate and a chat box appears: WTF U DOING?

The fat pirate waits for a moment, then casually stabs the jittering pirate with a sword, dropping him dead.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MORNING

Darius and Arnau get into Jeff's Acura.

INT. FACSIMILE - MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Bridgette approaches Jeff's office with two cups of coffee in hand. She slows as she passes, sees it empty through the glass, then keeps walking.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Jeff's car cruises the interstate in a dense, urban area.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - LATER

The backdrop has turned rural. Trees beginning to shed for fall race past.

JEFF

We're budgeted for two rooms, but if we all share one we can use the extra money for other shit.

DARIUS

Coke and hookers? Meth, actually. Probably more of a meth town.

JEFF

Exactly.

Arnau fidgets. Jeff eyes him in the rear-view.

JEFF

Arnau. Easy. We're just fucking around. We can spend it on buffets and shit. You never do coke or anything when you're studying for a test?

ARNAU

Cocaine? Are you crazy?

DARIUS

You're obviously not serious about your schoolwork.

JEFF

What are you studying?

ARNAU

Biological and life sciences.

JEFF

What the fuck are you interning at a magazine for?

ARNAU

The diversity looks good on
applications for grad school.

JEFF

Alright we need to get you laid on
this vacation is what needs to
happen.

DARIUS

Vacation?

JEFF

Work trip, whatever.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - LATE AFTERNOON

Darius looks out the window as Jeff drives, sun going down.

OUTSIDE:

Passing images.

-- Sign reads "Beaches 5 Miles."

-- Bridges connect a marshy mainland to the island beach towns.

-- A seafood restaurant with a giant crab on the roof.

-- A place called Shell World.

-- Freezing TEENS run in soaked shirts across the street.

-- A sign reads "Ocean View."

We get a good look at Ocean View. Nobody on the roads, nobody
on the beach. The summer's as faded as the last gasps of the
day's sunlight here. The town feels lonely. Too cold and too
late in September.

EXT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL - MORNING

A crusty motel that hasn't been remodeled since the early
70's. The Acura pulls into the parking lot. The three exit.

Jeff walks to a porch that looks out on the ocean. The sky is
smeared and overcast. A chilling wind blows off the gray
water. Darius appears behind him, wrapped up in a hoodie.

DARIUS

Ughh. It's freezing here.

Jeff, his shirt whipping in the wind, turns.

JEFF

It's got a bite, don't it?

DARIUS

It makes my stomach hurt. Reminds me of when it was time to go back to school.

JEFF

Now it's all just one long school year. No end and no start. Except for this guy.

Arnau joins them.

JEFF

How many more years of school you got left, Arnau?

ARNAU

Total including doctorate or just undergraduate?

JEFF

Aw, forget it.

INT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Darius, Jeff and Arnau lug their bags into the outdated room. Turquoise bed spreads and pink seashell lamps clash with wood panel wallpaper. Arnau squints at the Zenith TV set.

ARNAU

This is like the TV at my grandmother's house.

Darius drops her bags and looks at the two queen beds.

DARIUS

How're we doing the beds?

JEFF

Interns in one. Me in the other.

DARIUS

ARNAU

No.

Alright I guess.

JEFF

Fine. Me and Darius.

Darius shoots him daggers.

JEFF

Fine. Get ready, Arnau, I cuddle.

Jeff tosses his duffel bag on the bed.

JEFF

Tomorrow morning we jam it at the post office. Hopefully this guy checks his PO box every day.

CUT TO:

INT. OCEAN VIEW POSTAL OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE UP - PO BOX 322

We pull out as an OLDTIMER, 70's, enters frame and moves toward the box.

DARIUS (OS)

Here we go.

ARNAU (OS)

No way. He's too old to be time traveling.

EXT. OCEAN VIEW POSTAL OFFICE - DAY

Darius and Arnau sit on the hood of Jeff's Acura. Both peer through the post office window at the wall of PO boxes.

DARIUS

Excuse me? That's the time traveling demo. White beards, spectacles, pipes.

The Oldtimer opens a box right above 322.

DARIUS & ARNAU

Awww.

DARIUS

Close.

ARNAU

Wait, what about this one?

A HEAVY LADY, 40, waddles to the boxes.

DARIUS

She wants to go back to the 90's when McDonald's still had Supersizes.

Arnau studies a newspaper in his hands.

ARNAU

(reading)

Wanted: Someone to go back in time
with me. This is not a joke. P.O.
Box 322, Ocean View, NC 28469.
You'll get paid after we get back.
Must bring your own weapons. Safety
not guaranteed.

JEFF (OS)

There are no Starbucks here yet.
Crazy.

They turn their heads as Jeff approaches with plain white
cups of coffee and passes them out. Jeff waits one beat.

JEFF

God this is boring as shit.

DARIUS

It's kind of cool.

JEFF

I'm gonna walk over to the water.
There's a pier me and my family
used to go to.

ARNAU

You've been here before?

JEFF

We used to rent a house in Isle
Point every summer when I was a
kid. It's not far from here. I got
my cell on me.

Jeff walks off.

DARIUS

Our dedicated leader.

EXT. OCEAN VIEW POSTAL OFFICE - TIME PASSAGE

Darius slumps in the driver's seat of Jeff's car, window
down. Arnau sits cross legged on the sidewalk, playing his
online game on the laptop. Darius sits up.

INSIDE THE POST OFFICE

A FIGURE, only visible from behind, opens box 322. Nothing
inside, he quickly closes it and steps away.

Darius cranes her neck but can't get a good look at the
Figure exiting the front door.

DARIUS
It's him.

The Figure gets into a piece of shit 80's Datsun.

DARIUS
It's the guy.

Darius starts Jeff's car.

ARNAU
What are you doing?

DARIUS
Following him. You coming?

ARNAU
What about Jeff? We should call
him.

Darius doesn't care. She pulls forward as the Datsun drives away, leaving Arnau behind.

EXT. BRIDGE - DUSK

The Datsun drives across a suspension bridge to the mainland. Darius follows, keeping her distance.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DUSK

A two level office building that's seen better days surrounded by a low perimeter wall.

The Datsun slowly drives through a field on the other side of the wall. The Datsun stops.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - SAME

Darius stops the Acura on the side of the road and squints across the field at the Datsun.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - SAME

The Figure exits the car and stands on his toes to see through a locked fence gate and into the compound. He picks up a clipboard heavy with pages of scrawled notes.

This is KENNETH CALLOWAY, 28.

Not bad looking at all, but off. His hair, facial expressions, style, everything, just a bit off. A few nucleic acid sequences away from being a happy human.

He jots down a note, nods with a serious determination that is slightly comical given his odd, mullet haircut, then gets back into his car.

INT. U-SAVE - NIGHT

We track behind Kenneth pushing a pallet of detergent through the lonely aisles of the 24 hour warehouse superstore.

Darius appears from behind, discreetly trailing him.

INT. U-SAVE - LATER

Kenneth speaks to SHANNON, 63, an aging black man with a weary face, as they stock shelves. Darius pretends to browse nearby as she listens.

KENNETH

The economy isn't a fixed thing. People think because that's how it is now then that's how it'll always be, but they're just looking at this narrow band of time when if you look at the big picture the distribution of wealth has been steadily spreading out from aristocratic society to slave economy to industrial and on and on in both directions.

SHANNON

I gotta do a bathroom check, brother. To be continued.

KENNETH

Yeah, okay. It's just amazing how they can get these people to vote against their economic interests. Like it or not it's historically headed in one direction, they're just delaying the inevitable.

Kenneth continues stocking. Darius walks past and eyeballs his name tag as he stretches to reach the high shelf.

INT. U-SAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Darius approaches a SHIFT MANAGER, pen and card in hand.

DARIUS

Excuse me, I wanted to fill out a comment card about one of your employees, Kenneth. What's his last name?

SHIFT MANAGER

Aw jeez, what'd he do? I apologize
ma'am, he's a little...

The Shift Manager points at his head.

DARIUS

No. It's a positive comment. Like
complimenting him.

SHIFT MANAGER

Oh. Oh? Good. Kenneth Calloway.

DARIUS

Thank you.

They look across the jewelry displays and spot Kenneth, who makes a dramatic spin, scoops up a stray can on the floor and re-stocks it with an unusual amount of flair and purpose before continuing on with that oddly funny focus.

EXT. TIKI BAR - NIGHT

A small bar whose cheesy neon lights in tropical shapes are about half operational.

INT. TIKI BAR - NIGHT

Jeff drinks at the bar as he eyes the baby-faced COCKTAIL WAITRESS, 21, who serves the one occupied table in this bar decorated with glowing palm trees and plastic torches.

Arnau plays his on-line game on the laptop while sipping a can of soda. Jeff looks over.

JEFF

Are you kidding me with this? You
said you needed to check your e-
mail. And order a beer for God's
sake.

ARNAU

I'm just seeing who's online.

Jeff pulls the laptop away. He sees an e-mail alert.

JEFF

Wait a minute.

Jeff checks his e-mail. He clicks on a message that directs him to Facebook.com.

JEFF

Alllright. She accepted my friend request *and* she still lives here.

ARNAU

(reading profile)

Who's Liz Cleary?

JEFF

She was like the local chick I used to hang out with when my family came here. Summer lovin'. Fuck she was so tan and hot. And her hair was always bleached white from the sun. Man, if there's one girl I always wondered about it's her.

Darius approaches from behind.

DARIUS

You creeps, drunk-stalking on Facebook at a bar.

JEFF

Well there she is. Went all rogue, huh? What'd you get?

DARIUS

Got his name, where he works.

JEFF

Nice. Good job. Tomorrow I'll go in undercover, pretend to answer his ad, get the scoop on this yo-yo.

DARIUS

(re: computer)

What'd you get?

ARNAU

Basically he came here to hook up with a girl he knew when he was in high school.

DARIUS

Seriously?

Jeff shrugs.

DARIUS

I'd be weirded out if some guy tracked me down after twenty years.

JEFF

I would be weirded out if some guy tracked you down too. Just knowing there's a guy out there who would do that for you.

Jeff sips his rum and cola.

JEFF

(defensive)

And it wasn't twenty years. It was like thirteen.

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - DAY

The Acura stops in front of a small house that must've once had great landscaping, which is now all dead and dried.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - SAME

Darius has an open phone book on her lap. She reads the house number on the mailbox.

DARIUS

991 Mallory. This is it.

Jeff turns off the car and grabs the digital recorder.

DARIUS

Can I go in, too?

JEFF

You did good last night but let's let me handle this. I don't want to overwhelm the guy.

Jeff gets out and heads across the street. Darius and Arnau watch through the windows.

ARNAU

So, do you go out a lot back home, like clubs and stuff?

DARIUS

Not really.

ARNAU

You know those really tight leggings girls wear, do you wear -

DARIUS

There he is!

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - SAME

Kenneth exits a large shed beside the house and slides the doors to it shut. He then clamps shut a series of padlocks.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - SAME

Darius opens her door.

DARIUS
I wanna see.

Arnau pauses for a moment before following her outside.

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - SAME

Darius and Arnau sneak around the leafless trees lining the street. Darius' eyes fall on Kenneth walking toward Jeff, who stands on the porch of the house knocking on the door.

ON THE FRONT PORCH

Kenneth stops at the bottom of the porch.

JEFF
Kenneth Calloway?

Kenneth sizes Jeff up.

KENNETH
You work out?

JEFF
Hello. Uh, yeah. A little.

KENNETH
I haven't been able to lately.
Shoulder.

JEFF
Oh, that sucks. But yeah, so I'm
here cause I saw your ad in the
paper, about needing a partner.

KENNETH
What'd you do? The credit header
trick?

JEFF
The credit header?

KENNETH
I've had like tons of people, four
at least, show up at my door.
(MORE)

KENNETH (cont'd)
Found my address connected to the
PO box on credit headers.

JEFF
Yeah, me too. I didn't know that's
what they were called.

KENNETH
They were all jerks, though.

JEFF
So then the position is still open?

KENNETH
What's your mission?

JEFF
My mission?

KENNETH
Reason. For going back.

JEFF
Well, who wouldn't want to? I mean,
it's an amazing opportunity.
(Kenneth waits for more)
You know...see dinosaurs with my
own eyes? Um, watch the gladiators?

KENNETH
You're just tryin' to have a laugh
at me, like the rest of 'em.
Sending me joke letters, wasting my
time.

JEFF
No, I'm not making fun of you.

KENNETH
It takes guts, man. Real guts to do
what I need to do.

JEFF
I've got guts.

KENNETH
Can you look fear and danger in the
eye? Have you ever?

JEFF
I live inside fear and danger.

KENNETH

Get out of here, man! Who do you work for?

JEFF

For you?

KENNETH

It's not a trick question, jankhole! What do you know about pain and regret? Look at you! Get outta here!

Kenneth brushes past Jeff and through the front door, which SLAMS shut after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFF'S ACURA - MOMENTS LATER

Darius and Arnau hurry up from behind Jeff to join him as he strides to the car.

DARIUS

What'd he say? Was he totally Van Damme from Time Cop?

JEFF

He's the real deal. That ad is no prank. He's like, he's not retarded but there's something wrong with him. Definitely did not like me.

ARNAU

So, what? That's it?

JEFF

Oh no, this just got good.

INT. TIKI BAR - DAY

The three eat burgers at the bar.

DARIUS

What makes you think he won't slam the door in my face, too?

JEFF

You gotta be sincere and charm him. He's used to assholes coming to make fun of him.

ARNAU

Also probably none of the other people were beautiful girls.

JEFF

Easy, Arnau.

ARNAU

What?

JEFF

But use that too. There's something off about him. You gotta go really slow, like you're trapping a skittish animal or something. Feel him out. Lure him. Girls know how to do that shit. Pretend he's the guy all your friends want to fuck and you're gonna be the one that gets to because you act like you don't care.

DARIUS

You're dangling my vagina out there like bait? What if this guy's a serial killer?

JEFF

Then the story's even better.

EXT. OCEAN VIEW - DUSK

The cold sun sets down beyond the town.

INT. U-SAVE - NIGHT

Tracking through the aisles behind Kenneth again. We see Darius, casually browsing. She turns her head and makes eye contact with Kenneth.

Kenneth is a bit thrown off by this young woman. He re-focuses and turns left into another aisle.

INT. U-SAVE - SPORTING GOODS - LATER

Darius browses in the sporting section. Kenneth tentatively appears and makes himself busy rearranging a shelf. Darius glances over discreetly. Kenneth shyly meets her eyes.

DARIUS

Do you sell guns here?

KENNETH

What kind of gun?

DARIUS

I don't know, something sexy and affordable with killing power.

Kenneth digests these criterium with earnestness.

KENNETH

Hm. You probably want to go to C&R Guns in Wilkins. We only have airsoft and pellet guns.

DARIUS

What about one of those things with the spiky ball at the end of the chain? Does this kind of store still carry those or did Rosie O'Donnell ruin that too?

KENNETH

What exactly is the intended use? Like, hunting? Or pest problem?

DARIUS

Well if your ad had been written properly I'd have a better idea of what I need.

Kenneth pauses, looks around, as if people are watching.

KENNETH

My ad?

DARIUS

Yeah. Sloppy. I hope you worked harder on your calibrations.

KENNETH

My calibrations are flippin' pinpoint, okay?

Darius shrugs, not convinced. Kenneth begins pacing, paranoid. He nervously picks up a pink rubber coated dumbbell and starts distractedly doing curls with one arm.

KENNETH

There's people after me. How do I know you don't work for them?

DARIUS

Cause I've never worked for anyone in my life.

Darius' nonsense slides so slickly out of her mouth. Kenneth chews on all of it like it has meaty meaning.

KENNETH
You ever faced certain death?

DARIUS
If it was so certain I wouldn't be
here, would I?

Kenneth is at a loss. She makes too much sense.

KENNETH
This is a bad place to be talking.
I'm off in like fifteen minutes.
Let's rendezvous.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - NIGHT

Jeff sleeps, stretched out in the back seat. Arnau types on a laptop in the front passenger side.

Darius SWINGS open the door and jumps in. Jeff springs awake.

DARIUS
Get down!

JEFF
(scared)
What's going on?

DARIUS
Get down! Don't let him see you.

Arnau slides the seat back and ducks down, curling up in the foot space. Jeff slides down onto the floor of the car.

ARNAU
Is he coming?

JEFF
What the fuck is going on!

Darius spots the Datsun ahead of her. It flashes its brights twice before pulling away.

DARIUS
I got him all juicy for me but he's
all paranoid about everything.

Darius starts the car and follows Kenneth.

DARIUS
He's taking me to a secure location
to talk more. He's all freaked out
though, he thinks people are
following him.

EXT. CITY LIMITS - NIGHT

The Acura follows the Datsun through the streets in the edges of Wilmington past strip malls and closed water parks.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - NIGHT

Jeff laughs in the back.

JEFF

If this guy's a predator taking you
to a sex bunker he's gonna freak
when me and Arnau come falling out
of here like some clown car.

The brake lights ahead of them FLASH RED as Kenneth stops in an alley behind a supermarket. He gets out of the car and walks toward the Acura, now also stopped.

Darius tenses.

DARIUS

Shit.

JEFF

What's going on out there?

DARIUS

He's coming!

ARNAU

Oh man.

Arnau curls into a smaller, frightened ball on the floor.

JEFF

Don't let him see us. We'll blow it
all!

DARIUS

What do I do?

Kenneth is almost to the Acura.

Then HEADLIGHTS light him up as a car pulls into the alley behind them. Darius thinks fast and seizes the opportunity, putting the car in drive.

Kenneth steps back she Darius accelerates. She shouts out the window as she passes.

DARIUS

We're being followed! Go!

Darius' Acura speeds around the Datsun and turns a corner. Kenneth's eyes go wide at the innocently approaching car. He turns and sprints for his car.

INT. APPROACHING CAR - SAME

An OVERWEIGHT BOYFRIEND AND GIRLFRIEND watch Kenneth's panicked run to his car.

BOYFRIEND
What the hell is this?

They slow as they approach. Kenneth opens his trunk and pulls out a shotgun.

BOYFRIEND
Oh shit!

GIRLFRIEND
Git! Git! Go! Git out!

The Boyfriend wildly swerves his car and speeds away.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - NIGHT

Darius pulls over on the side of the road around the corner.

DARIUS
Get out.

JEFF
Where the fuck are we?

DARIUS
I don't know. Just get out and I'll
come pick you up after I'm done.

Jeff looks out the window and sees a row of run-down houses. On one porch several BLACK MEN in wife beaters drink from brown bagged bottles.

ARNAU
(wary)
I don't know.

JEFF
Yeah, fuck that.

DARIUS
What are you guys, racist?

Her cell phone RINGS, lighting up the car interior.

DARIUS

Hello?

INT. KENNETH'S DATSUN - NIGHT

A shaking, spooked Kenneth drives with his cell to his ear.

KENNETH

It's too hot here right now. I have
a gut feeling you're not with them
but, but I just don't know. I'm
gonna do a background check on you
and I'll be in touch if
everything's good, okay?

DARIUS (VO)

(on phone)

Yeah, okay.

KENNETH

Okay. Good-bye, uh, good night.

Kenneth hangs up. He leans over and looks at his face in the rear view mirror. He pushes his ear back closer to his head and studies himself, positioned so that only that half of his head is visible in the mirror. He keeps driving.

INT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Darius wakes up to bright daylight filling the room. She gets out of her bed. Arnau sleeps on the other bed. Jeff is gone.

She rubs her eyes and checks her cell phone. Nothing.

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

Jeff enters a salon where a half dozen STYLISTS do their thing. A MAN and WOMAN occupy the RECEPTIONIST so Jeff drifts back against the far wall and surveys the interior.

His hopeful eyes settle on a thin BLOND, who turns around and reveals her face. Not her. Jeff scans the other stylists. He finally focuses on a woman cutting of the name LIZ in one stylists' area. He studies the woman cutting hair there.

LIZ CLEARY, 30, is more than a little on the heavy side, has brown hair, pale skin and generally does not match Jeff's description of a sun-kissed beach blond hottie.

Jeff stares at her, the brightness fading from his eyes.

He turns and exits the salon.

INT. TIKI BAR - DAY

Jeff sits at the bar with Darius and Arnau and wiggles his fingers in front of his face while grimacing.

JEFF

She was, she was big, and like...

DARIUS

Your age? I know, gross.

JEFF

Let's just say the years have not been kind. They pretty much took a shit all over her.

DARIUS

When I go back in time with him I'm finding you as a child and turning you gay.

JEFF

Did dude call yet?

DARIUS

No.

JEFF

Don't sweat it. He'll call. Your weird mojo clicked with his weird mojo and you got him in the bag.

ARNAU

Should we like do a background check on him, or something? Make sure he's not a murderer.

DARIUS

He seems pretty harmless.

Jeff's eyes follow a young HOSTESS who walks toward them before meeting up with her baby-faced BOYFRIEND, 17. A brief reality check registers on Jeff's face. Darius sees.

DARIUS

Unlike perv-ison here. That girl's like twelve.

JEFF

What girl?

INT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - DAY

Over Kenneth's shoulder we see his computer screen.

ON SCREEN: Darius' MySpace profile. We see as he scrolls:

--Darius has 0 friends.

--Under "Here For": Quantifying my self worth by the quality of total strangers who hit on me here.

--CLICKS on "Photos": Various photos of Darius doing prison poses, flashing fake gold teeth, and throwing up gang signs on a bed covered with one dollar bills.

Kenneth leans more into frame and we hear TYPING.

ON SCREEN: A Google search. Darius Britt. Various versions of the same article appear. The gist of all of them: Ridgewood Woman Murdered...survived by husband Phillip Britt and daughter Darius Britt.

Kenneth's arm comes into frame, holding a cell to his ear.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - BLEACHERS - NIGHT

The Friday night lights glisten off the wet grass in a medium-sized stadium. Two high school teams take the field.

We follow Darius through a crowd and up the bleacher stairs, past the seated band, pounding their drums, to the top row.

KENNETH

Hi.

Kenneth puts down a seat pad next to him. Darius sits on it.

DARIUS

Thanks.

KENNETH

(almost yelling)

I hope you don't mind the noise.
It's a good public place to meet.
They won't be able to hear our
conversation.

DARIUS

I would have done the same. Who are
we dealing with here?

KENNETH

Can't say for sure. They've been
following me, monitoring me since I
started this mission. Government
agents maybe. Probably.

DARIUS

Look. I just need to know if you're some kind of nutjob and this is all bullshit or if you're legit.

KENNETH

Oh I'm legit.

Darius gives him a dead stare.

KENNETH

Trust me. I didn't put up that ad just so people would make fun of me. They wouldn't do that to my face!

Darius isn't threatened by his awkward attempt at rage.

DARIUS

I don't want to get jerked around.

KENNETH

Jerking around is for jerks.

EXT HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - OTHER BLEACHERS

Jeff and Arnau sit a good distance away, watching Darius from afar. Jeff opens a small cooler and forces a beer on Arnau before taking one for himself. Jeff breathes in.

JEFF

God, I remember that smell. The smell of grass, you know? And the sound of the drums.

ARNAU

You should give Liz a chance. That sucks to spend all those years wondering about her and you're finally here and you don't go through with it.

JEFF

All that time I was wondering About her she didn't look like a female butcher.

ARNAU

That's sad if the love of your youth was just based on what a girl looked like in her bikini.

JEFF

Naw, it's not like that. It wasn't her looks. She had the hottest southern accent. And she was so, I don't know, warm. I don't know how to describe it.

ARNAU

How do you know she's still not?

Jeff thinks about it. Then looks around.

JEFF

Dude, there's a ton of hot chicks.

Arnau looks. There are.

ARNAU

They're like all sixteen.

JEFF

You should fucking put the moves on these chicks.

An uptight MOM in the row in front of Jeff frowns.

JEFF

Well?

ARNAU

Well what?

JEFF

I'll go see Liz again if you start talking to that chick right there.

ARNAU

They're high school girls.

JEFF

Yeah, and you're a college guy. Who do you think high school girls fuck?

They get an angry head turn from Mom.

EXT HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - BLEACHERS

Darius plays it cool and straight.

DARIUS

So what's the year? Where are we going?

KENNETH

2003. Does that work for you?

DARIUS

Perfect. That gives me time to do what I need to do. What are the...means of transportation?

KENNETH

Hold it in your holster for a sec. I'm still making up my mind about you as a potential partner. I have to be completely certain I can trust you before I include you in certain information.

DARIUS

That's fair. What's the time table?

KENNETH

There's a critical step soon. I need to obtain certain materials to facilitate the travel. I'm planning to execute this within the next week. As far as you're concerned, this is an evaluation period. I'm not making any promises.

DARIUS

Why 2003? What are you going back for?

KENNETH

Like I said, certain details will have to wait.

Kenneth goes silent, suspiciously eyeing the GUY sitting nearest to them, then gives Darius a poignant look. She nods.

EXT HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - OTHER BLEACHERS

A DEPUTY SHERIFF walks up the bleacher steps. The Mom stands and points out Jeff and Arnau.

MOM

Right there, officer.

Jeff downs a gulp of his beer and looks around, puzzled.

MOM

These two.

The Deputy beckons to Jeff with his finger.

DEPUTY
Let's go.

JEFF
What?

DEPUTY
You two! Up! Let's go.

JEFF
What's the problem?

DEPUTY
You're drinking alcohol at a high
school football game. Come on.

Arnau takes a deep breath, his world ending around him.

JEFF
It's a football game.

DEPUTY
Smartass if I have to ask you one
more time!

EXT HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - BLEACHERS

Heads are turning to see what the ruckus is about. Kenneth
and Darius look over and spot the Deputy shouting at Jeff.
Darius' eyes go wide for a moment as Kenneth looks.

DARIUS
These drums are giving me a
headache. Is there somewhere else
we can go?

Kenneth takes his eyes away from the scene.

KENNETH
Okay.

EXT HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - OTHER BLEACHERS

Who are now up, being escorted away by the Deputy.

MOM
That's right. Get them out of here!

JEFF
Don't worry, he's still gonna fuck
your daughter.

The Deputy WHIPS his red face around. Arnau shakes his head
apologetically to the Mom and Deputy.

ARNAU
No, that's not true.

EXT HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONCESSION STAND

Darius and Kenneth weave through the crowd. They pass a group of ROWDY TEENS, where a big BEEFHEAD KID, 18, roughhouses with a JOCK.

Kenneth is BOWLED OVER by this big mutant, knocked to the ground. The Jock then slaps Beefhead's hand holding his fountain soda, causing it to spill all over Kenneth.

The teens LAUGH. The Beefhead pretends to have remorse. Darius helps Kenneth to his feet.

BEEFHEAD
(through a big grin)
I'm sorry man. It was his fault.

KENNETH
W-w-w-watch it, man.

JOCK
(mock stuttering)
I-I-I can't believe you just
assaulted a retard.

Kenneth is suddenly tight and uncomfortable, embarrassed.

DARIUS
You guys are total assholes.

Beefhead and Jock turn to face Darius.

DARIUS
I mean, how useless are you? At
least all the other fatasses are
out there playing football right
now. And this one?

Darius looks at the Jock, as if to speak, but SLAPS his elbow, knocking his fountain soda into his own face.

JOCK
You fucking bitch.

The other teens pull him back as Kenneth leads Darius away.

KENNETH
I'd have really messed them up if I
wasn't trying to keep a low
profile. But I'm glad I got to see
your qualities.
(MORE)

KENNETH (cont'd)
I think you're ready for the next
phase, some basic training.

Kenneth spots the Jock approaching with another DEPUTY SHERIFF.

KENNETH
The heat's moving in. That's all
for tonight.

The Jock points her out to the Deputy Sheriff.

JOCK
That's her! She assaulted me with
my drink.

Darius turns back to Kenneth but he's gone. One with the
night. She sighs and turns to face the music.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jeff and Arnau are escorted out through a gated door in the
fence just as Darius is led through at the same time by her
own Deputy Sheriff. They all eye each other curiously.

DARIUS
(sarcastically)
Seriously, how'd you guys get
kicked out of a high school
football game?

INT. KENNETH'S DATSUN - NIGHT

Kenneth climbs into his seat. He looks at the Coke stain on
his shirt. He SLAPS the steering wheel over and over. This
isn't the first time he's been humiliated.

He performs a few karate moves with his arms, complete with
self-generated sound effects, re-playing in his mind what he
wished he could've done to those guys.

The driver's side window FALLS in its slot, disappearing into
the door. Kenneth stops and looks at his broken window.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

BLAM! Darius fires a .22 handgun in a remote woodland. A
bottle on a fallen tree shatters. Kenneth nods.

KENNETH
Nice. You smoked it.

Kenneth pushes PLAY on a cassette deck boom box he's hung from a branch by its strap.

Cheap Trick's cheesy 80's anthem "MIGHTY WINGS" plays, as recorded off of the radio two decades ago.

Kenneth nods to the music, really finding the elusive zone through its lyrics, then fires his gun at a bottle. The top chips off and he finishes it off with two more shots.

DARIUS

I'm getting better than you. All I
need is one shot.

Kenneth, insulted, takes her joke personally.

KENNETH

It's easy to shoot standing still
with no pressure.

Kenneth runs a few steps, then takes a dramatic stance with both knees bent, both arms extending his gun out, and FIRES.

KENNETH

But you have to be able to shoot on
the move...

Kenneth spins and fires off two more shots.

KENNETH

...with the heat flying by...

He drops to a knee and FIRES, then pulls out a backup gun.

KENNETH

...do what I'm doing. Come on.

DARIUS

Really?

Kenneth ducks behind a tree, faking like he's under fire, then spins out from the cover and shoots a bottle. It all looks very awkward and slowly paced.

KENNETH

Come on!

Darius imitates him, but with only a fraction of his effort and intensity.

KENNETH

Smoke it! Come on, smoke it!

Darius fires some shots.

KENNETH
They're closing in. Smoke 'em.

DARIUS
Okay, just shut up.

Darius finally hits a bottle.

KENNETH
Yeah! You smoked him.

DARIUS
Yes, I smoked him. He's smoked.

An enraged MAN IN A FLANNEL storms through the trees.

MAN IN FLANNEL
Hey! Stop your shooting!

They freeze as the man screams toward them.

MAN IN FLANNEL
My house is back there! You put a
hole in my swimming pool you
jackasses!

DARIUS
Should I smoke him?

KENNETH
Run, go!

Darius and Kenneth take off into the woods. The Man in Flannel huffs and puffs but just stops, hands on hips.

Running side by side, Darius sneaks a sideways peek at Kenneth's face as he runs. She can't help but burst out in laughter at the comical severity of his expression as he breathes rapidly in and out through his O-lips.

Kenneth tones it down as they slow their clip.

KENNETH
What?

She just keeps laughing good-naturedly. Kenneth cracks a smile, too. Soon they're both laughing hard.

EXT. LIZ'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeff waits on the porch of a cute little cottage style house. Liz opens the door.

JEFF

Hello, Liz.

LIZ

Jeff! Oh my goodness! Look at you.
Come here!

She's all sweet southern goodness, like a hot cotton T-shirt right out of the dryer. She hugs him fondly, looks him over.

JEFF

I'm sorry about yesterday. I'm here on work and something came up, I just couldn't make it.

LIZ

I was so sad when you didn't come after you got me thinking about you on that Facebook. Isn't Facebook just the craziest thing? Come in, get in here.

INT. LIZ'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Liz draws him into the house.

JEFF

This is the best smelling house I've ever been inside.

LIZ

Well what do the houses in New York smell like?

JEFF

Like Chinese food.

LIZ

I just have to get on the computer and read this magazine of yours. That's so exciting, I always knew you were going to do something special with your life.

JEFF

Special? Easy now.

Jeff winces and rubs his neck.

LIZ

What's wrong with your neck, honey?

JEFF

I'm sharing a bed with my intern. I sleep like a stiff corpse, trying not to rub ass with the guy.

LIZ

You need heat on that...Oh! I have pies in the oven.

JEFF

Wow, you made them? Like with flour and that roller thing?

LIZ

I made a peach, apple and strawberry rhubarb. Which kind do you want?

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Darius and Kenneth sip Gatorade while sitting in the shade on a wooded hilltop overlooking the parked Datsun.

KENNETH

That was some good training we got in. I got to see you under pressure. I think you're ready for initiation.

DARIUS

I was born ready.

KENNETH

I like your intensity. You're like, no-nonsense.

DARIUS

There's no sense in nonsense. Especially when the heat's hot.

KENNETH

Exactly.

Kenneth nods. She's speaking his language.

KENNETH

They wouldn't be making fun of me if they saw us just now. Sometimes I wish I was like a superhero that doesn't stop crime, but like steps in when someone's getting made fun of and stops that, you know? Not me, but other people that get made fun of, that aren't tough like me.

Darius looks at Kenneth in a way we don't recognize from her. Something changes here. She's no longer making fun of him.

KENNETH

But you're pretty good with the gun. No, you're damn good.

DARIUS

I like your intensity, too. You've got good moves.

KENNETH

I do have to know what you're going back for, though.

Darius looks at him questioningly.

KENNETH

I have a certain responsibility to keep.

DARIUS

Right. That's fair. Okay.

(beat)

I'm going back to stop my mother from dying when I was fourteen.

KENNETH

How'd she die?

DARIUS

She was killed by some guy. Just some guy at a gas station took her and killed her.

KENNETH

Oh man. Like a random thing?

DARIUS

Yeah. Well, no. She was driving home. It was late, like after midnight. And she called me to tell me she was on her way home. And I -

(beat)

I asked her to stop and get me some chocolate milk. Because I had to have chocolate milk. So like five minutes later she calls me from the gas station and says they had it and she was coming home. Her voice was so excited. Like she was so happy to get this chocolate milk for me. And I was just like whatever. I wasn't even nice.

(MORE)

DARIUS (cont'd)
And that was it. Last time I talked
to her. So, no. It wasn't quite
random that she was there.

KENNETH
But it wasn't your fault.

DARIUS
That's what they tell me.

Silent beat. Kenneth nods affirmatively to himself.

KENNETH
You're ready. I trust you, Darius.

A speck of guilt in Darius' eyes.

DARIUS
Good. You should.

INT. LIZ'S KITCHEN - DAY

Liz has a heating pad wrapped around Jeff's neck as she rubs
the trouble spot. A half eaten pie rests on the table.

JEFF
You bake pies like this and you're
not married? What's going on there?

LIZ
I was married. Married this boy
when I was twenty and that didn't
work out.

JEFF
What happened?

LIZ
He was a ball player, so I followed
him around everywhere his team
went, he was in the minor leagues
for four years. I was the good
little wife, working to support the
both of us, baking cookies for the
team.

Jeff takes a bite of pie, neck wrapped in heating pad, Liz
massaging his shoulder. He's on a cloud.

JEFF
Ohh, cookies, too?

LIZ

But as soon as Cameron got called up to the Marlins and started making money he started running around with those Miami girls and that was that. I came back here.

JEFF

What a dick.

LIZ

Well, we were both young. It happens. Hey, do you have a free night while you're here? I want to make you a homemade dinner.

JEFF

(nearly cooing)

I want to eat that homemade dinner.

INT. DINER - DAY

Darius and Kenneth at a booth in the country kitchen.

KENNETH

It's important that we don't abuse the power that will come with our knowledge of the future. No matter how tempting it might be to be the first poster on a message board to "find" all the secrets of the newest video games. Or to say, you know, hey I think that Battlestar Galactica show might really be awesome before anyone else is talking about it.

DARIUS

What about, for the betterment of future society, assassinating certain celebrities when they were vulnerable before they got famous and got entourages?

KENNETH

Absolutely not. We must stick to the plan.

DARIUS

So when do you fill me in on it?

KENNETH

Soon. The action's getting hungry. Real hungry.

Darius spots a KID, 5, at a table licking the sugar bottle.

DARIUS

Oh my god.

The Kid proceeds to place the whole rim of the salt shaker in his sloppy mouth while his MOM ignores him.

DARIUS

I can't eat here.

KENNETH

Why?

DARIUS

Do you see this mutant kid? I'm getting nauseous. I can't look.

Kenneth turns to look and Darius notices his left ear off kilter. It sticks out in an odd angle.

DARIUS

Oh. Something... your ear -

Kenneth's eyes go rigid with fear. He feels at his ears, then SNAPS the ear back into place.

KENNETH

Oh yeah. It, uh.

Kenneth is running out of breath, near panic attack.

DARIUS

It's cool. We can eat here.

Kenneth's panic mixes with anger and he curses at himself.

KENNETH

Stupid! Forget it, it's off.

Kenneth gets up and storms out of the diner.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Darius follows him out as he rushes to his car.

DARIUS

Dude, what's wrong?

KENNETH

I'm sorry. I changed my mind.
You're not the right one.

Kenneth gets into his car. Darius runs to the window but he pulls away. She stops, confused.

The car pulls onto the road, begins to speed away, then brakes. It finally stops on the side of the road.

Darius watches for a moment, then walks over to the car.

Kenneth has his head on the wheel. Darius leans down.

DARIUS

Kenny, what's the deal?

He sits back, takes a deep breath.

KENNETH

It's fake.

DARIUS

What is?

KENNETH

My ear.

DARIUS

It's fake?

KENNETH

I was born with only one.

DARIUS

Is that what this is about?

KENNETH

They used to make fun of me. All the other kids. My parents could only afford one prosthetic so they waited until I stopped growing.

DARIUS

Kenneth, I don't care. It's nothing to be embarrassed about. Shit, people made fun of me, too. I wax my lip and shave my arms. I know it's not the same, but I get it, you know? I had a freaking mustache until I was fifteen.

Darius places a gentle hand on Kenneth's tense shoulder. He reacts like it's electricity, like human contact is something he's starved of, and he just tasted the best kind there is.

KENNETH

We can still do this if we just
never talk about it again. Please.

DARIUS

Okay.

Kenneth silently unlocks the passenger door.

INT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Darius types on the laptop while Arnau jots down notes.

ARNAU

(to Darius)

So then what'd you tell him your
reason for going to 2003 is?

DARIUS

I just made up some story.

ARNAU

Yeah, what's the story?

DARIUS

I told him I wanted to go back and
stop my parents from getting
divorced.

Jeff enters the room, a bounce in his step.

JEFF

There he is.

Jeff slaps Arnau's back.

JEFF

Arnau, the man.

ARNAU

What are you doing?

JEFF

Whatever I'm doing, I'm feeling
fucking fantastic doing it.

DARIUS

Did you just have sex with that fat
girl you came here to stalk?

JEFF

No we didn't. We shared nice
conversation. And she's not that
fat.

(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)
A girl's beauty is, it's in the
eyes, you know? And that never goes
away.

Darius does the jack-off motion.

DARIUS
No wonder you didn't nail her, with
lines like that.

ARNAU
So anyways, for the article we
should know what's wrong with this
guy. Like low I.Q., or emotional
disorder, or whatever it is.

DARIUS
What makes you think he's 'got'
something?

ARNAU
He thinks he's going back in time.

DARIUS
So? Did Einstein have something
wrong with him? Or David Bowie?

ARNAU
What?

DARIUS
Maybe he's just a guy trying to do
something new. What makes that such
a freak show?

Jeff watches Darius with curiosity as he cracks a beer.

JEFF
So you think it's normal?

DARIUS
I don't know. Is it normal that
your interns do all the work on
your story? Is that how all your
articles get written?

JEFF
I'm better at running things.
Leading. I'm not good with like
words and shit and making sentences
sound good.

DARIUS

That's probably kind of important,
being that your job is writing.

JEFF

I never thought of myself as a
writer. I got the job off of
something I wrote in college, but
it took me all fucking year to
write that thing. And it only
turned out so good because it was
about the one thing I could get
into and really write well about.
It's funny how you can do one thing
and you just become that guy. Your
whole life gets defined by it. And
it was just like an accident in the
first place.

ARNAU

What was it about?

Darius' cell RINGS. She looks at the name.

DARIUS

It's him. I have to go.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

An old van rushes by Darius, bundled in a hoodie on the
sidewalk. The van slows and pulls to the curb down the road a
bit. Darius chases after and the door swings open.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - NIGHT

The van comes to a stop in the field behind the medical
research facility we saw Kenneth casing earlier.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Kenneth and Darius.

KENNETH

There's technology inside this
building that I need to complete
the machine that will take us on
our journey.

Kenneth hands her a clipboard of notes.

KENNETH

I'll breach the outer perimeter,
disable their security measures,
penetrate the target, locate and
secure the package, then rendezvous
with you at the getaway point. The
details are all in these notes.

Darius flips through the notes. Page after page of diagrams, maps, lists, and action drawings of Kenneth fighting guards.

Kenneth pulls a black mask over his face. He gets out of the van. Darius follows him with her eyes as he runs to the wall.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

Kenneth performs an unnecessary somersault roll to come to a stop against the eight foot wall. He rises, jumps up and catches the ledge of the wall.

INT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT

The Security Guard sits in a parked car on the inside of the walled compound, studying materials for some class that will no doubt lead to a meteoric rise up the socioeconomic ladder.

His study is interrupted by a handgun pointed through the window by Kenneth.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

The Guard unlocks the double-wide back doors on the raised loading dock in the back of the facility while Kenneth kneels in a dramatic pose in the shadows, gun on the Guard.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - STORAGE CLOSET- NIGHT

Kenneth rolls a wheeled cart out of a storage closet, then locks the Guard inside the closet with his own keys.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kenneth flies down a long hallway in a panic, looking a bit lost as he pushes the cart as fast as he can.

He turns a corner wildly and rolls into a large lounge area where over a dozen EMPLOYEES celebrate a CO-WORKER'S birthday with cake and food.

Kenneth pulls his cart to a stop. No one notices him. He backs the cart out the way he came, completely unseen.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - STORAGE CLOSET - NIGHT

The Guard lays down on a mattress made from boxes and foam pads and gets comfortable.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Kenneth wheels the cart into a store room and begins loading it up with medical devices about the size and shape of old answering machine phones.

They have bases and handpieces connected by a wire. We glimpse wording on the side of one unit: DIODE LASER.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Employees from the party chat in the hallway as Kenneth wheels his cart around a corner.

He stops and the laser devices spill onto the floor. The employees watch him, unsure what to do, as he pulls his mask back over his face and scrambles to retrieve the lasers.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Darius' cell phone lights up. She sits up straight, gathers herself and turns the key in the ignition. The van doesn't start. She looks around, confused, then spots the manual stick shift. Her eyes widen.

DARIUS
Crap, stick?

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Kenneth wheels the cart out through the back doors onto the loading dock. The curious employees follow him out, still not quite sure how to react to this situation. Some try to talk to Kenneth, while ONE GUY is on his cell phone, gesturing as if giving play-by-play of what's going on.

Kenneth's head whips around searching for the getaway.

We see a festive sign posted on the door behind him announcing a birthday party for ELLA PARKS tonight.

The van jumps and jerks its way close to the loading dock. Kenneth wheels the cart to the back, opens the rear doors and spills the contents of the cart into the back.

He jumps inside the van and shuts the doors.

The employees at the back door watch the van pull away, then stall. It starts up, moves another ten yards and stalls again. It starts, JUMPS forward and SPEEDS out of the lot.

EXT. OVERPASS - NIGHT

The van is parked next to Kenneth's Datsun in a dry riverbed under a rural highway overpass. Darius watches Kenneth hurriedly transfer the lasers from the van to the Datsun.

DARIUS

What do we do with the van?

KENNETH

Leave it. I stole it from a lot.

DARIUS

Kenneth, you didn't hurt anyone in there, did you?

Kenneth shakes his head.

KENNETH

No casualties.

Darius grips Kenneth's arm.

DARIUS

You're shaking.

Kenneth looks down sheepishly.

KENNETH

Adrenaline from the infiltration.

INT. KENNETH'S DATSUN - MOMENTS LATER

Kenneth steers around a bend to a dirt path leading up to the highway with the headlights off.

KENNETH

No!

There's a night road work crew ahead of them. Bright stand lights illuminate a traffic light in need of repair as a WORKER is raised up in a crane to reach it.

DARIUS

It's fine. They won't know.

KENNETH

We can't have any witnesses to connect my car to the van.

(MORE)

KENNETH (cont'd)
The people that are after me will
be on full alert after tonight.
They'll put the pieces together.

Kenneth reaches the verge of another panic attack.

KENNETH
Dangit! Why didn't I plan for this?
This is not good. Not good!

Darius puts her hand on his back.

DARIUS
We'll just wait here until they're
done. It'll be okay.

Kenneth nods, breathes deeply, then steers the car behind
some brush and turns it off.

KENNETH
I'm sorry. I'm just so close now.

DARIUS
It's cool. I know.

KENNETH
It's a girl.

Darius looks over at him.

KENNETH
I'm going back for a girl.
Belinda St. Sing.

DARIUS
Who was she?

KENNETH
My first girlfriend. Only one I
ever wanted to have. We were both
twenty-one. Her birthday was the
same day in April as mine is in
October. She was really, really
pretty. When she first started
working at the restaurant I didn't
really think about her. But then
she was so nice to me. She'd get me
food. She'd talk to me while I
cleaned up. Everyone else was off
getting ready to go out, all her
friends. But she'd sit there on the
stool and talk to me.

DARIUS
What happened?

KENNETH
She died. Some jerk, some a-hole
jerk in a band who got drunk after
his show, crashed his car into her
house one night. A night I was
supposed to be there but wasn't. I
should've been there.

DARIUS
You would've just gotten hurt, too.
It's not your fault.

KENNETH
Everyone always says there's plenty
of other girls out there. But it
doesn't work like that. It's not
just about the girl, it's about a
time and a place. You just can't go
find that again.

Darius leans back in her seat, sleepy, and somehow so
comfortable in this odd place and company.

DARIUS
I like your reason for going back,
Kenneth.

EXT. PARK - DAWN

The sun creeps up, cold in the misty air. Long shot of the
Datsun dropping Darius off at the park before driving away.

INT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL - BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY

Jeff scarfs down a mini-box of Raisin Bran across the table
from Darius and Arnau.

JEFF
Fucking lasers?

ARNAU
What kind of lasers?

DARIUS
I don't know I'm not a freaking
Storm Trooper.

JEFF
This guy's awesome. He's over there
right now really thinking he's
building a damn time machine.
(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)
Arnau, what are the chances he can
really do it with these lasers?

ARNAU
How would I know, I'm not a -

DARIUS
He's not a freaking Storm Trooper.

JEFF
Storm Troopers don't know shit
about lasers or time travel,
they're fucking blue collar
workers.
(mouth full)
I gotta go see this shit.

EXT. KENNETH'S SHED - DAY

Darius, Jeff and Arnau sneak to the locked shed next to the house. Jeff tries to climb up the shed wall to peer in through the crack between the roof and wall.

DARIUS
Isn't this like violating his
privacy?

JEFF
I can't see down far enough.

Jeff drops back down to the ground.

JEFF
What are you building in there,
Kenny?

Arnau, on look-out, frantically combines as many warning gestures as his mind holds: throat slash, incomplete pass, thumbs down, etc.

Jeff and Darius crouch and hold their breath as KENNETH emerges from the shed and locks the many locks behind him.

He carries a large box to his car and loads it into the trunk.

JEFF
Shit. Get the fuck outta here.

A SUNGLASSED MAN in dark slacks and jacket appears from the trees beyond Kenneth's house and runs across the street. He gets into a black sedan parked around the corner.

JEFF
Who's this asshole?

Kenneth's Datsun drives away. The black sedan slowly pulls out onto the main street and follows his car.

DARIUS
They're following him. Oh my God.
There really are people following
him.

EXT. OCEAN VIEW STREETS - DAY

Kenneth's Datsun turns right onto a residential street. Moments later the Sedan does the same.

Next comes the Acura, Jeff behind the wheel.

INT. KENNETH'S DATSUN - DAY

Kenneth checks his rear-view mirror and sees the Sedan a good distance behind him. He makes another turn.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - DAY

The man in sunglasses nods to his nearly identical partner. We'll call them JONES and SMITH.

JONES
Stay back. Don't spook him.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - DAY

Jeff trails the black sedan.

ARNAU
Stay back. Don't scare them.

JEFF
This is fucking intense.

DARIUS
We're going fifteen miles an hour.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - DAY

Jones watches Kenneth's Datsun abruptly turn onto a side street.

JONES
Shit, he saw us. Go!

Smith looks in his rear-view and raises an eyebrow.

SMITH
I think we're being trailed.

Jones spins around.

JONES

Huh?

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - DAY

The Sedan in front of them quickly speeds up and turns around a corner out of sight.

JEFF

Shit, they're on to us.

DARIUS

On to what?

EXT. DEAD END STREET - DAY

A LOCAL WOMAN pulls her car to the end of her driveway, braking for the Datsun to drive by.

Kenneth reaches the dead end and does a tight U-Turn, kicking up dirt and tearing up the corner of someone's lawn.

The local woman slams on her brakes before pulling out, surprised by Kenneth's quick turnabout.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - DAY

Smith guns the sedan around the corner onto the dead end street and swerves to avoid swiping the nose of the local woman's car. He hits the brakes hard as Kenneth drives past.

SMITH

Shiiiiit.

Kenneth glares at them as he passes and continues in the opposite direction.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - DAY

Jeff takes the corner tight and fast. The Datsun appears and both cars brake to avoid a collision.

Jeff and Darius duck their heads down.

JEFF

Don't let him see you!

INT. KENNETH'S DATSUN - DAY

Kenneth looks into the Acura as he steers around it and onto the main street. All he sees is Arnau, frozen like a deer in the backseat, staring back. The front looks completely empty.

Kenneth, confused, speeds away.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - DAY

Arnau exchanges the same confused looks with Smith and Jones, who slowly drive past before speeding away.

DARIUS
What the hell, did you see those
guys?

ARNAU
They look like government agents or
something.

DARIUS
(amazed)
He's really being followed.

JEFF
(laughing)
Holy shit is this guy for real?

EXT. COASTAL PICNIC AREA - DAY

Jeff sips on a milk shake as Arnau types on the laptop on a picnic table.

Darius' cell RINGS. She answers. Jeff hovers. She eyes him and turns away for privacy.

DARIUS
Kenneth? Are you okay?

Jeff shoots an arched eyebrow at Darius.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Kenneth paces, cell to his ear.

KENNETH
Hey. The heat got too hot today.
They're all over me. Way too hot.

EXT. PICNIC AREA - DAY

Darius covers her open ear.

DARIUS
Who is?

KENNETH (VO)
(on phone)
I can't talk. Just watch your back.
Stay low and lay low.
(MORE)

KENNETH (VO) (cont'd)
Go to the park, I'll come get you.
It's almost time.

Click. Darius lowers the phone.

JEFF
Look at you.

DARIUS
What?

JEFF
Are you in love with this guy?

DARIUS
No.

JEFF
You're getting all worked up about
this whole thing. What's been going
on with you two when you're off
alone?

DARIUS
I'm doing what you made me do.

JEFF
Maybe that was his plan the whole
time. Whoever answered that ad
would have to be his soulmate.

DARIUS
Shut up.

ARNAU
It was like a personal ad.

JEFF
E-harmony for lunatics.

DARIUS
You guys are assholes. Take me to
the park. I'm meeting him.

JEFF
Oooh, for a picnic?

EXT. U-SAVE - PARKING LOT - DAY

Darius and Kenneth on the outer edge of the vast U-Save lot.

KENNETH
It's obvious they see a threat in
me possessing this kind of power.

DARIUS
Who are they?

KENNETH
It's not clear what entity they
represent. Their presence here
accelerates the plan, though.

Kenneth hands Darius a wide shoebox wrapped in a string.

KENNETH
They'll have one of their guys at
every door, but you should be fine.
I don't think they've ID'd you yet.

DARIUS
Got it.

EXT. U-SAVE - DAY

Darius carries the box inside. She can't help but eye the
unconcerned OLD LADY waiting by the entrance.

INT. U-SAVE - STOCKROOM - DAY

A STOCKBOY leads Darius into a back storeroom and points out
the weary old black man, Shannon, who we saw Kenneth talking
to at work earlier. Darius approaches.

DARIUS
Shannon?

Shannon leans a dolly against a wall and turns.

SHANNON
Yes ma'am.

Darius holds out the box.

DARIUS
This is from Kenneth. He wanted me
to give it to you.

Shannon, surprised, slowly takes the box from her. She
watches him slide the string off and open the lid.

Inside are thousands of dollars. Looks like every last dollar
Kenneth could possibly have.

SHANNON
Kenneth said to give this to me?

Darius, shocked as much as Shannon is, nods.

Shannon tries to speak, but is overcome by emotion. He shakes his head, his tired eyes fighting off tears.

SHANNON

I don't even know how to thank the man.

DARIUS

It's okay.

SHANNON

You tell him...

Shannon chokes up.

DARIUS

I know. I'll tell him.

SHANNON

And tell him I hope he gets wherever he's goin' an' it all works out how he wants.

EXT. U-SAVE - PARKING LOT - DAY

Darius walks through the lot. Her face is a bit blank, a bit overwhelmed. She looks so much softer than when we met her.

INT. KENNETH'S DATSUN - SAME

Darius gets in and just stares at Kenneth, a smile in her eyes, trouble in the rest of her face. Kenneth looks back at her, then the road, then her.

KENNETH

What?

DARIUS

Nothing.

EXT. LIZ'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Jeff sits at a picnic table while a wholesome feast is laid out before him by Liz.

LIZ

It sounds dangerous. Her running around with this guy and these other men following him around.

JEFF

Ah, she'll be fine. There's still leftover pie, right?

Liz brings him an icy bottle of beer.

LIZ

Do you remember when you talked me into going on that boat with that strange man?

JEFF

Yeah, see. Nothing bad happened to us. We got to go wake boarding, had a good time.

LIZ

He spent all day taking photographs of me in my bathing suit!

JEFF

Oh yeah, he never did mail those to us like he said he would, did he?

LIZ

No! He was probably a sexual predator and you threw me right to him so you could waterski.

JEFF

It worked out, right? Fair trade. I'm sure he got some pleasure out of those photos.

LIZ

He took hundreds!

JEFF

How did I not even think that was weird at the time?

Liz falls down into his lap playfully.

LIZ

He took a lot of you so he might've been getting pleasure out of those ones, too.

JEFF

Well of course he did. I was ripped back then.

LIZ

Oh you were not. You were scrawny.

Jeff forces her hand onto his chest.

JEFF

Yeah, well feel me now.

Liz rolls her eyes. Jeff kisses her.

EXT. BOY SCOUT CAMP - DAY

The Datsun parks in a remote wooded area where a small camp area consisting of open, wood framed shelters blends into the fall foliage. Darius and Kenneth get out of the car.

KENNETH

The place we're going is a short walk, maybe five minutes from here. You have to make sure you remember how to get here.

Darius strolls along the camp shelters.

DARIUS

Got it.

KENNETH

Here.

Kenneth leads her to one of the shelters where a sleeping bag lies next to a duffle. Some books are scattered on the wooden floor next to a cooler. Kenneth opens the cooler and takes a local trail map out of it.

DARIUS

This is your stuff?

Kenneth draws on the map with a pen.

KENNETH

Yeah, the Boy Scouts don't use this place after September so I just kind of set up here, like having a second home to come spend some nights, you know. Clear the head.

Darius digs into one of the boxes and pulls out a an old zither, a kind of flat, square guitar that's laid on your knees when you play it.

KENNETH

There, I drew the location on here so you'll always be able to get there.

DARIUS

You play this?

KENNETH

I've been trying. Belinda really loved music. Back when we were together I always wished I could play her something. My dad had one of these so I've been learning some songs for when I see her again. I want to be a better man for her this time.

DARIUS

Play something.

KENNETH

Oh, nah.

DARIUS

Come on. You need to practice on somebody. I'll tell you if it's good.

KENNETH

Yeah, you're right.

Kenneth takes the zither and sits down, laying it across his knees. He begins to play.

It's Van Halen's When It's Love but it's hard to recognize, slowed down. He plays like a savant, technically perfect, even adding notes to fill spaces.

Darius watches with wonder. The sound is amazing. Then he begins to SING.

KENNETH

(singing)

Everybody's lookin' for somethin',
somethin' to fill the holes...

His voice isn't great, but not bad either. He sings softly, sincerely. It's at once ridiculous and beautiful. He wraps.

KENNETH

(singing)

Oh, oh, oh, when it's love.

His shy eyes can't even look up at Darius.

KENNETH

So anyway, that's one of them. I've learned like thirty of 'em.

DARIUS

Kenneth it's so good.

KENNETH

Yeah?

DARIUS

So good.

INT. LIZ'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jeff collapses onto Liz's full cleavage in the aftermath of heated, partially clothed spontaneous sex on her couch.

JEFF

Oh my God. That's the best I've ever had. I'm not lying.

Liz giggles.

LIZ

That's what you said about the fried chicken.

JEFF

I'm so serious.

Jeff props himself up and gazes at her, his brain loaded with food and sex pleasure chemicals.

JEFF

You don't now how long I've been thinking about this right here. Ever since I used to come down here in the summers I never met a girl like you. You've been this character in my head like from an old fairy tale. Like you were the last of a kind that doesn't exist anymore.

LIZ

(laughing)

What are you talking about?

JEFF

No, I'm so serious, I wrote a story about you. Like how love never feels as good as the first one, and you can't ever get that high again.

LIZ

You're so cute.

JEFF

I want you to come to New York.

LIZ

What!

JEFF

I want to figure this out, make it happen.

LIZ

Jeff, Jeff, Jeff. You're not in your right mind right now.

JEFF

I'm completely sincere about this, Liz.

LIZ

Jeff. As soon as you drive out of this place you're not going to want me there anymore.

JEFF

Come on, don't you feel this?

LIZ

It's a fantasy. This is fantasy time. I'm dating a real solid man right now. He works at the post office, he grew up here. This isn't a fantasy world for him. He can take care of me.

JEFF

So can I.

LIZ

Jeff, I've been through that before. I'm too old to take those chances again.

Jeff stands up, now becoming angry.

JEFF

So no? You're saying no?

LIZ

I'm sorry.

JEFF

This is un-fucking-believable. I stretched my ass out on the line here and look what I get. Fucking punched in the face. Hey asshole, follow your heart. Listen to your heart.

(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)
Oh, ok, what's that you say, heart?
You just got punked and now you
look like a giant dildo.

LIZ
Jeff, I think you're acting a
little crazy about this.

JEFF
Goddammit!

Jeff punches the air, but tweaks his back muscle, and doubles over holding his neck.

EXT. LIZ'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jeff marches away from Liz, fuming. She watches him go with sympathy from the porch.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Kenneth leads Darius down a hill to an old, large tree on the edge of a wide lake. A rope swing with a wood disk at the end hangs from a branch that stretches over the water.

KENNETH
Here it is.

Kenneth finds a large knot in the tree, reaches his arm up into it, pulling away a small wood covering. He strains until he pulls an old army ammunition tin out of the tree hollow.

KENNETH
When we go back in time, if
anything bad happens, if anyone
gets hurt, you mess up, the people
after me catch us, anything bad -
come here and put a note inside.
I'll do the same, then we know what
went wrong and we can fix it. Got
it? This is very important.

Darius nods. Kenneth looks inside the box. It's empty.

KENNETH
So far so good.

DARIUS
This was here in 2003?

KENNETH
It's been here since I was a kid. I
used to camp back there when I was
in the Boy Scouts.
(MORE)

KENNETH (cont'd)

Some of the other kids used to make fun of me for bringing my Star Wars figures with me, cause I didn't want them to be alone back at my house, so they'd take them and throw them into the fire and laugh at me for sleeping with them. This was before my martial arts training, of course. I carved out this hiding spot for them so I could still take them with me and no one would hurt them. I'd just sneak down here at night and take them out, then put them back in the morning.

DARIUS

I wish I could see you when you were a little kid.

KENNETH

(snort laughs)

I was not as impressive as I am now.

Kenneth replaces the box back into the tree. Darius runs her finger along the wooden disk at the end of the rope, tethered to the trunk by a nail.

KENNETH

Me and my dad made that, too.

DARIUS

What do you do? Swing?

KENNETH

Yeah, get on.

DARIUS

No, I'm not much of a swinger.

KENNETH

Come on, get on.

Kenneth unhooks the swing from the nail and holds the disk flat for her.

KENNETH

Come on. I played that song.

Darius reluctantly swings her leg around the rope and straddles it, seated on the disk, feet dangling a few feet off the ground while Kenneth holds it in place.

DARIUS

Now what?

KENNETH

Hold on!

Kenneth SPRINTS forward toward the pond, running down the hill, pushing Darius on the swing. Their faces are a few feet apart, her eyes wide with surprise, his wide with the glee you normally only see in a child's.

Kenneth pushes her to the lake's edge and lets go.

Darius, hands tight on the rope, swings free and far out over the water.

She swings back over land. Kenneth laughs as he chases her. He grabs onto the disk and tucks up his legs as she begins to swing back to the lake, now with Kenneth hanging on.

The two of them soar over the lake. At the highest point Kenneth lets go and splashes into the water.

Darius swings back over the land, half screaming, half laughing. Kenneth motions her into the water with his hands.

KENNETH

Come on! Jump!

Darius makes another pass over him, shaking her head 'no.'

KENNETH

How else are you going to get off?

Darius swings over the land, then clenches her eyes shut as she flies back over the water. She pushes off. The swing goes back alone. She plunges into the cold water.

She splashes to the surface and swats water at Kenneth, who laughs.

To the music, a series of shots:

-- Kenneth holding Darius' hand, helping her out of the water.

-- Kenneth giving a soaked Darius the only towel out of the back of the Datsun and helping wrap her up in it.

-- Kenneth, shivering cold, gets a fire started in the camp fire pit as night falls. Darius, snug in her towel, laughs as he squats down right in the fire, desperate for the warmth.

-- They sit by the fire. Kenneth lights the wing of a paper airplane and sends it on a fiery flight.

Darius takes his head in her hands so softly. He's paralyzed.

Her hands run over his ears. Kenneth's hand defensively grabs her wrist to pull it away from his prosthetic, but then he relaxes and lets her arm go.

She kisses him.

CUT TO:

INT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Arnau plays his online game on the laptop. Jeff enters with the most deadly serious look on his face.

Arnau meets his gaze, apprehension gripping his soul.

Cheap Trick's "Mighty Wings" ramps up, full force...

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - NIGHT

The Acura cruises down the road, windows down. Jeff looks over at Arnau, gives him a nod.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Jeff and Arnau have a drink at the bar. Jeff scans the joint. Nothing but sad bar regulars and a 50 year-old COCKTAIL WAITRESS. Jeff downs his drink and gets up, on a mission.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Jeff exits the Acura. A group of three GIRLS and one SOUTHERN GOTH GUY wave him over from the corner of the storefront.

Arnau watches from the car.

The most audacious of this group, LINSEY, holds out a twenty dollar bill to Jeff and motions toward the liquor store as she politely pleads with him. This group is obviously under 21, how far under we'll never know.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - NIGHT

Arnau is squeezed in the back seat next to a DECENT GIRL, her FRIEND, and the Goth Guy. In the front seat, Linsey chugs a Hard Lemonade. Jeff looks over at her, widens his eyes and lowers her bottle down out of view from the outside.

Linsey laughs and playfully swats his hand away.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Jeff, Arnau and their new friends on the beach with burnt fireworks and empty bottles. Linsey chases Jeff with a sparkler while the Goth Guy shoots bottle rockets at Arnau and the other two chicks, who run for cover.

GOTH GUY
Oh shit the cops!

Jeff looks up to see a police cruiser on the far side of the dune above them. Everyone runs, laughing.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

On a quiet, remote street, the Acura does donuts.

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - CONTINUOUS

Arnau braces in the backseat, girls falling all over him. Jeff looks back from the front and screams euphorically.

INT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Jeff emerges from the bathroom, passes the two queen beds, one with Linsey and another girl passed out on it, the next with the Goth guy and the Decent Girl on it watching TV.

EXT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL - ICE ROOM - NIGHT

Arnau gets a Nestea from a soda machine. Jeff approaches.

ARNAU
They still in there?

JEFF
Yeah, where've you been? That girl's in there waiting for you.

ARNAU
Nah. You go.

JEFF
Dude, this isn't about me. This is all for you. You better get back in there and handle business.

ARNAU
I don't think so.

JEFF
Wait a minute. Are you gay, Arnau? Cause that I can handle. That I'll understand.

ARNAU
No, I'm not gay.

JEFF
Then what are you doing?

ARNAU
Come on, just leave me alone.

JEFF
No. It's all set up perfectly.

ARNAU
Whatever, you act like it's so easy.

JEFF
It is.

ARNAU
Yeah. It is for you. And people that look like you.

JEFF
You don't even know what you're talking about.

ARNAU
No, you don't! You wouldn't do anything either if you were me and you know it. Do you want to see me get embarrassed?

Jeff grabs Arnau forcefully.

JEFF
Come here.

ARNAU
What are you doing, man? Let go.

EXT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL - NIGHT

Jeff walks Arnau to the their motel room, forces him inside.

INT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jeff drags Arnau inside and literally throws him onto the bed with the Goth Guy and the Decent Girl. Arnau tumbles onto the girl, who smiles with sleepy, drunk eyes.

ARNAU
I'm sorry.

JEFF
Hey, pillow fight!

Jeff smacks the Decent Girl with a pillow, then smacks Arnau, then leaves the pillow with the girl. She immediately picks up the fight, playfully swatting Arnau with it.

Jeff looks at the Goth Guy.

JEFF
Smoke?

The Goth Guy nods and follows Jeff to the door. Jeff looks back as he exits.

The Decent Girl throws her arms around wide-eyed Arnau and begins making out and grinding with him.

Satisfied with himself, Jeff closes the door behind them.

INT. KENNETH'S DATSUN - DAWN

Darius, still snug in the towel, watches Kenneth fight shivers as he drives with the chill wind whipping in through the broken window.

EXT. PARK - DAWN

Kenneth helps Darius out of the car. She smiles at him. He drops his head shyly. Darius waves good-bye and walks away. Kenneth stares after her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL - MORNING

Jeff sleeps, sitting upright in a chair placed outside the motel room door as Linsey and her friends slip out behind him and silently walk away.

A CELL RING. Jeff's eyes pop open. He answers.

JEFF
Yeah.

INT. FACSIMILE - BRIDGETTE'S OFFICE - DAY

Bridgette on the office phone.

BRIDGETTE
Jeff, I've been going over the notes you've been sending in.

INTERCUT WITH JEFF

Jeff checks his watch.

JEFF

Now? It's so early.

BRIDGETTE

Yeah, I'm working here. Isn't that what you're doing down there?

Jeff shifts in his chair. A cheap champagne bottle slips off his chest and bounces on the cement walkway.

JEFF

Yeah.

BRIDGETTE

This Belinda St. Sing? The girlfriend he said died in an accident. Is that the right name?

JEFF

Yeah, that's right. Why what's up?

EXT. SEASIDE INN MOTEL - MORNING

Darius walks through a white fog spun by the still morning. She silently passes Linsey and her friends, with pale faces and smudged mascara, moving like ghosts through the mist.

Jeff clicks his cell phone shut as Darius approaches.

JEFF

You're past curfew.

DARIUS

Were those girls with you?

JEFF

Hundred percent Arnau. Hey, that girl your boyfriend said he's going back to save, Belinda?

DARIUS

Yeah?

JEFF

She is alive and well. Lives a couple hours from here.

DARIUS

How? What do you mean?

JEFF

I mean she's alive. Bridgette called her and set an interview with her. I think your dude's seriously nuts.

Darius composes her face and makes busy with her bag.

DARIUS

I know he's crazy. So she's alive. Whatever. I want to do the interview.

EXT. BELINDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Darius exits the Acura. Jeff, in the driver's seat, looks her in the eye from behind dark sunglasses.

Arnau sleeps in the backseat.

JEFF

You sure you got this, kiddo?

Darius nods.

EXT. BELINDA'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Darius stands on the porch of a suburban home in a lush, colorful neighborhood that contrasts the bleak pre-winter beach areas. The door finally opens.

Belinda ST. SING, 30's, a mom who's held on to her beauty without going to extremes, smiles.

BELINDA

Hi. Darius, right?

DARIUS

Yeah, like the Hootie and the Blowfish guy.

Some SCREAMS from kids playing.

BELINDA

I'm sorry. It'll probably be more quiet if we talk outside.

EXT. BELINDA'S HOUSE - PATIO - DAY

Darius sits across a patio table from Belinda.

BELINDA

He worked at Anderson's, a restaurant I was waiting at during college. Really sweet. So different than any of the other guys. All of my friends were like, why are you dating this guy? But he was really fun, and funny. I remember he had all these little insecurities. He'd never let me touch his head. And he got real serious real fast, you know? I guess we've all had one of those guys, right?

Belinda laughs. Darius swallows uncomfortably.

BELINDA

We broke up after not long. He quit the restaurant, I didn't see him for awhile after that. Then there was the accident.

DARIUS

What was the accident?

BELINDA

He crashed his car into my boyfriend's house. It was when I first started dating Rob, my husband. He had a show in Wilmington that night, he was in a band back then. Anyways, we had a party at this little house he was renting at the time after the show. I stayed over and we went to sleep and next thing we know Kenneth crashes his car into the front lawn. Went all the way up to the house, put a dent in the wall under the kitchen window. Kenneth seemed a little drunk. I convinced Rob to let him go before the police came and we reported it as a hit and run. And now that I think of it, that's the last time I saw him.

EXT. BELINDA'S HOUSE - LATER

Belinda waves as Darius makes her exit.

BELINDA

Hope I helped. It's Facsimile Magazine?

DARIUS
Yeah. Thanks again.

Darius walks to the car, head spinning.

She takes a few steps down the street before she sees the two men in black, Smith and Jones, exit their parked Sedan.

DARIUS
Oh shit.

Jeff gets out of his car and catches up to Darius as Smith and Jones reach her.

SMITH
Excuse me. Can we have a moment of your time?

DARIUS
Who are you?

SMITH
Nothing to be alarmed about. We'd just like to ask a few questions about Kenneth Calloway.

JEFF
Look, we're just here doing a story on him. We're not involved in anything he's involved with.

JONES
We don't mean to come off the wrong way. We've actually talked to Facsimile magazine and verified your connection to Calloway.
(off Jeff's look)
You talk to people and we talk to those people. It's our job.

DARIUS
What do you want with him?

SMITH
We work in the private security branch of Gower MedLabs. We've been investigating Calloway for a couple of years now. We suspect him of being an agent working for a rival medical research company.

DARIUS
Why would you think him?

JONES

He's participated in trial testing conducted by our company at a frequency that raised some internal alarm. Turns out he's repeatedly applied for various jobs with us, all in unrelated fields.

DARIUS

He can't be a spy.

SMITH

He was arrested in Florida for breaking and entering at one of our facilities. And then there was the recent robbery at one of the testing facilities here...

JEFF

Oh yeah? What'd they take?

SMITH

Prototypes for a laser hair removal system.

JONES

Technology that could be very valuable to a competing corporation. Have you had any contact with him in the past 24 hours?

JEFF

No. Darius?

Darius shakes her head.

DARIUS

You know for sure he was the one who robbed the research place? Like, you have evidence?

SMITH

We're confident. Give us a call if you hear from him?

Smith hands Darius a card. Jones turns to leave. Smith pauses.

SMITH

What's this story about?

JEFF

What's that?

SMITH
For the, for your magazine.

JEFF
Oh, the story. Time travel? I don't
know anymore, actually.

He eyes them both.

SMITH
Good luck.

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - DAY

The Acura parks in front of Kenneth's house. Jeff looks at Darius as she opens the door.

JEFF
You sure?

DARIUS
Yeah.

Darius exits the car. In the back, Arnau awakens and groggily pokes his head forward.

ARNAU
Where are we?

JEFF
Sex clinic, Romeo. You have a
serious problem and need help.

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Darius knocks and waits.

It's dark inside the cracked open window. She slides the window up and lifts the screen off its groove. She reaches in shoulder deep around to the door lock and unlocks it.

INT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - DAY

Gray shafts of daylight reveal the nest of an organized hoarder. Books and magazines piled neatly, edges squared but eating up all of the interior space. Some mechanical device lies in neat pieces on a blanket on the floor.

Darius turns sideways to squeeze through the neat, chest-high columns of clutter on her way to the computer in the corner.

Darius shakes the mouse and the screen saver blinks off. The computer's desktop is as cluttered as the apartment. She clicks on a few of the icons, finds nothing.

She turns her attention to stacks of papers on the desk. She leafs through journal entries and hand-drawn designs of small component machine parts.

Her eyes are drawn to a small pile of photographs on a shelf. She looks through photos of Kenneth at various ages...until she stops on one photo in particular. An 8 by 10 we only see the back of. This photo makes an impact on her.

KENNETH (OS)

Darius? What are you doing here?

Darius shakes out of the spell and finds Kenneth there.

DARIUS

I just came to see what's going on.

KENNETH

Everything's set. I moved the machine to the launch site. Departure is at five PM. Things are pretty hairy, I had to sneak in through the back cause the spooks are all over me. They could be out there right now.

Kenneth slyly peers out through the closed blinds.

DARIUS

Kenneth, we need to talk.

KENNETH

About what happened last night. I know our working relationship became complicated but we need to re-focus and not let it compromise the mission.

DARIUS

No, Kenneth, I mean I talked to the guys who are following you. They said you stole those lasers to sell the technology, like you're some corporate spy or something.

KENNETH

Hah. Simpletons. Let them think that, it works in our favor.

DARIUS

I also talked to Belinda. I was at her house like an hour ago.

There's a subtle twitch in Kenneth's expression.

KENNETH

Wait, what? What's going on here?
You're checking up on me?

DARIUS

Well yeah. Most people that promise
to take me on a journey through
space and time I do a little
research on.

KENNETH

I knew it. See, this whole mission
is getting janked up by you.

DARIUS

What's the mission? She's alive,
Kenneth. I just saw her. You lied
to me about her. What else have you
been lying about?

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - SAME

Waiting inside the Acura, Jeff and Arnau see Jones and Smith
pull the black sedan into Kenneth's drive.

JEFF

Shit.

Jeff sits up and opens the car door.

INT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - SAME

Kenneth paces, concentrating hard.

KENNETH

No, no, no. Don't you see?
Obviously if she's alive then I've
already succeeded in my mission.

DARIUS

Kenneth, just be honest with me.

KENNETH

The question is why I'm not with
her. What does it mean?

The front door opens. Jeff spills into the room.

JEFF

Darius, fuck! They're right behind
me.

Jones and Smith push in right on his heels.

KENNETH
You're with that guy?

DARIUS
Kenneth, oh God.

KENNETH
You're just like the rest of them?
You were making a joke of me?

DARIUS
No. No, I'm not.

JEFF
Look, man. We're trying to write an
honest story about you for a
magazine. Nobody was trying to make
a joke out of you.

DARIUS
Jeff, don't -

KENNETH
A magazine story?

Kenneth's face drains. His wide, hurt eyes fall on Darius.

KENNETH
You've been pretending? Darius?

JONES
Kenneth Calloway, we're taking you
into custody and transporting you
to Florida to stand trial.

Jones and Smith step forward.

DARIUS
You guys aren't cops. You can't
come in here.

They brush by Darius and close in on Kenneth.

JONES
I have been granted power of
attorney by your bail bondsman to
apprehend you and deliver you to
Clearwater to stand trial.

Jones and Smith move to cuff him but Kenneth struggles.

KENNETH
You can't take me now! I'm leaving
tonight!

Kenneth whips out of their grasp, knocking over towers of folded clothes and magazines, spilling onto the floor a flood of junk that Jones and Smith get caught up in, dropping them.

Kenneth takes one last pained look at Darius and flees out the back. Jones and Smith scramble to their feet and follow.

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Jones and Smith run into the backyard just in time to see Kenneth vanish into the thick reeds of the wilderness beyond his property. They stop, hands on hips.

Darius exits the house. She shuts her eyes and holds her hands to her head.

DARIUS
I'm such an asshole.

Jeff appears behind her.

JEFF
So was he really building a time machine or what?

ARNAU (OS)
Hey! Check this out. It's open.

Darius looks over to the shed. The chains on the doors dangle freely, their locks hanging open.

INT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - SHED - MOMENTS LATER

Darius opens the doors, Jeff and Arnau behind her.

They enter the shed, lit by sunlight filtering in through the spaces between the roof and walls.

It's mostly empty.

The cement floor is largely clean and bare except in a distinct pattern around the edges, suggesting something the size of a small RV recently rested here.

Dozens of tools litter the floor's edges, along with pieces of tubing, pipe, gaskets, gears and circuit boards.

All eyes are drawn to the walls of the shed, however. They are covered with DETAILED SCHEMATICS OF THE TIME MACHINE.

From the drawing we get the sense of an airboat heavily modified with extra propeller engines and intricate machinery. It's impressive. It looks like the real deal.

ARNAU
Whoa, awesome.

JEFF
This is fucking fantastic.

They look to Darius.

ARNAU
You don't think he really - ?

JEFF
Holy shit, would he already be gone? How would we know?

ON DARIUS

Realizing she knows exactly how they'd know.

EXT. LAKE - DUSK

Darius hurries down the hill to the base of the tree at the edge of the lake. She reaches her arm into the hollow of the tree and removes the ammunition tin.

She sits down on the hill with the tin on her knees as Jeff and Arnau approach.

She opens it. There's a note inside. Her fingers almost tremble as she reads.

ARNAU
What is it?

Then we hear the rumbling ROAR of engines in the distance.

It's the sound of raw combustion engine mixed with the smooth, high pitched purring of electric motors.

Darius stands, drops the note and follows the sound to the edge of the lake. The source quickly becomes visible.

It's incredible.

A crazy, modified airboat with four propellers, multiple engines, and all kinds of tubes and cords and unidentifiable parts fixed together create an intimidating piece of machinery floating in the water next to a narrow dock.

JEFF
Holy shit.

Kenneth stands on a small deck on the machine. He flips a switch.

Behind him a raised chassis on the machine begins spinning in circles so quickly it becomes a dangerous blur of whirling steel.

UP THE HILL

Jones and Smith crest the hill behind them, out of breath. They spot the machine and share a bewildered look.

ON THE DOCK

Kenneth sees Darius as she runs onto the dock.

DARIUS

Kenneth!

Kenneth sees Darius. He eases a throttle back and the noise of the engines dies down.

DARIUS

Kenneth, I'm so sorry...

He steps off the machine onto the dock, keeping his distance.

KENNETH

Were you just making a joke of me
the whole time?

DARIUS

No. I promise you. I lied about the
story but everything else was real.
That was really me.

Kenneth processes this, wanting to believe her...then nods to himself, resolute.

KENNETH

Get on.

DARIUS

What?

KENNETH

I wasn't going back for Belinda.
I'm going back for you. I have to
save your mother.

Tears appear in Darius' eyes, surprising her.

KENNETH

Come with me.

Darius looks behind her. Jones and Smith are closing in. Jeff and Arnau watch from the shoreline.

Kenneth reaches out his hand.

Teary-eyed but laughing, she takes it.

He pulls her onto the time machine and they share a moment, now face to face. Kenneth places her hand on a railing.

KENNETH

Hold on to this. I won't let you
get hurt.

Darius nods. He returns to the controls and pushes the throttle. Lights glow and machinery spins as the noise accelerates.

ON THE DOCK

Arnau picks up the fallen note as Jones and Smith walk past. Jeff watches in disbelief.

JEFF

What is she doing?

ON THE MACHINE

floating away from the dock, rocking wildly in the water. Kenneth holds on to the support rail with Darius. His wide eyes look upwards, hopeful, expectant.

As the roaring engines reach a crescendo, we hear a loud POP. Kenneth's expression is invaded by doubt.

ON THE MACHINE

Kenneth pushes buttons and checks gauges, his face wracked with desperation. The spinning parts are now grinding. Smoke spills upwards.

Darius watches Kenneth with a desperate look, hoping for something that is not possible and she knows it.

Kenneth shouts at the controls, pleading and anguished.

His shouts fade with the roar of the engines as the machine slowly winds down and finally becomes deathly quiet, bobbing on the black water.

Kenneth slumps back against the rail.

All hope drains from Darius. She puts a hand on his.

Jeff and Arnau watch silently and sadly from the dock as Jones and Smith ready their handcuffs.

EXT. LAKE - SUNDOWN

Kenneth's despondent face is turned down in the backseat of the Sedan.

He makes eye contact with Darius one last time as Jones and Smith drive him away.

As the car disappears, Arnau looks at the note from Kenneth still in his hand.

It reads: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JEFF'S ACURA - MORNING

The day's first gasps of sunlight streak through the passing trees onto the faces of Arnau, Jeff and, finally, Darius on a melancholy drive out of town.

INT. FACSIMILE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Bridgette speaks to the Facsimile editorial staff.

BRIDGETTE

And so in light of having written a story that's gotten the most web hits in the history of Facsimile, created an internet sensation and brought unprecedented attention to our little magazine, the least we can do is promote you to full time feature writer.

As Bridgette speaks, we track across the faces in the room, all looking in one direction, to Darius, whose face we finally settle on. She forces a smile as the room APPLAUDS.

BRIDGETTE

Not to mention this is the first time they've ever sold T-shirts on the internet based on one of our stories.

Bridgette unveils a joke T-shirt with a photo of Kenneth's comically serious face next to a blown-up copy of the classified ad, above which is printed, SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED.

LAUGHS around the room.

Jeff looks at Darius, who seems a thousand miles away from the celebratory mood in the room.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Darius walks amongst an ocean of exhausted commuters, a face in the crowd.

INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT

Darius rides alone, pensive, sad.

INT. BRITT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Darius sits with Mr. Britt and Farid on the couch, their faces lit by the glow of the TV.

JAY LENO (ON TV)
Wanted, somebody to go back in time
with me. This is not a joke. Safety
not guaranteed. I've only done this
once before...

Farid chuckles. Darius winces, angry. Mr. Britt notices the melancholy on his daughter's face.

INT. FACSIMILE - MAIN OFFICE - EVENING

The tail end of the office party. A banner pinned along the wall reads CONGRATULATIONS DARIUS.

Douchey guys surround Jeff, laughing too loud.

JEFF
Meanwhile she's like, "I want you to
fuck my ass." And I'm like, "you're
the kind of girl I might fall in
love with, let's take it slow."

Jeff notices Darius drift away from the group. She passes a COWORKER at a computer.

COWORKER
Hey, Darius, there's another parody
video about your mullet-man. You
gotta see this, it's hilarious.

Darius moves on, ashamed to even acknowledge it.

COWORKER (OS)
This guy's a legend...

Jeff catches up to her alone in the corner.

JEFF
I had this made up for you.

He hands her a glass framed print of her article.

JEFF
Nice writing, kid.

Darius takes the frame, then casts a guilty glance toward the parody video on the computer.

DARIUS
Jeff, I never meant to--

JEFF
I know.

Arnau approaches with a short INDIAN GIRL under his arm.

ARNAU
Hey, we're cutting out early, but
congrats.

DARIUS
Thanks, Arnau. Bye.

Arnau and Darius hug, then he leaves with his woman.

JEFF
Seriously, great job. I'm proud of you.

She smiles. Jeff leaves her. She looks at the framed story.

Her POV pans across the article. We see the title.

SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED

Photos of Kenneth that we saw earlier in his house are
patched in amongst the paragraphs.

We see her face as she stops on one photo in particular:

Kenneth, age five, before he ever was the butt of any joke,
smiling with wide, innocent eyes and just one ear.

CUT TO BLACK.