

LOCKDOWN

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE BATHROOM - DAY

Air-raid sirens are sounding from outside, faintly but unmistakably. The bathroom is empty, stall doors ajar, except for one closed door.

A toilet flushes and a stall lock jiggles open to reveal PENNY, a 20-y/o female, backpack dangling from one shoulder, phone in her hand.

A ding from her phone, from someone titled "Eli" with no contact photo. The text reads, *"I guess I've just been worried about you. I know we said we could still be friends but I feel like you haven't been yourself."*

She squints at it. Frowns a little bit.

She still has one hand on the door when she notices the sirens. She stops in her tracks and lets her phone drop to her side, cocking her head slightly to listen closely.

PENNY:
(mumbles)
What the...

She frantically looks around. No sounds other than the siren.

PENNY: (CONT'D)
Fuck. Uh...

As she stands stuck in place, sirens still coming, a slow, low rumbling begins. It's not as intense as an earthquake, but not as mild as a plane passing overhead.

Penny stumbles back and slams into the stall door.

PENNY: (CONT'D)
Shit, shit, shit shit.

Painstakingly, she jerks back, manages to open the stall door, and retreats back into the stall, locking it after a couple attempts.

Penny pulls out her phone, reads the text from Eli. She blinks at it for a second, then quickly texts back, *"hey what's going on???"*

She starts to type another text, but then hears a faint crash from outside the bathroom, and the sound of someone yelling.

Penny lets her phone drop to her side.

She hears the door to the bathroom swing open and crash against the wall, and then close again.

Penny lets out a shaky breath. She slowly pulls herself up until she's sitting on the toilet and her feet aren't visible from outside the stall.

She hears footsteps slowly approach her stall, then they stop what sounds like right outside.

Penny curls herself further up into the smallest ball perched on the toilet that she possibly can. She breathes quickly, eyes locked on the tiny sliver of floor under the stall door. Terrible, tense silence.

Her phone goes off with an upbeat "ding".

Penny covers her mouth, with shaking hands desperately fumbles with the silence button on the side of her phone.

The stomp of a heavy footstep, and a huge looming shadow appears underneath the stall door.

PENNY: (CONT'D)

Oh, god.

Something slams into the stall door and begins rattling it, the lock shaking vigorously. Penny screams, holds out her hands in a futile attempt to keep the door closed against whatever massive force is pushing against it. We see the door slam open in a massive burst of force, and then only see the floor as we hear blows make contact, Penny's screams, feet scuffling and stomping on bathroom tile floor.

A spatter of blood across the floor, and then... silence.

The shadow crosses back to where it came from as Penny's shattered phone drops to the floor, the damning text message visible.

It's from Eli. It reads, *"get inside right now, I think we're going on lockdown"*

SMASH CUT TO:

LOCKDOWN TITLE SCREEN

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS- DAY

The sirens are louder here. Groups of students are sitting at several tables in an outdoor area of a college campus.

The students slowly and uncertainly get to their feet, checking their cell phones.

JAMIE, a ~19 y/o female, and EMMETT, a ~19 y/o male, are in the corner, standing up from where they were studying at a large table.

JAMIE:
Holy shit. Did you just get that alert text too?

EMMETT:
"Emergency Alert. Go inside now, secure yours--"

Before he can finish the sentence, the same low rumbling starts. Several students around them scream. Some start running, some hide under tables, some stay frozen in place.

Jamie lurches over to Emmett. They both frantically look around for a second.

JAMIE:
What do we do??

Emmett notices a door to a building near them that some students are filing into. Without a backwards glance towards Jamie, Emmett starts sprinting towards it.

JAMIE: (CONT'D)
(calling)
Wait, hold on! Wait for me!

She's right behind Emmett, racing towards the classroom. But right before Emmet makes it inside, a student inside slams the door closed. A click of a lock. Their face is pressed up against the glass part of the door and they lock eyes with Penny for a second before disappearing.

Emmett looks at Jamie, annoyed.

EMMETT:
Babe, keep up!

He sprints off towards a smaller building entrance a little further down from where they were studying.

Jamie mutters something angrily, spares a glance at her bookbag, looks around for another second frantically, and then runs after him.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Air-raid sirens are sounding as LIV, ~18 y/o female, walks near a building towards the back entrance of a classroom. She stops in her tracks right outside of the door, in the threshold in between outside and inside, as a collective "ding" of several cell-phones goes off from all directions.

One student, ELI, 20 ~y/o male, is already in the classroom, looking at his phone. He squints at it, then looks up at Liv, face unreadable.

Liv hovers outside the door.

LIV:

What's--

The rumbling starts. Liv grabs onto the doorframe. Eli jumps up from his desk, painstakingly runs towards the doorway.

Suddenly Eli's eyes widen as he looks behind Liv.

ELI:

HEY--

Emmett and Jamie slam into Liv, pushing to get into the classroom, and the three of them crash to the floor.

Emmett jumps right back up, brushing himself off, not sparing a hand for Jamie or Liv on the floor.

EMMETT:

What the hell??? Get out of the way!

Liv shakes her head, annoyed, fixes her hair and gets to her feet, offers Jamie a hand up.

LIV:

You okay?

Jamie is breathing heavily, nods her head, doesn't say anything, doesn't take Liv's hand.

ELI:

Hey, don't talk to her like that, you're the one who just slammed into her like it's the-- the end of the world or some shit!

Liv looks closely at Jamie, who puts her head in her hands. Her breathing is faster now, more frantic. It looks like she's having a panic attack.

Liv looks at the boys.

LIV:

Uh, guys?

EMMETT:

We don't know what's going on, it could very fucking well be! She was just *standing* there, blocking what might be one of the only safe places!

Nobody's paying attention to Liv. She taps her fingers against her jeans. Bends down to Jamie's level.

LIV:

(soothingly)

Hey, hey. Deep breaths. It's okay.

ELI:

Yeah, we're all scared as shit, dude. You don't have to prove it by body-slamming people.

LIV:

(figuring it out on the spot)

My name's Liv. I'm a-- I'm twenty years old, I have two cats.

EMMETT:

Maybe you're scared as shit.

(grumbling)

Can we lock the door now, at least?

Liv massages her temples, puts a hand on Jamie's arm.

LIV:

Uhhh... my favorite color is green, because someone told me it was a boy's color once when I was a kid and I was too spiteful to ever change it.

This is helping, slightly. Jamie is looking up at Liv now, cracks a tiny smile, face tear-streaked.

ELI:

(laughs in disbelief)

Oh yeah, sure. Now that you're all safe and sound, fuck all those guys still outside looking for a place to go, right??

LIV:

What else. I... I've got two baby teeth, still, the adult ones never came in. Um, I write stories. I'm gonna have a good one to write about this day, I can already tell.

Emmett laughs. Locks eyes with Eli as he reaches for the door, slams it closed and locks it.

As the lock turns, the rumbling stops. Eli and Emmett continue to stare at each other with malice.

Liv shakes her head at them.

LIV: (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ. Men.

Emmett notices Jamie still on the floor, breaks the stare with Eli to take a couple steps closer to Jamie and put a hand on her shoulder.

Jamie takes a deep breath. Shakes her head as if pulling herself together.

JAMIE:

Sorry. I--

EMMETT:

Don't worry, babe. I'll keep you safe.

Liv grimaces. Tries to catch Eli's eye, but he's checking his phone.

Eli opens a text chat with "Penny". His contact photo for her is a closeup portrait of her laughing. We see the other end of Penny's text conversation from the bathroom, with the most recent text still being sent from him, *"get inside right now, I think we're going on lockdown"*

There are "typing" bubbles on her end. They continue for a moment. He stares at it expectantly for a few seconds, and then they go away again.

He takes a deep, stressed-out breath, closes out the text app. We see his home screen pop up for a second. His background is a picture of him and Penny, and a flashing news app headline on the screen says, "BREAKING NEWS-- UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT OVER CAMPUS".

Eli turns off his phone. Then he blinks. Processes what he's just read. Frantically turns back on his phone, starts to enter in his password.

ELI:

Guys.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

A laptop screen is set up on one of the desks, and the four students are huddled around in chairs, watching it. A news broadcaster is talking. There's no sound, but the captions are on.

Eli's phone is still pulled up to his text chain with Penny. He glances at it every so often, but nothing changes.

NEWS CAPTIONS:

No photos have been released of this unidentified flying object over the University. Officials are urging students to remain calm while they assess the situation for danger and bring in government experts to assist.

As the last caption flashes across the screen, Emmett scoots back in his chair with a loud creak. Everyone jumps a little.

EMMETT:

Object? What the hell does that mean?

LIV:

(mumbles)

Of course they're not telling us shit.

Eli hovers his fingers over the keyboard for a second as if thinking about what to say. He types the word "Penny", thinks for a second, then deletes it again.

JAMIE:

(typing on her phone as she talks)

Reddit is saying it's a military drone test gone wrong. Is that true, babe??

EMMETT:

(rolling his eyes)

A drone isn't important enough to cause the entire school to shut down.

Eli tries again. Types the text, *"I know things have been weird but can you tell me that you're okay? at least?"*

LIV:
Or big enough to shake the building
like that...

Eli sends the text, leans his head back. Blinks back a couple tears, and slides down from his chair to sit on the floor.

Liv turns away from the laptop screen and looks his way. Slides down from his own chair and sits next to her.

LIV: (CONT'D)
Hey. Hey, are you okay?

Eli leans his head forward, sadly laughs a little.

ELI:
This is the biggest irony of my
life.

LIV:
How so?

EMMETT:
(loudly)
HOLY SHIT.

Everyone jumps. Overlapping exclamations of fear and annoyance.

EMMETT: (CONT'D)
Look, a picture of the UFO thing
was just leaked.

Eli wipes his eyes quickly, stands up. So does Liv. They all gather around his phone.

ELI:
(managing a smile, dryly)
On reddit?

As they all see the phone screen, eyes widen, hands clench.

JAMIE:
That's not--that's not real. It
can't be.

LIV:
Yeah, like why is it so blurry?
It's like they're making it seem
low-quality on purpose.

Another ding. Everyone checks their phones, confused, brows furrowed.

EMMETT:

"Emergency update: Stay sheltered in place until all clear. Do not unlock your secure location until advised otherwise by University officials."

Eli checks his text chain with Penny. The typing bubbles on her end have popped up again. He clutches his phone with both hands, stares at them.

A text comes through from her. *"i wafsjright"*

JAMIE:

(nervously)

What does-- what does that mean? Is whatever came from the UFO... here?

Eli squints at the misspelled text, confused, concerned.

As if Jamie summoned it, there's suddenly a blast of knocks on the door.

Everyone freezes in place.

EMMETT:

(whisper-hissing)

Everyone be quiet!

Another pounding round of knocks. A female voice, so quiet it's unintelligible, is saying something outside. They all lean a bit closer, trying to hear, but the voice falls silent.

Eli's eyes widen with a realization as he looks at the text again.

With his phone still open to Penny's text, he takes a couple steps towards the door.

LIV:

Eli.

Eli looks back at her. Eyes full of fear, and love.

ELI:

My girlf-- my-- friend. Is still out there.

Emmett takes a step towards Eli, seething with barely-contained anger.

LIV:

Eli, you just saw the text.

ELI:
I think that's her.

EMMETT:
(quietly)
Don't take another step towards
that door.

Eli doesn't seem to hear them. Takes another step towards the door.

ELI:
When I was ten, I met her. She
believed there was sentient life
out there, I didn't. It was all we
talked about.

JAMIE:
(looking at Emmett
nervously)
Babe, do something.

Eli takes another couple steps towards the door. Emmett does too.

ELI:
We made a promise, one time, when
we were in middle school. A promise
that if we ever found out for
certain, one way or the other, no
matter how far we'd drifted apart
in life or if we hadn't talked in
years-- we'd find a way to let the
other one know. So we could finally
stop debating it.

LIV:
(frantically)
Eli, you'll be able to see her
soon. I'm sure they'll let us out
any-- any time now.

Eli reaches the door. In one smooth movement, Emmett sidesteps Liv and Jamie and stands directly across from Eli, in the opposite side of the threshold of the doorway. He puts a foot out. Stares at Eli.

EMMETT:
Don't. Take. Another. Fucking.
Step.

Eli laughs, chokes on a sob at the end of it.

ELI:

Penny always used to tell me that if they were out there, they probably weren't going to hurt us. She had done the research, looked into interviews and theories. Gone to lectures and readings.

He puts a hand on the doorknob.

ELI: (CONT'D)

Just like how the hostile civilizations in humankind have lasted a relatively short time, it's theorized that the aggressive, unfriendly alien species would too. The benevolent ones would have the reason and the means to reach other galaxies.

Emmett pulls out a small pocketknife.

EMMETT:

(quietly)

If I have to stab you in the throat right now to stop you from opening that door and killing us all, I will do it in a single fucking heartbeat.

Jamie sobs and crumples to the floor, distraught. Liv bends down, face taut, puts her arms around her.

Eli looks at the pocketknife for a second. Looks up at Emmett.

ELI:

I made a promise.

Lightning-fast, he turns the lock and starts to pull the door open.

Without hesitation, Emmett plunges the knife into the closest piece of flesh he can reach-- the back of Eli's shoulder.

Jamie screams, a long, terrible, drawn-out sound. Liv's face is pale as she sinks to the floor beside Jamie, still holding her tightly, trying to shield her face as one would shield a child from a violent scene in a movie.

Eli doesn't even seem to feel the knife, turning back and throwing the door open all the way.

The door slams into Emmett's face where he's standing and he yells in pain, bringing one hand up to his face and groping for the doorknob with the other.

Eli manages to slip through the door and stumbles out into the empty campus. He pulls the knife out of his back and holds it in his hand as a bloody spot starts to form.

The door slams closed and locks behind him.

For a single moment Eli stands still, and then collapses to the ground, on his back.

When he collapses, we see another figure on the ground, right in front of the door. Eli's eyes land on it too. It's Penny! She's bloody, scraped-up, and bruised, with a knot on her forehead, but alive.

The three faces of Emmett, Liv, and Jamie appear in the window. Jamie is sobbing, hand against the glass. Liv looks stone-faced, and Emmett's face is red with exertion, and a slight tinge of regret.

Eli drags himself towards Penny and she blinks her eyes open. Smiles weakly. He smiles too, and puts his arms around her, laying his head in the crook of her neck.

As they both look up, a shadow slowly starts to pass over their head, far above, slowly creeping towards the place that they lay.

The low rumbling begins again. The two hold each other as darkness envelops everything, leaving just a black screen.

FADE OUT.