

Velvicide

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

We slowly push in on a silent young woman sitting idle in a high back antique chair. Its upholstery, a dated yellow cotton -- its wooden frame, a dark sleek walnut oak.

The room is dark, save for a few bright FILM LIGHTS. Gear strewn about haphazardly. CAMERAS in place, ready to roll.

A skeleton FILM CREW bustles about, few in number -- but overwhelmingly busy with tasks.

The SOUND GUY pushes past a GRIP conferring with the GAFFER - approaches our girl...

-- fastens a LAV MIC to her blouse, concealing it with a quick flip of the collar. Attempts to fasten a button to hold it in place. Struggles somewhat.

Still pushing in on our subject. STOIC. Nervous. Anxious with cause. Her eyes seemed fixed on the camera.

SOUND GUY
(still struggling)
Hate buttons. Always have issues
with 'em. For some strange reason,
I can never...seem to...

Finally fastens it. *About time, rookie.*

SOUND GUY (CONT'D)
Ahhh, there we go. Fat fingers, I
guess.

Nothing. Her intense stare still straight ahead.

He inspects his work once more. *All set* -- lingers a moment, takes in her blank expression. Notices the sadness behind her eyes.

SOUND GUY (CONT'D)
Speaking of buttons...You know, the
belly button--

This elicits a response. The young woman breaks free of her trance. Her eyes land on our sound guy. She forces a sad smile.

SOUND GUY (CONT'D)

You know they're just scars, right?
I was bragging the other day to a
friend how I have no scars and she
pointed out that I had a belly
button. Which I was reminded -- is
a scar. We all have one. Just
different--

Our DIRECTOR, ISAAC (early 30s), strong presence, boyish good
looks BREAKS in mid-sentence--

ISAAC (O.S.)

--Guys, guys. If we could wrap up
the prep...rolling in five.

The sound guy backs off as our girl cracks a weak smile --
authentic perhaps? A true moment of happiness, if only
fleeting...

Isaac approaches, leans in to meet her eyeline, voice low and
tender --

ISAAC (CONT'D)

We're ready when you are. Just as
we discussed before -- I'll ask a
few questions and we'll roll from
there.

(beat)

Questions?

GIRL

I thought you were asking the
questions?

Touché. Our girl has a pulse. Isaac returns a warm look,
retreats behind the camera with the rest of the crew.

ISAAC

Quiet on set!

The 2nd AC steps in frame, clapper board in hand -- reads the
slate -- waits for a thumbs up from the CAMERAMAN, gets it --
vacates the area.

The crew makes their callouts -- "camera rolling" down to
"sound speeding".

The set -- CRICKETS now.

Isaac nods and points -- the young woman's CUE.

A LONG BEAT as we cut to WHAT THE CAMERA SEES -- a moody
documentary talking head set up.

The girl clears her throat, uneasy. Flits her eyes to Isaac and back to the camera, unsure of how to proceed-

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Your name. Let's start with your name. Tell us who you are and why we're here.

Another beat. A few crewmembers exchange shrugging glances. *We're on the clock, lady.*

GIRL

My name. Right.

(clears her throat)

My name is Velvet Stevens. And this is my story.

Another lull. Isaac offers a second prodding question-

ISAAC (O.S.)

Why are we here today?

Hold on VELVET, deep in thought. Her eyes searching for the right response. *Why, indeed?*

VELVET

(sotto)

Why are we here today?

(beat)

We're here because of what happened to me. I was kidnapped. By this deranged, masked man. I was locked in a garage, chained to a massive, metal safe. He took months of my life from me.

(beat)

We're here because -- I want to tell the world my story. I want...

The cameras still rolling -- all eyes on Velvet. *She's alive. What more could she want? Yet, we're intrigued...*

VELVET (CONT'D)

Maybe by telling it...I dunno.

Maybe by telling it, I can find out who...

(anger surfacing)

Well, I can find the *bastard* who did this to me and slit his fuckin' throat.

There it is. Pure resolve. Teary eyes that flash from helpless and fragile to something sinister and vengeful --

SLAM CUT TO BLACK:

TITLES ROLL OVER BASEMENT IMAGES OF MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS WE'LL SEE THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE MOVIE.

HEAVY CHAINS WITH ANKLE CUFFS. PLASTIC WRAP IN WALLED OFF SHEETS HANGING FROM POPCORN CEILINGS. RAZORS. PILLS. A PISTOL. ROPE. ETC.

BACK TO:

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - MOMENTS LATER

Tight on Isaac.

The assembled group is in awe. *Maybe this documentary will be interesting after all?*

ISAAC

Let's start from the beginning.
Tell us what you remember about
that night. The night he took you.
The night it all began.

The steady RED light on the camera beckons Velvet through the silence. Once again, adrift in thought, something behind her eyes surfaces -- *fear perhaps? Anger? Sadness?*

VELVET

I want to say that night was like
any other, but it wasn't...

CUT TO:

INT. VELVET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tight on a FOOT. A nail polish BRUSH slathers the last untouched section of a big toe -- a glittery black.

VELVET (V.O.)

I was going through my nightly
routine. Getting ready for bed.

The artist behind the brush, an unperturbed Velvet (much different than our first encounter) -- BEATS HEADPHONES blasting some indiscernible jam as she doubles over her work.

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The only thing slightly jarring was
my then-boyfriend and I had an
agreement. He decided to break it
that night...

KYLE FLASK (late-20s), *a looker some would say*, leans on the
doorframe -- arms folded.

Velvet looks up from her half-ass pedi, notices her newfound
company -- music still blaring.

Kyle's lips move with no discernible sound. Perhaps bad lip-
reading, but he seems to have said something along the lines
of "*I wanna fuck you.*"

Velvet removes the headphones-

VELVET
What?

KYLE
I wanna vacuum.

She flings a pillow in his direction. *A grade-school joke.*

KYLE (CONT'D)
I'm serious! That damn cat of
yours. There's dander literally
everywhere. I have to wear socks
all the time around here just
thinking about it.

Velvet rolls her eyes, gathers the small pile of cosmetics in
front of her.

VELVET
I have to agree. You should wear
socks. You'd be doing us all a
favor.

KYLE
(sardonic)
Ha ha. Hysterical.
(beat)
Any word on your father?

Velvet shakes her head, steadies her toes in an attempt to
avoid touching the bedsheets.

KYLE (CONT'D)
(off her look)
I'm sure he'll be fine.
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

The doctors, they're really good at what they do--

Velvet's heard enough. He's trying, but she's in no mood.

VELVET

-what are you doing here, Kyle? You promised. The only communication we agreed on is over the phone.

KYLE

Yeah, yeah. Right. About that-

VELVET

-and how'd the hell did you get inside anyway?

Kyle points over his shoulder, shrugs...

KYLE

Front door. It was unlocked. I knocked, but-

VELVET

-See. That's what I'm talking about right there.

She removes the headphones completely, places them on the bed -- makes her way to him. Their eyes lock in one-sided standoff, *Velvet the obvious victor.*

VELVET (CONT'D)

You wanna help? You want to satisfy your savior complex?

She leans in, slowly -- almost a threat. Kyle understands his role. *Stay quiet and listen. He's been here before.*

VELVET (CONT'D)

Suck it.

KYLE

(confused)

I'm sorry?

VELVET

You heard me. Suck it.

(beat)

The carpet, you dipshit. You wanted to vacuum.

She lips the command "Vacuum" or "Fuck you" as she shows him the middle finger. We can't be certain which one...

Velvet opens a nearby drawer, pulls out some night clothes.

VELVET (CONT'D)
I'm about to shower. I want you
outta here by the time I'm done.

KYLE
Vel...

VELVET
You heard me. Phone only. Next time
you wanna talk. That was our deal.
Phone only...

KYLE
(nodding)
Phone only. Got it.
(sullen)
How long are we gonna do this? This
separation? It's killing me, babe.

Velvet turns to leave, stops briefly. *The question is a valid one -- one she's not willing to explore at the moment.*

VELVET
The vacuum's in the downstairs
closet.
(beat)
Be gone by the time I get out.

*Cold -- the end statement resonates with Kyle. It's no
mystery. He's not wanted here. Get the hell out.*

ISAAC (V.O.)
The boyfriend? Care to elaborate
why you guys were on a break?

INT. BATHROOM, VELVET'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

We pull back from an earth tone shower curtain in a MIRROR
and track to a steaming shower head. Slow push in as Velvet
lathers conditioner through her thick hair, *suds aplenty.*

VELVET
Let me tell ya. He wasn't happy
about it.

GLASS SHATTERS. *Maybe downstairs?* Velvet turns toward the
sound --

INT. VELVET'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Velvet, hastily secures her towel -- still soaked and covered in rebellious suds -- makes her way through the room towards the disturbance.

VELVET

Kyle..?

No response. WET FEET and freshly manicured toes trek across the carpet -- across a wooden threshold into-

INT. FOYER, VELVET'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Moonlight BEAMS through looming windows casting eerie shadows from dancing tree limbs outside.

Velvet takes a deep breath -- musters up the courage to continue forward.

VELVET

Kyle, this isn't funny, *asshole*. If you hear me, speak up!

Still silent. The AC unit -- a little louder than it should be -- kicks on, startles her a bit. Another step.

And unbeknownst to us as to why, Velvet begins to sing with bated breath. *Perhaps to quell her fears?*

VELVET (CONT'D)

♪ She'll be coming around the mountain when she comes.. ♪

-- to the edge of the stairs now. Descending toward the pitch dark quiet nightmare downstairs.

VELVET (CONT'D)

(still singing)

She'll be coming around...the mountain...She'll be coming--

At the base of the stairs now-

VELVET (CONT'D)

--around the mount-

A NOISE -- from the opposite direction.

Velvet WHIPS around to find a RUNNING VACUUM. Dead center in the middle of the room. Standing up, running idle on its own.

We lock onto this oddest of tableaus -- man vs. machine.

Velvet tries to contain herself, the fear overwhelming. After an seemingly eternal beat, Velvet composes herself.

She takes a step towards the PURRING machine-

VELVET (CONT'D)
♪ She'll be riding-

A BLACK BAG rapidly drapes her head from behind as we-

SLAM CUT BACK TO:

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

Velvet readjusts in the chair, finds Isaac's eyes beyond the towering film lights.

The crew sits quiet a long moment. Exchanges glances. Isaac sifts through some notes, choosing his next question carefully. And then-

SOUND GUY
Question. If I may...

--glances to Isaac for permission. Isaac gives a "Really?" look, but nods his approval.

SOUND GUY (CONT'D)
She'll be coming 'round the mountain?

Half-expecting the question, Velvet somberly smiles. Nervously fiddles with her nails, a glossy amber tint.

VELVET
It's something I do when I'm scared. I sing.

ISAAC
You sing?
(beat)
Why this particular song? Why "She'll be coming around the mountain"?

VELVET
You'd have to ask my dad. He started me on it.

ISAAC
This is the second time you've mentioned your father. Where is he now?

A dagger. Another stinging question. Regrets come flooding in only minutes into the interview. Velvet ignores the question.

VELVET

After everything went dark, next
thing I knew--

Isaac takes the subtle hint, smiles as she continues...

INT. / EXT. CAR TRUNK - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

THE SLAMMING OF A TRUNK LID.

We see a hint of light in Velvet's terrified eyes. The soft glow of an interior tungsten bulb.

VELVET (V.O.)

I was shoved into the trunk of a
car. It happened so fast. He
started driving and all I remember
was the smell. Cigarettes and what
can only be described as stale fast
food. My blindfold had fallen off--

Velvet is crammed amidst jackets, a tire iron, junk, etc. Her body a contorted pretzel in this metal prison.

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

The emergency trunk release was
hanging there. I wanted to grab it,
pull it. I would've done anything.
Jump out of that moving car, hurt
myself to escape. But my hands were
tied behind my back. I suppose I
could've tried to grab it with my
mouth, but I didn't. Thought about
it, but I didn't. It was like I was
frozen. So, I just laid there and
watched it sway back and forth,
almost mocking me. Escape inches
away...

Overhead, a GLOW-IN-THE-DARK PULL LATCH sways. Just out of reach. Her eyes follow its steady swing. *Hopeless.*

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

CLOSE ON a SWAYING CORD hanging from an unused lighting fixture. The gaffer makes the connection from the story, wraps the cord securely, almost embarrassed.

We RACK past the cord to Velvet, lost in memory.

ISAAC

Sometimes fear can immobilize us.
 Nobody here blames you for
 inaction. Pulling that latch
 could've changed the whole
 narrative. Who knows? Had you
 pulled it, you might not be here
 today -- *alive* to tell your story.

His words soften her. Velvet grabs a bottled water tucked
 away out of shot, takes a pull, returns it.

VELVET

That night was a blur. I'm not sure
 how long the drive was, but it
 must've been hours. When we finally
 stopped...again it happened so
 fast. I could barely-

INT. / EXT. CAR TRUNK - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

Blinding moonlight and street lamps flood in -- illuminate
 Velvet as the trunk flies open.

We see a MASKED FIGURE for a brief instant as he-

-tosses a dark BLANKET over Velvet and we-

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - NIGHT

-where WRINKLED SUNSPOT-LADEN HANDS toss our NOW hooded
 Velvet onto a concrete floor. Her head smacking the hard
 surface.

VELVET (V.O.)

Somewhere in the struggle I blacked
 out.

TIGHT ON the black hood, dormant on the floor -- slow push in
 on the outline of Velvet's face against the floor.

Out cold -- the same elderly hands reach into frame, drag a
 heavy chain across the floor as we follow--

--along the floor, down her passed out blanketed torso to her
 bare feet where we land on freshly painted black glittery
 toes.

The hands FASTEN and CLASP on a METAL ANKLE RESTRAINT.

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

TIGHT ON Velvet's ankles intertwined at the foot of the chair. Almost phantom pain as she winces.

VELVET (O.S.)
When I came to...that's when the
nightmare really began.

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - LATER

Velvet sits up, disoriented. Feels something heavy attached to her ankle -- METAL CUFFS. Her expression bathed in fear as she notices-

-a CHAIN attached to the cuff. She TUGS violently to free herself, but it's useless. The other end of the chain is fixed to a LARGE METAL SAFE, the name SILAS inscribed on it.

This SAFE is huge. Where the majority of our story takes place. *Imagine a dog house for humans, if you will...*

VELVET (V.O.)
This large metal safe. I was
chained to it. And inside...

Its door is open. Inside, a makeshift pallet of dirty blankets and one lone pillow on the floor.

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...he had this bed made for me.
Like I was supposed to sleep there
or something. And the more I looked
around-

To her horror, she spots a 5-GALLON BUCKET and roll of toilet paper just within reach. *No way in hell...Her reality becomes clearer by the moment.*

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
-the more I understood. This wasn't
an overnight stay. This person had
plans for me. Like he'd thought it
through or done this before.

This seems to be a garage. At one time it probably was, but now -- The walls are lined with painter's plastic draped from the popcorn ceilings.

A single swinging bulb hangs overhead.

Behind a sheet of plastic on the far wall, a large soft light filters through. *Daylight perhaps or something else?*

Small puddles form on the concrete as it is shallowly flooded. A busted pipe overhead, the culprit.

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I wanted to scream. To cry. To
 break down, but it was like my mind
 was protecting me. Like it kicked
 into fight or flight mode. I was
 looking for any way out.

Velvet's eyes follow the pipe across the ceiling. It disappears behind the plastic. She notices a water hose, faintly leaking at her side on the floor.

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But everywhere I looked, I just saw
 more evidence that I was in this
 for the long haul.
 (beat)
 And that's when...

-on the other side of the plastic in the far corner of the room, a FIGURE makes its way to a slit opening.

Velvet's eyes follow the figure-

FIGURE (O.S.)
 How long you stay here is entirely
 up to you.

VELVET (V.O.)
 His voice was *off*. I'd never heard
 anything like it before. The only
 way I could describe it -- it was
 low-pitch with autotune. Like his
 voice was filtered through some
 sort of microphone.

The figure emerges through the slit in the plastic.

His geriatric face hidden beneath a terrifying silicone MASK -- Oddly enough, large bloodshot GOOGLY EYES are fixed to the front of the mask. They dance back and forth discordantly with the mask's theme. From now on, we'll refer to the kidnapper as GOOGLY EYES.

Velvet's eyes land on a tracheostomy tube protruding from the man's throat -- its contents, a thick, viscous green liquid dripping ever so slightly from its opening.

Velvet cowers back a few inches, hands slipping on the wet concrete. The masked old man, a sickening sight.

Velvet takes in rest of his attire -- a long black robe and gloved hands.

She finally finds her voice, musters the courage to speak up:

VELVET
Who the hell are you-

Googly Eyes holds up one gloved FINGER -- silences her mid sentence. He paces to a nearby empty chair, sits down slowly. No urgency in his actions.

He raises a small device to his mouth -- presses a button-

GOOGLY EYES
One question. I'll answer just ONE question. *Choose wisely.*

She studies her captor, *incredulous. Torn.*

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

VELVET
Only one question. I had a million, but could only choose one. I sat there trying to piece together the events of the night. Why me? Why here? Why now?
(beat)
Just a bunch of whys?

We can hear a pin drop as the crew hangs on her every word. The sound guy notices his BOOM has lowered from getting sucked into the story. He raises it, repositions it.

Back on Velvet-

VELVET (CONT'D)
I mean, what the hell do you ask when you only get one question?

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

Wide on our kidnapper and Velvet, a weird power dynamic -- face to face (mask) -- in a stare off. Googly eyes sits quietly awaiting her response.

Velvet finally breaks her stare, looks down at the large metal cuff around her ankle. Back to the masked perp-

VELVET

Do you expect me to take a shit in
that?

Her eyes point to the 5-gallon bucket. Googly eyes stands, *not impressed*. He exits behind the plastic curtains, disappears to the sound of a slamming door.

Despite the unexpected bravado, Velvet glances once more over her shoulder toward the bucket and toilet paper.

A grim reminder of her predicament. The desperation returns. The real question at stake, *Will she be here long enough to find out?*

ISAAC (V.O.)

You've got balls.

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

Velvet taps the arms of the chair nervously. The story resurfacing old wounds.

ISAAC

And I mean that respectfully. Most women -- or men -- would be shitting bricks.

(beat)

I mean, a masked man. An unfamiliar setting. The accommodations, a few steps down -- I'd imagine, from your shittiest drug infested motel. Yet here you are asserting authority in a situation where realistically, you have none...

VELVET

I'm not a Stockholm kind of girl,
(forgets his name)
mister..?

ISAAC

Right. Of course not.

(beat)

Please, once again, just call me Isaac. No formalities needed. Now where were we?

SOUND GUY

The porta potty.

Again, the sound guy too invested in the process. Isaac shakes his head, continues:

ISAAC

Right. The bucket. The pallet in the safe. Tell us, what was that first night like?

Back on Velvet, the trauma resurfacing as we cut to-

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - LATER

Velvet dry heaves before puking into the bucket. Her labored breathing subsides as she wipes her mouth.

LATER

Velvet is now leaning against the steel exterior of the giant safe, the name *SILAS* etched on the door. Velvet props her head against its frame.

She is weakly humming the tune of "*She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain...*"

VELVET (V.O.)

They say an adrenaline rush is always followed by a low point.

(beat)

I was already exhausted from the events of the night. I wanted to escape, but those thoughts were cut short by the heavy chain attached to my leg. So I did nothing. The cold steel of the safe helped soothe this massive headache I had. I just sat there -- resigned to my fate.

Velvet's eyes grow heavy as she drifts off.

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

I'd fallen asleep and some time later, he woke me up. I asked more than one question this time...

SOMETIME LATER

Googly Eyes is seated in the chair across from Velvet. *Same creepy mask, same black robe. Same disgusting old man...*

Velvet startles awake at his presence, notices a few items on the ground in front of her--

-- a food tray with a TOMATO SANDWICH ON RYE, cut in four neat squares. Beside it, a glass of water.

Also on the tray, *strangely enough* -- a single RAZOR BLADE. Velvet takes in the scant spread in front of her.

VELVET
What the fuck is this?

Silence. Googly eyes motionless.

VELVET (CONT'D)
You expect me to eat? Stay healthy?
Is that what this is?

She picks up the razor blade.

VELVET (CONT'D)
Did you cut my sandwich with this?
(beat)
You know, a simple knife would've-

GOOGLY EYES
Tomato on rye.

That same eerie voice--

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)
Cut in fourths.

Velvet's face changes in an instant. *Confusion? Revelation?*

VELVET
Yeah, so?
(finally breaks)
You think you know me? Because of
this? Something you could've found
out on social media. How long have
you been watching me?

GOOGLY EYES
(singing)
♪ *She'll be coming around the
mountain when she comes...*♪

Everything about this is CREEPY. The filtered voice. The way it's off key...

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)
(continuing to sing)
♪ *She'll be riding six white horses
when she-*

RRRRRIINNNGGG!!!

For the first time, we notice an outdated rotary dial TELEPHONE between the two of them propped up on a small box.

The phone RINGS again, its sound deafening.

The kidnapper picks up the receiver, holds it to his face -- nods as someone speaks on the other end.

After a brief moment, he hangs up.

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)
Your father, Gregory Stevens. Room
306. Saint Francis hospital. Stage
III pancreatic cancer.

These tidbits of information are enough to silently enrage Velvet. Through budding tears--

VELVET
What the hell do you want?

Finally, the question we've been waiting for--

GOOGLY EYES
I want to give you what you want. I
want you to kill yourself.

Back to the lone RAZOR on the tray.

VELVET
(numb and sotto)
Kill myself? Why would I want--

She chokes on her own words, eyes racing for an answer.

The kidnapper raises an arm, pulls down the robed sleeve -- exposes his skin beneath.

We notice several SCARS cut perpendicular to the veins. The man's finger traces his veins from wrist to elbow as he speaks--

GOOGLY EYES
This direction. Don't make the same
mistake I did.

VELVET
(spits on him)
Screw you, you bastard!
(beat)
And if I don't?

GOOGLY EYES
Well, your *old man* -- Gregory
Stevens. Room 306. Saint Francis
Hospital. Will have more to worry
about than pancreatic cancer...

A twisted Sophie's choice. Velvet considers the razor.

ISAAC (V.O.)
Are you suicidal?

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

CLOSE ON Velvet's wrists as she massages one. Clean, without blemish -- or more importantly, without scars.

Those words jar her a bit.

VELVET
What kind of question is that?

Isaac, a bit uneasy, clears his throat -- rephrases:

ISAAC
Once again, I don't want to overstep boundaries here. We're just trying to get the full story for the documentary. You said this guy knew you or at least, had been watching you. I mean, the sandwich, your father...among other things. It's nothing to be embarrassed about. We all struggle with depression in one form or another. So, again I ask, for the sake of the story--
(beat)
Are you or have you ever been suicidal, Velvet?

CUT TO:

INT. CUBICLE OFFICE - DAY

A room lined with heavily partitioned cubicles. Your picturesque 9-5 office job, *a middle-class hell.*

We push in on one cubicle in particular. Its occupant, CALLUM NEVILLE (mid 30s) confined to a WHEELCHAIR -- intelligent behind tired eyes -- readjusts his headset, presses a button on an outdated switchboard.

CALLUM
Thank you for calling National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This is Callum speaking. How may I be of assistance today?

A woman's voice spills over through the headset. *We'll come to know her as Roxanne later in the call.*

ROXANNE

(through the headset)

Be of assistance? What is this,
Grub Hub?

CALLUM

Umm, no ma'am. This is the suicide
prevention lifeline. You called our
lifeline. This is Callum speaking-

ROXANNE

-you said that already. I see
intelligence is a high priority to
your company.

CALLUM

(ignoring the jab)

Miss, I'm gonna ask you a few
questions-

ROXANNE

Roxanne.

CALLUM

Right. Miss Roxane.

ROXANNE

No, just Roxanne.

CALLUM

Okay, Roxanne. Just a few questions
here. Are you thinking of-

ROXANNE

(cuts him off)

*-thinking of suicide? Have you
thought about Suicide in the last
two months? Have you ever attempted
to kill yourself? Blah, blah, blah.*
I know the whole spiel, Callum. You
really gonna save a life reading
from a damn script? Every single
one of you is the same.

Callum readjusts his headset again more out of frustration
than anything.

We land on his computer screen -- chock full of scripted
lines to read. *In fact, the exact lines Roxanne just spouted.*

CALLUM

Okay, so no script. What do you
wanna talk about, *Roxanne*?

ROXANNE

I wanna kill my deadbeat husband.
I've been calling for months, but
y'all keep talking me outta it. One
time, you even sent the police
aknockin' on my door.

CALLUM

Okay, miss...
(catches himself)
Umm, Roxanne, I don't have to tell
you it's against the law to murder
someone. *Even your husband.*

Roxanne laughs weakly on the other end.

ROXANNE

See, now is that so hard? Way
better than a script. *Am I right?*

CALLUM

Like I said, you can't murder
someone-

ROXANNE

-oh yes, yes you can, *boy.*

CALLUM

I'm sorry?

ROXANNE

I said, yes you can. Murder-
suicide. People do it all the time.
So to answer the script's question.
You bet your ass, I've thought
about suicide over the last two
months. *Hell, years maybe.*

CALLUM

Roxanne, I don't think I'm
qualified to...let me switch you
over to my supervisor-

ROXANNE

-Oh no you don't get to get rid of
me that easily. You switch me over
and I'll do it. Give me a reason. I
dare ya to.

Callum shifts uncomfortably in his chair, glances around the place -- everyone oblivious in their own scripted worlds.

CALLUM

Okay, so what do you want me to do,
Roxanne?

ROXANNE

I want you to listen.

CALLUM

Okay, I'm listening...

On the other end we hear what sounds like CLICKING. One single CLICK after another.

ROXANNE

You hear that?

Another CLICK. Callum nods, but doesn't respond.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

Do I have to put ya on speaker?

CALLUM

No, no. I hear it. Clicking, right?

ROXANNE

You know what that clicking is?

CALLUM

No idea.

ROXANNE

Well, lemme help ya. Won't find it
in your script, Callum.

(beat)

That there is the sound of a nine
millimeter bullet being loaded into
a gun. My husband's Beretta to be
exact. Kind of ironic if you think
about it. Something he keeps around
the house for protection-

CALLUM

...Let me transfer you, Roxanne...

ROXANNE

I must've done this a dozen times
now. Always loading and unloading
this thing...

CALLUM

-Roxanne. You don't have to do this.

ROXANNE

-hoping I might have the brass to do what needs to be done.

(off his words)

Well, hold up. I'm gonna stop you there, because I do. I have to do this, Callum. The bastard's been gettin' away with it for too long.

CALLUM

Getting away with *what*?

ROXANNE

That's between me and my creator.

CALLUM

Your creator? So you believe in God?

ROXANNE

Let's just say I believe in accountability. In judgment. Hell, I'll believe in divine intervention if someone 'll stop me!

Callum leans forward over the keyboard, his voice low, but strong with resolve:

CALLUM

Roxanne, put. The. Gun. Down. You hear me. You called me. You obviously want me to stop you. This is me stopping you.

Silence on the other end. Callum presses on-

CALLUM (CONT'D)

Put it down, Roxanne. It's not worth it. You don't want to do this.

(silence, beat)

Roxanne..?

ROXANNE

...Damn signal. Lost ya there for a minute...you were saying?

CALLUM

(frustrated)

I was saying-

BANG!!! A GUNSHOT echoes on the other end.

Callum sits a LONG BEAT in deafening silence. Then finally:

CALLUM (CONT'D)
(choked, gritted teeth)
Roxanne...

Even more silence. *Not a peep. Not a dial tone. Nada.*

ROXANNE
Callum, you still there?

Callum perks up at her voice-

CALLUM
Roxanne, what the hell...what
happened?!?

Other cubicles are now sniping glances in Callum's direction.

Roxanne starts laughing hysterically on the other end. *Was this all a prank? Some sick joke?* She struggles to collect herself over her incessant, uncontrollable cackling. Finally manages to speak:

ROXANNE
I wish I could've seen your face,
Callum. I bet it was a good one.

CALLUM
Who the hell- You can't just-

ROXANNE
You should've seen HIS face though.

Those words stop Callum, cold.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)
There's blood everywhere, boy.
What's it say in your script about
blood everywhere?

Still in shock, Callum repositions his wheelchair -- speechless. At a loss for words.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)
I gotta thank ya, Callum. Been
calling for a while now. You got me
over that hump. You're a real
winner in my book.
(beat)
Don't go quiet on me now.
(MORE)

ROXANNE (CONT'D)
 I really don't want to be alone
 when I do this...

On those words, Callum finds his voice...*kind of*...quick
 scans his script-

CALLUM
 (reading robotically)
 Are you feeling any kind of
 hopelessness, helplessness...do you
 feel...*trapped*?

ROXANNE
 Not you, Callum. You're better than
 that. Talk to me like a human
 being. And to answer your question
 -- I don't feel trapped.
 (beat)
Not anymore...

CALLUM
 Roxanne...I think we need to call
 someone...

ROXANNE
 Ya know, I've seen a lot of dead
 bodies in my time. Mostly funerals
 and on tv. But they just look
 different when you're the one who
 done it. You know what I mean?
 Awww, hell, how could you know what
 I mean? You ain't never killed
 nobody.

CALLUM
 Roxanne, please. We have to get you
 help...

ROXANNE
 You've already helped enough, hun.
 Welp, Callum. This is where you and
 I part ways. You know what they
 say, the squeaky wheel gets the
 grease.

Before Callum can process those words-

BANG!!! A second shot rings out over his headset followed by
 a couple KERPLUNKS.

A DIAL TONE. *This is a traumatizing moment that lingers in
 the air a LONG, TORTUROUS BEAT.*

Callum finally hangs up, sits in silence some more before-

-Another CALLER patches through?

CALLUM
 (still shaken, weak)
 Thank you...for calling uh...umm
 the National Suicide Prevention
 Lifeline.
 (beat)
 This is Callum speaking.

The low, upset voice of a woman strains through:

WOMAN
 (over the headset)
 Yes. Hello, I'd like to talk to
 someone. I've been having these
 thoughts...

Callum, still shaking the last call -- *if that's possible*,
 refers to his script.

CALLUM
 Have you thought about committing
 suicide over the last two months,
 miss..?

WOMAN
 Velvet. My name's Velvet. And yes,
 I've thought about ending it.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

We push in on Isaac and the last question he asked:

ISAAC
*Are you or have you ever been
 suicidal, Velvet?*

HOLD ON Velvet, her eyes struggling to mask the pain beneath.

VELVET
 I have not.

An obvious lie. Isaac senses her deception as does the crew.
 A few pity smiles bounce around the room. Then finally:

ISAAC
 How about we take five? Sound good?

The crew nods, cuts cameras, sound -- retreats to craft
 services.

Isaac offers a hand, which Velvet kindly declines. She stands, grabbing her water bottle in the process.

VELVET
 Didn't realize how difficult this
 would be. Reliving all those
 moments I've tried to suppress.

ISAAC
 Can I offer one word of advice?

Their eyes lock. Velvet wants to run for the hills, but softens at his demeanor.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 Put it all out there. Holding back
 detracts from what you're trying to
 do here. You want to catch this
 guy? Help us help you...Put it all
 out there.

Velvet nods. An appreciative smile.

VELVET
 One word of advice? Really?
 (counts with her fingers)
 Put...It...All...Out...There. Five
 words. Five words of advice, Isaac.

She excuses herself past him.

ISAAC
 (to himself)
 Five words. Right.

INT. CRAFTY LINE, VELVET'S HOUSE - DAY

Velvet sifts through a deep selection of Lay's potato chips and Costco cookies.

ISAAC (O.S.)
 Listen, I wanna apologize.

Velvet studies a packet of crackers. *Decisions.* Isaac joins her at the table.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 Back there. I know I was pushing it
 a little. We're just trying to get
 the story. That's all.

VELVET

Oh, I'm sorry. I must be confused.
I thought we were playing Mario
Kart.

She finally settles on a sugar cookie, places it in a napkin.

VELVET (CONT'D)

But seriously, a word of advice...

ISAAC

(intrigued)
All ears.

VELVET

Ease in slowly.

Isaac counts the words on his fingers -- *one, two, three* -- a
silent flirtatious gesture.

VELVET (CONT'D)

This isn't sixty minutes and you're
not Diane fucking Sawyer. Lube a
girl up first. A little foreplay
goes a long way.

The sound guy approaches crafty -- catches the tail end of
that line -- turns away immediately.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK PATIO, CALLUM'S PLACE - NIGHT

Tight on a plate of GRILLED CHICKEN hitting the tabletop.
Pull back to reveal Callum is the host. He wheels himself
around the table into a chair-less spot, parks his rear.

Across from him, a couple (early 30s) -- LIAM and KASEY sit,
adult beverages in hand.

CALLUM

(grabbing a plate)
And that's when she said, *the*
squeaky wheel gets the grease and
then blew her fuckin' brains out
right there on the phone.

LIAM

No shit?

Kasey, halter top, red lipstick -- takes a big drink through
a straw, eyes wide. Swallows hard.

KASEY

What's the protocol for something like that?

CALLUM

Protocol? Eh, we're supposed to contact the authorities. Let a supervisor know immediately.

(beat)

Hey, where's Finch? Said he was coming tonight. He's thirty minutes late.

KASEY

And that's what you did? Told 'em what happened, right?

Callum spears a slab of chicken to his plate, starts cutting.

LIAM

I'm sorry. I'm still stuck on *the squeaky wheel gets the grease*. What the heck does that mean, anyway?

Callum takes a bite, processes the question.

KASEY

It means someone who causes problems will get help over someone who stays quiet.

(to Callum)

Okay, so back to this crazy ass pickle you're in. You eventually told your supervisor, right?

Callum shakes his head, puts down the fork.

CALLUM

I took another call.

KASEY

(incredulous)

You took another call?

LIAM

He took another call. What part of that don't you-

(beat)

Wait? You didn't report it?

CALLUM

I got distracted.

LIAM

Distracted? As in you didn't let anyone know? As in there's a dead woman and her murdered husband lying in a house somewhere because you didn't report it?

CALLUM

That's right.

Kasey fishes two pieces of chicken from the serving dish, places one on her plate and the other on Liam's.

KASEY

As with everything you do, Callum. I'm sure you had a good reason. Besides, you can tell your supervisor tomorrow.

LIAM

You're not worried they recorded you or something? And that they'll fire you for not telling them?

CALLUM

I highly doubt they'd comb through all our calls. I can't imagine who they'd pay to do that. Besides, these kinds of things have happened before. It's just, no one ever keeps their mouth shut. Like me right now.

(a sober observation)

The squeaky wheel gets the grease.
I'm supposed to be the grease.

KASEY

You really should look into a different line of work...

DING! Liam's phone. He checks it, takes a bite of chicken.

LIAM

Finch is running late. Said don't wait on him.

Callum forks another bite, lifts his brow at the gesture.

CALLUM

Of course, he is. Wait on him?
Wouldn't dream of it.

Kasey takes another swig from her drink -- stands up.

KASEY

Little girl's room. Gotta piss like a racehorse.

LIAM

Really? *Very lady-like.*

CALLUM

Com'on, Liam. Cut her some slack. You've domesticated her so much, I hardly recognize her anymore. She used to tell us she was taking a dump...

KASEY

I never...

(to Liam)

Okay, so what's the ladylike version of piss like a racehorse?

CALLUM

Tinkle?

KASEY

I can do tinkle...

LIAM

Fair enough. Baby steps, I guess.

A quick peck on the head and Kasey enters the house.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Hope you don't mind us bringing a few drinks...

CALLUM

No, you guys enjoy. It's not your cross to bear.

LIAM

But we do feel a little guilty after, you know-

CALLUM

Again, let it go. I'm a big boy. I make my own decisions.

Liam checks his shoulder, leans in.

LIAM

Okay, *big boy*, so let's cut the shit. What's her name?

CALLUM

Pardon?

LIAM

The girl? The distraction?

(beat)

I mean, a murder-suicide takes place on your line. You were obviously in shock, so you take another call. Let's call it autopilot or whatever.

He shovels a bite. Chews while talking-

LIAM (CONT'D)

But something happened while you were on that call. Who made you forget, Callum?

(off his look)

Listen, I get it. If you don't report the incident after a certain amount of time, they might look into the call that impeded your report.

CALLUM

I can't believe Finch stood us up.

LIAM

Screw Finch. Don't dodge the question, man.

(beat)

Who's the girl? You risked your job for someone. That's the only thing makes sense. And I've known you long enough. So, again, I ask -- *who's the girl, Callum?*

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

Our girl -- Velvet, melts back into her antiquated throne.

Isaac and the crew take their marks and attend to their regular rigamarole.

We're rolling now. All eyes on Velvet.

ISAAC (O.S.)

So, obviously you didn't kill yourself that night. What happened next?

Back to what the cameras see -- the documentary setup. Velvet clears her throat, starts:

VELVET
That first night was hell. I'd be lying if I said I didn't think about it.

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

Velvet studies the shimmering blade of the razor nestled in her open palm. A fly lands on her uneaten sandwich.

VELVET (V.O.)
But something inside me screamed 'no way in hell'. I was feeling rebellious. To give him that satisfaction...I couldn't do it.

ISAAC (V.O.)
And your father? What about the kidnapper's threat? Did that affect your decision?

She returns the razor to the tray.

VELVET (V.O.)
I made him a promise. One I intended to keep...

A quick JERK of the chain, another few tugs. Sturdy. *Not breaking this thing.*

Velvet fixes her eyes on the blankets and pillow in the safe.

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The idea of sleeping inside that safe was unbearable. Just the thought alone made me nauseous.

And then she catches sight of a few scattered CAMERAS and their red blinking lights.

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And it was obvious -- *he was watching me*. Cameras were everywhere. Their red blinking lights, begging me to make a move.
(beat)
So, once again, I did the opposite. They say inaction is a form of action. Maintain the status quo, if you will. So, I just sat there.

Once again, Velvet's eyes grow heavy as she drifts off.

VELVET
Your move, asshole.

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

The Gaffer readjusts a background light, rejoins his makeshift apple box seat.

ISAAC
A game of chess.

VELVET
I prefer *Go Fish*. The transparency.
You simply ask for what you want
and if your opponent has it--

ISAAC
-they give it to you...

VELVET
Right. They give it to you.

ISAAC
Let's say he gave you that
opportunity -- let you simply ask
for something you wanted. What
would you've asked for in that very
moment?

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

Velvet's eyes violently snap open to the sound of a RINGING PHONE. The same phone from before -- right next to her.

Googly Eyes picks up the receiver.

Velvet had barely processed his presence. She wipes the sleep from her eyes, swivels her head to fight a crick in her neck.

Again, the masked figure nods to the person on the other end, hangs up the phone.

VELVET
Sex hotline? Is that even a thing
anymore? You know, with all the
free sites online-

GOOGLY EYES
-you failed your first test.

VELVET

Okay, sensei. Are we in the wax-on,
wax-off stage now?

Googly eyes sits silent -- cocks his head in observation.
He's not getting through to her like this.

GOOGLY EYES

What do you want?

VELVET

I want a five-star...

Velvet catches herself, reconsiders her answer, decides to
tell the truth-

VELVET (CONT'D)

I wanna go home. See my family.

GOOGLY EYES

The phone. You could've used it.
Why didn't you?

Velvet stares at the antiquated device, considers the
question.

VELVET

It's a trap. You have cameras
everywhere. What happens when I
pick up that receiver? Who's on the
other end?

GOOGLY EYES

Like anything. You have to weigh
risk versus reward.

He holds out his hands, pantomimes the balance of scales.

VELVET

Why don't you take off that mask
and show me how hideous you are
underneath? I'm not playing your
stupid game. Whatever this is. I'm
not giving you what you want...

He leans forward, removes a HANDGUN from his waist and makes
his way over to his chained-up captive -- kneels down to meet
her eye line.

GOOGLY EYES

Open your mouth.

Velvet -- lips tightly sealed. Horror surfacing across her
face.

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)

Funny. That cakehole was wide open
only seconds ago. Where did that
feisty little girl go?

(beat)

Now open your mouth.

With his free hand, the perp grabs her cheeks, presses
inward. Her mouth slowly opens.

Googly Eyes inserts the barrel into Velvet's mouth -- draws
in close. *Uncomfortably close.*

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)

From now on, I do the talking. You
listen to me and do as I say.

As he talks, he slowly moves the barrel back and forth -- a
degrading sexual obscene gesture.

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)

You will kill yourself or I will
kill you. It's as simple as that.
The choice is yours.

(beat)

I have ways of making you comply.

No more words needed. *He's serious.* And Velvet understands.

He removes the barrel, a trail of saliva stringing from her
chattering teeth.

Velvet hyperventilates, almost retches.

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll turn your attention
to exhibit A.

Velvet steadies her breathing -- squints in an attempt to
make out the tray in front of her through tear filled eyes.

The tray has a new sandwich. This time it's not cut in
fourths. And it's not a tomato sandwich. No rye bread.

It's peanut butter and jelly on white. *This madman.*

Beside it, a handful of pills. Miscellaneous. Red ones, Blue
ones. Take your pick.

And to top it off, a room temperature glass of water to wash
it all down.

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)
 Red pill or blue pill. It doesn't
 really matter. I expect to see you
 dead in the morning. *That* is your
 reality.

(beat)
Enjoy the sandwich.

On that note, Googly Eyes leaves Velvet to her own devices.

ISAAC (V.O.)
 Tough pill to swallow.

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

The crew still hard at work, Isaac at the helm--

ISAAC
 No pun intended. I mean, the fact
 that this guy-

VELVET
 -dickhead.

ISAAC
 Right, of course. This um, *dickhead*
 -- decided you were going to off
 yourself one way or another. I
 can't imagine how traumatizing that
 must've been. It's not every day
 you have a gun in your mouth...

CUT TO:

INT. VELVET'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK/NIGHT

Velvet has a GUN in her mouth. Trails of tears streaming down
 her cheeks. *A far cry from the Velvet we know...*

Her PHONE rings -- disrupts her. *Unknown Caller.*

She answers it, changes to speaker phone. *What the hell could
 it hurt?*

VELVET
 (stoically)
 Velvet speaking.

A familiar voice breaks through on the other end -- *Callum.*

CALLUM
 (over the phone)
 Yes, hello. I was calling to see if
 you were happy with your auto
 insurance provider.

VELVET
 Kick bricks.

CALLUM
 Whoa! Hold up. It's me. Callum.
 Your Suicide Prevention
 Lifeline...*guy*.

VELVET
 (perturbed)
 How'd you get this number? I
 thought it was anonymous.

CALLUM
 I mean, it is. We don't share your
 information with a third party-

VELVET
 -this is gotta be illegal. You
 contacting me and all. Do you do
 this to other callers?

Velvet repositions herself against the ivory chenille
 headboard.

Silence on the other end, and then:

CALLUM
 I apologize. I just had a rough day
 yesterday and then you called
 and...*it got better*.
 (she softens, beat)
 Again, I'm sorry for the call. I
 just-

Velvet finds herself somewhat invested.

VELVET
 You just *what*?

CALLUM
 I know it's none of my business,
 but I don't want you to hurt
 yourself. I listen to people
 everyday and everyday it's the same
 thing.

(MORE)

CALLUM (CONT'D)
They threaten to go through with it
-- most of the time an empty
threat. They don't mean it. But you
meant it. I could tell.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, CALLUM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Callum is seated in his wheelchair under a large window.
Moonlight spilling through blinds, perforating the darkness.

The rest of the conversation, we'll switch back and forth
between the two locations.

CALLUM
The woman before you meant it, but
I couldn't tell. That's the
difference. With you, I could tell.

VELVET
Well, you're right. It is none of
your business. And I appreciate
your concern. I really do-

CALLUM
-It's your dad, isn't it? He's the
reason you're sad.

A LONG DRAWN OUT SILENCE between the two.

*Is it anger or sadness that wells up in her eyes? Or perhaps,
both?*

CALLUM (CONT'D)
You two are close, I take it?
(beat)
I was close to my mom. Like you are
with your dad. So when I lost her-

Callum chokes momentarily on those words.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
Well, let's just say, I hit the
bottle hard.

VELVET
Is that your advice? Start a month
long bender?

CALLUM
(cracks a smile)
*What? Am I allowed to give you
advice now?*

VELVET
Callum...Callum, right?

CALLUM
*Right. It means dove. Purity.
Peace. Yada yada. None of the
things I identify with...*
(beat)
*What about you? Got a deep,
profound meaning behind your name?*

VELVET
It means a soft-napped fabric.

They both chuckle. The tension somewhat dissipates.

VELVET (CONT'D)
*Okay, let's say I don't call the
cops on you, Callum. Or worse, call
the Suicide Prevention Lifeline and
tell them what you've been up to-*
(beat)
*What's in it for me if I keep
quiet?*

CALLUM
Blackmail. I like your style.
(beat)
*That's easy. Someone to watch over
you. Keep you alive when it seems
hopeless. Someone to talk to...*

Velvet unloads a SINGLE ROUND from the gun's cartridge --
considers his offer as we cut to-

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON MULTIPLE SECURITY CAMERAS keeping watch. We find
ourselves back in Velvet's living hell scenario.

She studies the pills, a FISTFUL now in her palm.

VELVET (V.O.)
*I think it was Nelson Mandela who
said "May your choices reflect your
hopes, not your fears."*

Velvet takes ONE RED pill, places it between her lips, holds it there, briefly.

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

A few days in and I'd *hoped* to be rescued or have escaped. But the fear was stronger. I would die there and I knew it. Whether I did it or the masked freak did it -- I was a goner.

She picks up the glass of water, the dim light dancing on its rippling surface.

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

I weighed my next decision carefully. Was I basing it on hope or fear? Was there hope in knowing by taking the pills, I'd finally be free from the torture of this makeshift prison? Or was it fear driving me? What would happen next? Would I get another gun shoved in my mouth? Would he pull the trigger this time?

(beat)

It was obvious what I needed to do.

She swallows the PILL, chases it with a sip of water. Swallows a few more. Another gulp. Finishes off the rest of them in one fell swoop.

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

Isaac senses the tension building in the room. Decides they've had enough for today.

ISAAC

Let's cut right there. Great job, guys. We'll reconvene tomorrow at the same time.

The sound guy fidgets with an audio device in his belt, finds himself uncomfortably close to this weird director/talent dynamic again -- struggles to sheath his boom stick to leave.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(to Velvet)

Quick question...

VELVET

They're never quick with you. More so, long and convoluted.

ISAAC

There are so many jokes there to unpack. I'm going to stay far away from that one.

VELVET

So, your question?

ISAAC

Right. *My question.*

(beat)

There's this hole-in-the-wall dive bar down the-

VELVET

That's not a question.

ISAAC

Well, eventually it would've been.

VELVET

No, no way in hell-

ISAAC

-ouch. Not even in hell, huh?

VELVET

Not even in hell.

Velvet pushes past him, gathers her purse and belongings.

ISAAC

You know that hurts. I'm only trying to help you here. Find common ground. Figure this thing out together. I'm team Velvet, *remember?*

A gut punch. Velvet soaks in those words. Turns-

VELVET

One drink?

ISAAC

One drink.

VELVET

Team Velvet.

ISAAC

Team Velvet.

VELVET

We're not coming up with some silly handshake, are we?

ISAAC

I wouldn't dare.

They both exchange smiles -- *perhaps something more.*

CUT TO:

INT. HOLE-IN-THE-WALL DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Isaac and Velvet perch over a few Long Island Iced Teas at the end of the bar.

This place is under-lit and understaffed, but the locals love it -- *a real hidden gem.*

ISAAC

...and that was the first and last time I cut an umbilical cord.

Velvet laughs -- a little too easily. Already a few drinks in and it shows. *Inhibitions to the wind.*

She slides a strand-full of thick locks behind an ear -- Isaac's eyes can't help but follow her hands. *The sexual tension is real.*

VELVET

Paging doctor Isaac...we have a bleeder in room five-

ISAAC

Doctor. That's funny...I can't even get a film right.

(off her look)

This one's gonna be fine, trust me. The last I need is you running for the hills because you think it's all a waste of time. I'm confident we can get a big platform to buy this thing. Your story...It's nothing short of amazing. And I'm humbled you're letting us help you tell it.

She stirs a cherry in her drink with the straw. The bartender places a BLT SANDWICH in front of her.

VELVET

Well, you did reach out first. I'm a first come, first served kind of girl.

ISAAC

...but you're not a Stockholm kind of girl and I'm not Diane *fucking* Sawyer.

VELVET

I have to admit -- you're giving her a run for her money.

A familiar voice breaks in just over their shoulders.

KYLE (O.S.)

What've we got here?

(to Velvet)

You don't call. You don't write.

Velvet rolls her eyes at Kyle's presence. *Not tonight of all nights...*

VELVET

You don't say anything original.

A familiar sting. However, Kyle's used to it -- sets his sights on Isaac.

KYLE

You look familiar. Do we know each other, friend?

ISAAC

Do we, *friend*?

Confrontational. Kyle backs off. Back to Velvet.

KYLE

I miss you. It's not fair-

VELVET

-not here. Not now.

KYLE

I didn't do anything, Velvet. It's not my fault what happened. I need you to listen to me-

ISAAC

-hey! The lady said -- not here, not now. Are your wires so crossed you don't get that?

KYLE

(re: Isaac)

Back off. This is none of your business.

(to Velvet)

You have to give me a chance to explain. *He took me, too.* You're not the only one...

This new information piques Isaac's interest -- despite the contentious peacocking.

ISAAC

Hold up. Back up a minute. You mean to tell me -- *he took you, too?*

KYLE

Yeah, what's it to you?

ISAAC

It's just interesting. That's all. In fact, it's very interesting. Your timing is impeccable. We're doing a story on the whole she-bang if you want in.

VELVET

(re: Isaac)

Isaac, what are you doing?

ISAAC

(ignores her; continues)

I'm a filmmaker. *The director, actually.* We're trying to figure out who this guy is -- bring him to justice.

KYLE

Sure, friend. I'm down to help however I can.

ISAAC

Great. It's a date. We'll set you up. Get you on a call sheet.

Isaac extends his hand -- they shake on it.

VELVET

Oh, groovy. So you guys are *what*, friends now?

ISAAC

What? We have a vested interest in telling *your* story. It's important we examine it from all angles.

VELVET

(to Kyle)

FYI, you and I -- we're still kaput. *Got it?*

KYLE

Absolutely. No ulterior motives here. Just a friend helping an old flame...

VELVET

Well, you better strap up.
(eats the cherry from her drink)
This man asks hard-hitting questions.

KYLE

I think I can handle it. Whatever helps you find this guy.

Velvet's sandwich catches Kyle's eye -- followed by a forced smile.

KYLE (CONT'D)

(to Velvet)

Bacon, *really?* What ever happened to tomato on rye? Cut in fourths? A tiger never changes its stripes, sweetheart...*or its tastebuds.*

(to Isaac)

I'll be looking forward to our interview, friend.

On that note, Kyle lays down a business card and excuses himself. Isaac struggles with the new information. *Does Kyle know more than he's letting on?*

Velvet's eyes land on a figure at the far end of the bar. The old face and hands look familiar. A scarf wrapped around the man's neck. Dark sunglasses covering his eyes.

The two lock eyes for one LONG MOMENT. The man gets up and disappears in the crowd towards the front door.

ISAAC

What's wrong?

VELVET

He's following me. He was just here...

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

Same crew. Different day. The cameras are already rolling as we push in on Velvet, a quiet desperation looming. Back to that horrible moment -- *the pills, peanut butter and jelly...*

ISAAC (O.S.)

So, you took the pills. All of them. What happened next?

VELVET

Like everything else, it was all a blur. I woke up in a pile of vomit. I felt like death, but I was *alive*.

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

TIGHT ON Velvet, bloodshot eyes, face half-caked in dried vomit. We hold on Velvet a long moment--

A BOOT steps into frame, replaces the tray with a new one.

VELVET (V.O.)

I'm not sure how or why I survived. If he wanted me dead so bad, he could at least made sure whatever he gave me did the trick...

Velvet wills herself up off the floor, takes note of the tray. Tomato on rye, cut in fourths. A glass of water, a rope tied into a noose.

VELVET

(hoarse, gutted)

A rope now? Great. Terrific. Where am I supposed to hang myself?

She motions to the imaginary rafters in the ceiling. Googly Eyes listens in silence.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Couldn't get the pills right. So, it's death by hanging now. Real old fashioned of ya.

(beat)

You're giving me the silent treatment?

(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)
 I did what you told me to, bastard!
 I took the fuckin' pills. All of
 'em.

She starts to lose it.

VELVET (CONT'D)
 Every last one of 'em. But I'm
 still here.
 (beat)
 Why am I still here? Huh? Why-
 (screams)
-AM I STILL HERE?!!

Tears streaming now -- too weak to fight it.

Googly Eyes disappears behind the curtains -- door slams.
 Those words reverberate as we cut to-

INT. ISAAC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

-where we land on Isaac and Velvet pretzeled under the
 sheets. She combs a strand of his hair out of his eyes.

VELVET
 Why am I still here?

ISAAC
Good question. This is normally the
 time where I call you an Uber and
 make up some silly excuse as to why
 I need you out of here *stat*.

VELVET
 Oooo, doctor lingo. There you go
 again. You sure you're in the right
 profession?

ISAAC
 Ask me again after we release this
 thing...
 (beat)
 While we're talking shop -- that ex
 of yours--

VELVET
 Kyle...

ISAAC
 Ugh, Kyle. Right.
 (beat)
 I got a bad feeling about that guy.
 How long did you two date again?

Velvet sees where this is going. *Guy catches feelings. Guy gets insecure. She's been here before.*

VELVET

Long enough to know he's no threat.

ISAAC

If you say so. I just get the heebie-jeebies from him. You know what I mean?

(off her look)

Of course you don't know what I mean. You dated the idiot.

(mockingly)

Do I know you, friend?

Velvet slaps him playfully.

VELVET

Stop it. Is someone jealous?

ISAAC

This guy? Jealous? Please! I don't get jealous.

VELVET

Hmmm.

ISAAC

I don't. You know, more men die of jealousy than they do cancer.

This strikes a nerve with Velvet. Isaac takes notice, immediately regrets his choice of words.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Your father. I'm sorry.

VELVET

No, it's fine. You can't walk on eggshells all the time to protect me.

ISAAC

Are we going to talk about that tomorrow? It's the last interview. We have to cover what happened to your father. We can't keep avoiding it, Velvet. It's integral to the story.

VELVET

Right. I know.
(changing lanes)
(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)

Listen, why don't you call that cab already? So, afterwards I can do what I came to do -- steal your wallet.

ISAAC

I'm a filmmaker. Good luck finding anything there...

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

The crew's back at it again on the final day of filming. Our sound guy as invested as ever -- one hand supporting the boom, the other in a bucket of POPCORN. *A real pro at work.*

Like before, our cameras are already rolling--

VELVET

Every night, he gave me a new option to kill myself.

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

A tray hits the concrete. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich (uncut), a tepid glass of water and a large BUTCHER KNIFE.

For the purpose of this montage: Each tray will either have a tomato sandwich cut in fourths or an uncut PB&J.

VELVET (V.O.)

Sometimes it was something I could plausibly do myself in with. Other times, it was--

We cut to another TRAY hitting the concrete. Tomato sandwich, water and -- *a jagged rock?* She picks it up, brow furrowed in confusion.

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

--let's just say, I'd have to be some sort of magician to pull it off.

Several trays hit the ground one after another -- each with a different means to kill oneself. We notice another tray of pills.

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

At one point, he started recycling old items. Like he'd used everything he could think of.

Velvet picks up the pills. A different type this time.

VELVET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That's when it really hit me. He
wasn't gonna stop until I did
something drastic.

Velvet turns to the PHONE. *Time to test the waters.*

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

Velvet fiddles with the sleeves of her blouse, deep in thought. The crew looks on, utterly engaged.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Wait a minute. The phone. This is
when you-?

Velvet nods.

VELVET
It's right before I escaped.

ISAAC
Can we backtrack just a second? I
feel like we're missing something
here? Did anything happen in
between? Is there something you're
leaving out?

Isaac shuffles through his notes on a yellow legal pad.
Velvet shakes her head in denial. Isaac presses on.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Anything at all? You gotta dig,
Velvet. We need the whole story or
this doesn't work...

VELVET
I told you everything already.

ISAAC
What about the bruises? The hand
marks? Your clothes?

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

We're back in Velvet's hell. This time, things seem a little different, *off*.

Velvet is covered in bruises, specifically in the shape of a grown man's hands.

ISAAC (V.O.)
The police report painted a
different picture--

Her clothes are tattered. Her hair is worse than the way we left it. Everything screams ABUSE, apart from her unscathed face.

Did this man do this to her? Why would she leave out such a pertinent detail?

We cut back to-

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

-where Velvet sits, tears of anger boiling in her eyes.

VELVET
(through gritted teeth)
He never touched me...

Once again, *an obvious lie*. Isaac stands down, offers an apologetic smile.

ISAAC
Right. He never touched you.
(a defeated beat)
So, the phone? You decided you'd
had enough. What happened next?

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

TIGHT ON the phone. Rack to Velvet studying it -- as if touching it would scold her hands.

Velvet glances at the cameras, the inanimate sentries towering overhead -- back to the phone.

VELVET (V.O.)
I'd had enough. I was tired of
waiting for something to happen. I
had to take matters into my own
hands. Maybe he'd kill me. I wasn't
sure. But I convinced myself it was
worth trying.

Velvet picks up the receiver -- holds it to her ear.

A DIAL TONE. A good start.

She spins the rotary once -- dials 9. Another button - 1. The last button...the final 1.

It starts ringing...

And ringing...

A third ring and ---

--- Someone picks up on the other end. Labored breathing and then-

MAN'S VOICE

9-1-1. What's the state of your emergency?

Velvet can't believe her ears. She can barely contain herself. Emotions flood in -- she realizes she's FROZEN. No words have left her mouth-

And then, just as she opens her mouth--

--a DIAL TONE. **DISCONNECTED.**

The sound of a door opening -- Googly Eyes emerges from behind the plastic curtains, takes a seat across from Velvet, new TRAY in hand.

VELVET

(suppressing tears)

Why?...Why are you doing this to me?! I've done everything you've asked.

(painful)

Everything...

Whatever that means. The man places the tray at her feet, but Velvet steadies her eyes on him -- *screw the tray.*

VELVET (CONT'D)

What do you want from me that you haven't already taken?

(beat)

You want my life? You want me to kill myself, right? Well, why don't you do it, you fucking coward? Why don't you kill me right now?!

Com'on asshole! Get it over with!

Googly Eyes raises a finger -- his universal *hush* signal.

He pulls out a tattered stack of playing cards, pushes the chair aside and sits on the floor across from Velvet.

Something he's never done before...

GOOGLY EYES
Are you familiar with the game *Go Fish*?

Velvet nods, confused.

Googly Eyes divvies out seven cards each and places the remaining pile on the floor between them.

Velvet hesitates before picking up the cards.

VELVET
Are you serious right now? You
wanna play a card game?

GOOGLY EYES
Not just any card game. *Go Fish*.

VELVET
Right. *Go Fish*. I don't understand-

GOOGLY EYES
Did you know that the longest game
of *Go Fish* ever recorded lasted
over 72 hours?

Velvet looks down at the tray. Tomato on rye cut in Fourths.

VELVET
Have you ever seen a doctor? Like a
psychiatrist or something?

GOOGLY EYES
Your cards are waiting...

Velvet flips over her hand. Over top of the typical numbers and suits we notice strange DRAWINGS in chicken scratch INK.

These drawings vary from pills to knives to guns to a noose, alongside other strange symbols -- one symbol per card.

VELVET
I mean, I can't figure you out.
Some days I get two PB&J's in a
row. Sometimes it's two Tomatoes on
rye in a row.
(beat)
Who goes first?

Googly Eyes extends a hand, offering her the first move.

VELVET (CONT'D)
Do you have a three?

On this particular card, we see a noose etched over the background.

GOOGLY EYES

Go fish.

Velvet draws a card, ten of spades, Red Pill scribbled on it.

GOOGLY EYES (CONT'D)

Seven?

Velvet searches her hand. Bingo. *She does indeed have a seven.* A scythe is drawn on it. She hands it over.

VELVET

And then other times, you
alternate. A PB&J one day, a Tomato
on rye the next...

(beat)

Do you have a ten?

Googly Eyes hands over a ten of hearts -- a bottle of poison drawn on it. *Two more to go for a full set.*

GOOGLY EYES

A six?

Velvet smiles, shakes her head.

VELVET

Go fish.

Googly Eyes reaches into the pile, draws a card. Reconfigures his hand. *He must be nearing a set.*

VELVET (CONT'D)

Do you have an ace?

For the first time, Velvet registers what's drawn on this particular card -- *It's a key.*

Googly Eyes hands her TWO cards, both with identical KEYS drawn on them.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Hey, this is two... I don't think
you're supposed to give me two
cards.

GOOGLY EYES

House rules.

VELVET

Right.

Velvet studies the three aces in her hand -- each scrawled and marked with a key.

GOOGLY EYES

Do you have a two?

VELVET

Go fish.

(as he draws a card)

And you only cut my tomato on rye
in fourths, but never the peanut
butter and jelly. You don't cut it
at all.

(beat)

I don't know what your deal is.
Beats me.

Velvet studies the aces -- *it's worth a try.*

She locks onto those googly eyes swaying with each speck of movement. A children's design that has become a nightmarish staple in her everyday routine.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Do you have a...key?

Googly Eyes remains motionless for a long beat.

Did she really asked that? A key?

And then--

--he drops the cards, reaches in his robe and pulls out--

...a KEY. And not just any key. THE KEY to the metal cuff on her ankle.

This is how it ends? No way. He's just going to let her up and leave? Walk out without any repercussions?

VELVET (CONT'D)

(deadpan)

You expect me to believe this isn't
a trap? Like the phone?

(beat)

Are you gonna shoot me in the back
or something? Do you have a gun?

GOOGLY EYES

Go fish.

Googly Eyes tosses his hand down face up, slowly stands, turns to leave -- but stops shy of the curtain. He peeks over his shoulder at Velvet, key in hand.

A long beat -- he says nothing and leaves.

We cut back to-

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

-where the interview has concluded. The crew sits, stunned.
Isaac breaks in-

ISAAC

So, that's it? Just like that, he
let you go? No final last words? No
explanation? No nothing?

(beat)

Just here's the key...*bon voyage*.

EXT. BACKROAD HIGHWAY - DAY

A malnourished, dirty and heavily bruised version of Velvet
ambles barefoot down an empty street.

BACK TO:

INT. SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM, INTERVIEW - DAY

VELVET

Something like that. Sorry it's not
what I built it up to be. I know
it's very anticlimactic. And that's
not good for television.

ISAAC

The house you left? You had the
address. Couldn't you lead the
police back to where you escaped?

VELVET

It was an old abandoned house off
highway 25. When the police went to
search it, they were too late.
Someone had set it on fire, burned
it to the ground.

For the first time in a hot minute, our sound guy pipes in-

SOUND GUY

We're just glad you're okay, ma'am.

Velvet shoots a smile in his direction and redirects her eyes
to the flashing RED INDICATORS on the cameras.

VELVET

And that's my story. The story of how I spent weeks chained to a safe in some sadistic guy's basement. And how, one day -- he just decided to let me go over a game of *Go Fish*. Just like that, it was all over.

ISAAC

Let's end with one last question, if you will, Velvet.

VELVET

Yeah, of course. *Shoot*.

ISAAC

The kidnapper. This googly eyed mask guy. Are you hopeful the authorities will find him?

Whether it's true or not, Velvet responds without hesitation.

VELVET

Absolutely.

ISAAC

And why is that?

VELVET

Let me put it this way, *mister director*. A good rule of thumb in card games is to always have a card up your sleeve.

(beat)

Let's just say I haven't revealed my ace yet...

Isaac is a little peeved at those words -- and more importantly, at her holding back in his film.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT STEPS, VELVET'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac keeps pace with Velvet as he plays a game of frogger with incoming crew members hauling equipment.

ISAAC

Whatever happened to put it all out there?

VELVET

I never agreed to that. It was your one word of advice, remember?

ISAAC

But for this to work, Velvet-

VELVET

-look, you got your interview. You got your movie. There are some things that are just too hurtful to share on camera. I know you understand that.

Isaac draws in close, caresses her cheek -- doesn't care if the crew sees it.

ISAAC

Okay, forget the cameras. Let's you and I do a one on one. I'll introduce you to our executive producer -- the guy funding this film. You and I can hash out the little missing details and finally wrap this thing. What do you say?

VELVET

I dunno.

ISAAC

Velvet. I need this. You need this. Just one last interview. Intimate. You and me...

(off her smile)

Good. It's settled then. I'll send you an address tomorrow and we'll meet there. I have Kyle's interview, too. So, it'll be perfect.

VELVET

Tomorrow.

ISAAC

Tomorrow...

More crewmen sweep past -- continue to load the grip truck.

VELVET

Anything else?

ISAAC
I can't wait to hear about this
card you have up your sleeve.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM #2 - DAY

Our crew scurries about like ants with a singular purpose. A final check on lighting. Our same, lovable sound guy adjusts a lav mic on-

-Isaac? Our producer?

SOUND GUY
An extra day's pay on an impromptu
shoot? Sign me up, *boss man*.

He continues attaching the device, hides the wires.

SOUND GUY (CONT'D)
I'm confused though. Why are we
here? What do you have to do with
"The Girl in a Safe" story?

ISAAC
You don't know?

The sound guy shakes his head.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Don't pretend like you didn't see
us. Hear us.
(beat)
I mean, that is your job, right. *To
hear us?*

The sound guy gives an uncomfortable chuckle, retires to his gear.

SOUND GUY
I reckon so.

ISAAC
Let's just say we're being
preemptive. Adding a little pepper
to the pot...

The crew finalizes last minute tasks and takes their places. A stand in producer makes a few callouts. The scene is slated and we cut to-

- the camera POV of the documentary setup.

STAND-IN PRODUCER

Okay...I guess I can start you off
with a few questions-

ISAAC

-I've been told I'm not a foreplay
kinda guy. Let's just jump into
this.

A few chuckles in the darkness behind the blinding lights.
However, the mood darkens as Isaac's face contorts to
something *disturbing...cold dark, eyes. Are those tears?*

ISAAC (CONT'D)

My name is Isaac Finch and I'm the
director of this film. There's no
easy way to say it, so I'll just
come out with it...During filming,
Velvet Stephens and I... well, I
won't cut corners. We got intimate.

Some of the crew is shocked. Others roll their eyes as in "*No
news there*"...

ISAAC (CONT'D)

And she told me some things. Some
incredibly dark things. I want to
share those with the world since
she's...

(gets choked up)

...since she's no longer with us.
Since she selfishly took her own
life...

Now there's news. The crew -- bewildered, exchanges
incredulous glances.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

We pan across a spacious, vacant room. A few chairs scattered
here and there. Dead center, we find one lone cinema camera
and a few lights. Two meticulously placed chairs.

Isaac waits at the center of the room for his guest.

She arrives. Velvet enters the room.

We notice she is completely dolled up. Hair immaculate.
Makeup on point. High heels. Dressed to kill.

We've yet to see her so put together...*so gorgeous.*

She takes the seat across from him -- A silent salutation with an exchange of knowing smirks.

Velvet breaks the ice:

VELVET

Thought you said no cameras?

ISAAC

I lied. *What can I say?* I'm a filmmaker. Anything to get the shot...

Velvet's eyes drop a hint a remorse. *Maybe she'd seen it coming, but it still hurts.*

VELVET

So, why are we here again? You want the details I left out?

Isaac nods in agreement. *Good. She's willing to play along.*

He reaches up and hits RECORD on the camera -- pulls out his yellow legal pad.

VELVET (CONT'D)

You won't be needing that. I think you could tell this story better than I can...

The strong eye contact is beyond palpable -- neither blinking nor turning away. *Was that an accusatory punch?*

VELVET (CONT'D)

Where should I start? With every time you put your hands on me? Every time you forced yourself on top of me?

ISAAC

You think I kidnapped you? You think *I'm Googly Eyes?* *The sick old man with the-*

Points to his throat, makes a disgusted face.

VELVET

They say sometimes sociopaths like to relive their darkest moments. Like maybe, it's the closest they come to actually feeling something real.

ISAAC

What is this, Velvet? I'm a sociopath now? All of a sudden, you don't trust me. Is that what this is? How can I be a sociopath when I'm falling for you? And why the sudden change of heart?

INT. ISAAC'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK/NIGHT

Velvet fastens a button on her shirt in a bedroom mirror. In the background, we see Isaac sitting upright under the sheets, yellow notepad in hand.

ISAAC

I'm really glad this happened.

A deep sadness overtakes Velvet.

VELVET

You remind me of someone...the way you--

(he looks up at her)
...never mind.

Isaac takes notice of her sudden change -- dismisses it with a shrug, thumbs through his notepad, lost in thought.

ISAAC

You can stay longer if you like. We can explore that secret handshake.

Something on Isaac's dresser catches Velvet's eye--

--a large plastic bag of GOOGLY EYES, half hidden under a few t-shirts. Velvet goes to reach for the bag--

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

Don't you dare.

Shit. Does he know? Why does he have these?

Velvet turns to Isaac. He finishes jotting something down mid-sentence--

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Don't you dare leave without some kind of goodbye memento...

He taps a spot beside him on the mattress as Velvet forces a smile through sheer panic. *This son-of-a-bitch...*

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Velvet fights the urge to buy into his lies. *She's made up her mind. He's not who he says he is...*

VELVET

(sotto)

You're falling for me. Right.

(determined)

Why'd you become a filmmaker,
Isaac? Did you want to capture
something the world had never seen?
Or did you do it for your own
selfish desires?

On Isaac -- taking in her words, *at surface level anyway.*

ISAAC

Fine. I'll be your villain if that
gives you closure. Okay? I'm a
selfish filmmaker that's guilty of
exploiting your generosity. That's
what I'm culpable of. I wanted your
story. Your *whole story*, not some
truncated version of the truth.
That's what I'm guilty of -- I care
about this story. Sharing it with
the world.

(beat)

So, *lock me up.*

Velvet stews in her thoughts a long moment.

VELVET

You want the whole story? *The
unabridged version?*

ISAAC

Yes, that's all I want. It's that
simple.

VELVET

Tell you what, let's fast forward
through the abuse. But if you
really need me to say it for your
precious camera.

(beat)

He raped me over and over. And
over. And over. And
over...sometimes.

(beat)

Other times, *we just talked.*

Isaac, surprisingly unfazed by her words.

ISAAC
What did you talk about?

VELVET
Stuff.

ISAAC
Stuff?

VELVET
Yeah, stuff that made me question
his motives. Happy stuff.
(beat)
Well, at least as happy as it could
be. Given my current predicament at
the time.

ISAAC
So, we're being vague again?

VELVET
I'm getting to what you wanna hear.
(beat)
And then other times, we played
board games. Monopoly, Checkers.
Your typical childhood games...

ISAAC
Go Fish?

VELVET
No, only the one time. The last
time--

ISAAC
The day you escaped?

VELVET
The day I escaped.
(beat)
It did go a little differently than
I told it the first time.

ISAAC
Please, you have the floor...

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

Velvet draws a card, ten of spades, Red Pill scribbled on it.

GOOGLY EYES
Seven?

Velvet searches her hand. Bingo. *She does indeed have a seven.* A scythe is drawn on it. She hands it over.

VELVET

And then other times, you
alternate. A PB&J one day, a Tomato
on rye the next...

(beat)

Do you have a ten?

WE'VE SEEN THIS SCENE BEFORE.

Googly Eyes hands over a ten of hearts -- a bottle of poison
drawn on it. *Two more to go for a full set.*

GOOGLY EYES

A six?

Velvet smiles, shakes her head.

VELVET

Go fish.

Googly Eyes reaches into the pile, draws a card. Reconfigures
his hand. *He must be nearing a set.*

VELVET (CONT'D)

Do you have an ace?

For the first time, Velvet registers what's drawn on this
particular card -- It's a key.

Googly Eyes hands her TWO cards, both with identical KEYS
drawn on them.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Hey, this is two... I don't think
you're supposed to give me two
cards.

GOOGLY EYES

House rules.

VELVET

Right.

Velvet studies the three aces in her hand -- each scrawled
and marked with a key.

GOOGLY EYES

Do you have a two?

VELVET

Go fish.

(as he draws a card)

And you only cut my tomato on rye
in fourths, but never the peanut
butter and jelly. You don't cut it
at all.

(beat)

*It's like you're two different
people...like you have two
different motives.*

They stop playing momentarily. They just stare at one another. *You can cut the tension in the room with a dull, butter knife.*

BACK TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

We join the room with the same tension in the flashback. Velvet and Isaac -- eyes glued on one another.

VELVET

Kyle. Your interview? How did it go? I have a sneaking suspicion you two already knew each other.

There it is. Velvet has said her piece.

INT. HOLE-IN-THE-WALL DIVE BAR - FLASHBACK/NIGHT

Kyle sets his sights on Isaac.

KYLE

You look familiar. Do we know each other, friend?

ISAAC

Do we, *friend*?

Confrontational. Kyle backs off. Back to Velvet.

BACK TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Isaac shakes his head, soaks in the accusation.

ISAAC
You would be wrong.
(beat)
Seems we both have an ace up the
sleeve.

Isaac shifts in his chair, takes a deep breath -- smiles at
her brass.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I told you I didn't trust that guy.
I'm pretty good at reading people.
He was a liar...

VELVET
Was?

ISAAC
I guess it's my turn to share.

Isaac leans in, on the edge of his chair -- *a sinister smile.*

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Hello, my name's Isaac. I'm here
today, because I'm a recovering
addict. *My addiction, you ask?* It's
complicated...I like to film
people.

INT. AUDITORIUM - FLASHBACK

Same auditorium. Different time. Kyle and Isaac sit across
from each other -- Isaac in the driver seat, firing off
questions:

ISAAC
So, you say he tied you up?

KYLE
Right. With a rope.
(beat)
Hey friend, *listen*. I thought
Velvet was gonna be here? We have a
few things we need to iron out.

ISAAC
She got tied up. You'll have to
forgive the pun. But it's good
segue to continue the story.
(beat)
So, you were saying you were tied
up?

KYLE
Yeah, sure.

ISAAC
Yeah, sure?
(beat)
I need solid answers here if we're
gonna nab this guy.

KYLE
Yes. The answer's yes. He tied me
up.

ISAAC
Were your hands behind your back or
in front? Did he tie your waist?
Did he gag you?

Kyle grows frustrated.

KYLE
Listen, the details are kind of
fuzzy. It was late. I was tired...

ISAAC
-bullshit.

Something darkens in Isaac's eyes.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
He never took you. Did he? You made
it all up to win your girl back.
You don't have to say anything.
Just nod if I'm right.
(beat)
It'll make this all go a lot
smoother.

Kyle manages a weak nod, his eyes full of guilt and sadness.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
See? Was that so hard?
(beat)
Listen, I love a good story as much
as the next guy. But you can't
bullshit a bullshitter. I'm making
something very *real* here. And
you're just trying to piss on
everything I've put together.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Velvet and Isaac exchange death stares -- deadlocked.

VELVET

What did you do to him?

ISAAC

Oh, you know...*I interviewed him.*

VELVET

Did you hurt him?

ISAAC

Okay, so are we jumping ship with the conspiracy theories you were just spewing? Kyle being in on it? You worried about *that deadweight* now?

(softens)

Why are you being so combative anyway? Just a few days ago, we were really close-

VELVET

-don't remind me.

ISAAC

I care about you, Velvet. I care about your story. Let's end this thing right. You know what you have to do next...

Velvet fiddles with a Lockett attached her small handbag. Barely notices that Isaac is now--

--BRANDISHING A KNIFE. She looks up, shocked, realizes this place is huge. He would catch her easily. *Nowhere to run.*

VELVET

Isaac, why do you have that?

ISAAC

I want you to sing. What's the song again? The one when you're scared?

Isaac stands as Velvet grips her belongings, straightens STIFF in her chair.

Isaac paces to a nearby folding table -- a record player resting on top. He lifts the needle with the blade of the knife, drops it in a groove-

-turns and smiles broadly as "*She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain*" scratches through the vinyl, its tune filling the room.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I thought it convenient...
(beat)
Nobody should have to do this
alone.

VELVET
(tears forming)
What is this?

ISAAC
The end of your story. Today,
you're gonna do what you couldn't
in those chains.
(beat)
*Locked to good ole' **Silas**...*

Velvet's eyes change on those words. *How could he have-?*

Isaac paces back to the chair -- camera still rolling. He motions to the device as he sits down once more.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
The world's your oyster, Velvet.

He slides the blade across the floor where it glides to a halt at her feet. Velvet cautiously picks it up.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
You can turn that thing on yourself
or you can attack me with it.
Choice is yours. I'll warn you,
however. If you DO choose the
latter, I'm not gonna make it easy
on you.

Isaac pulls a small PEASHOOTER from his waist, aims it in her direction.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I will protect myself. Then I'll
cut the tape -- edit it to look
like you attacked me. I'll kill the
sound, pretend I didn't capture
any. Just a bunch of boring
technical mumbo-jumbo. Anyways,
leave the rest up to the
imagination of our audience...

VELVET
Our audience?
(manages a weak laugh)
That's all this is to you.
(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)

A chance to be seen. Why didn't you kill me when you had the chance? I begged you to...

ISAAC

Can't say I didn't think about it. But you know that whole angel on the shoulder thing? The voice of reason nagging at you? I don't have one.

(motions to his shoulder)

This angel is nonexistent. But there was a voice there -- *not mine, mind you...*

VELVET

And what about now? *That voice?* What's it saying now?

Isaac smiles warmly -- in complete control.

ISAAC

It's silent...

He raises the gun -- leans forward.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

No more games. It's time to pull those big girl panties up and do what we came to do.

Velvet studies the knife, the blade shimmering under fluorescents. Her reflection on its surface.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Kill yourself...

There's nowhere to go, nowhere to hide. A gun is trained on Velvet, who considers her lack of choices, looks up at Isaac and then--

-- a FIGURE emerges silently behind him. It's old man GOOGLY EYES, *the mask, the robe, the whole freakin' ensemble.*

Velvet's eyes, full of confusion -- she can't register the scene before her and then--

--the FIGURE raises a gun to the back of Isaac's head. Isaac is completely oblivious to the intruder's presence--

♪ *She'll be riding six white horses when she comes-* ♪

POW!!! A GUNSHOT PIERCES THROUGH THE ROOM.

Blood showers the newly waxed floors. Isaac's BODY slumps in the chair -- motionless and DEAD.

The figure moves to the side of Isaac's body and removes the Googly eyes and then a silicone old man mask-

It's CALLUM, our suicide prevention lifeline guy...

♪ Then we'll all eat purple pizza when she comes... ♪

He's breathing heavily, gassed from the adrenaline -- from the gravity of the moment. *Perhaps from murdering another...*

For a brief second, Callum studies the corpse of Isaac -- tilts his head and registers an oddity such as "*I'll be damned. Roxanne was right. They do look different when you're responsible...*"

CALLUM
(still staring at Isaac)
...I'll be damned.

He lifts a foot and gives Isaac a kicking nudge as his body KERPLUNKS lifelessly and joins a puddle of pooling blood on the floor.

Callum takes a seat across from Velvet. Camera still rolling.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
Hey Velvet.

VELVET
Hi, Callum.

What the hell? How would she know?! And we cut to-

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - FLASHBACK

Velvet studies the three aces in her hand -- each scrawled and marked with a key.

GOOGLY EYES
Do you have a two?

VELVET
Go fish.
(as he draws a card)
And you only cut my tomato on rye
in fourths, but never the peanut
butter and jelly. You don't cut it
at all.
(beat)
(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)
*It's like you're two different
 people...like you have two
 different motives.*

They stop playing momentarily. They just stare at one another. *You can cut the tension in the room with a dull, butter knife.*

The man removes his mask and we see that GOOGLY EYES is none other than -- Callum.

-- but not just any Callum -- a torn up, teary eyed hollow version of himself. Distraught. Eyes full of guilt.

CALLUM
 Hello, Velvet.

That voice. Velvet recognizes it immediately, but she can't believe her ears...

VELVET
 Callum?

The betrayal and confusion register heavily across her face.

CALLUM
 I have a story to tell you. I'll
 keep it brief and then you'll be
 free to go.

Velvet studies the key in her hand.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
 I want to tell you why you're
 here...

EXT. BACK PATIO, CALLUM'S PLACE - NIGHT/FLASHBACK

A plate with a few scorched Ribeyes. A few empty beer bottles on one side of the table.

PULL OUT to reveal Callum and Isaac are sitting across from each other. Callum is scribbling a bomb on a playing card.

CALLUM
 Fuck you, Finch.

ISAAC
 Oh, fuck me? You remember that time
 I threw that New Year's Eve party
 and you stood me up? I mean,
 completely stood me up?

CALLUM

New Year's Eve. That's different, man. I fell asleep. I was on my way to your place and I fell asleep-

ISAAC

Nah, you didn't just fall asleep. You passed out on some fuckin' railroad tracks, man. That's some drunken shit right there. Do I need to remind you?

Isaac motions to the wheelchair. They both stew in silence for a beat.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(re: wheelchair)

When are you getting outta that damn thing anyways?

CALLUM

You gonna bring it up every time we get together?

(re: his question)

Doc said whenever I'm ready. Just need a little more physical therapy.

ISAAC

Listen, I'm sorry. Shit's been hectic lately at home. A lot of heavy shit I haven't really told you about.

CALLUM

No, I get it.

A LITTLE GIRL, Darlene (8), runs out of the house, grabs Isaac's leg at the table.

DARLENE

She ran under the couch, daddy! Mr. Callum's cat.

ISAAC

Oh well, I guess that means you've got some exploring to do. Gotta find Mr. Callum's cat so he don't get lonely.

(beat)

Think you can do that for us?
Find...

Isaac thinks a beat-

CALLUM

...Juju.

ISAAC

Right. Think you can find Juju for us?

Darlene's eyes go wide as she races back inside, mission locked and loaded.

Isaac's eyes immediately go dark at her departure.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Her bitch mother trying to take her away from me. Trying to take me to court, extort me for every dime I got.

CALLUM

Sorry to hear that.

ISAAC

They're all the same, man.
Bloodsuckers. Speaking of...
(takes a drink)
Liam told me about the call. About the girl. How you've been calling her lately.

CALLUM

He did?

ISAAC

Why would someone do that? Make those calls off the clock -- against company policy. Take that kind of risk?
(off Callum's look)
Unless...

Isaac cuts a piece of steak, takes a bite.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Liam also told me you looked her up. Fell in love right there on the spot.

Isaac takes a swig of beer, washes down the dry cattle.

CALLUM

Sounds like Liam told you everything.

ISAAC
 He didn't tell me your endgame.
 What the hell you trying to get out
 of this?

For the first time in the conversation, Callum's eyes go dark, *brooding*. He studies a scythe he's drawn on another card.

CALLUM
 I don't want her to kill herself.

ISAAC
 (incredulous)
 You don't want her to kill-
 (beat)
 So, *what*? You're gonna check in on
 her every twenty-four hours until
 she finally does? Have you learned
 nothing from your line of work? You
 can't stop someone if they're bound
 and determined to go through with
 it.

CALLUM
 I'm not so sure. I think you can.

Isaac puts his beer down. *The conversation has shifted.*

ISAAC
 What lengths would you go to save
 her? Outside of house calls -- I
 mean, do you think there's some
 sort of way you could reinvigorate
 her will to live? I dunno -- make
 the sight of razors repugnant to
 her?

Callum considers the questions.

Isaac's own words have sparked something. He has an idea. His eyes light up as he leans forward.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 What if I told you there was a way
 we could save your girl -- *make her
 want to live again* -- and
 simultaneously get rich doing it?
 (beat)
 I mean, it's a *batshit* crazy idea.
 But if we pulled it off. She'd
 never see our faces and I can get
 her to do a tell-all interview.
 Make a movie outta it...

CALLUM
Hell no. Sounds risky.

ISAAC
Com'on, man. You were hit by a
train and survived. Maybe this is
your calling. Maybe this why -- to
save this girl from herself...

Cut back to--

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - FLASHBACK

Callum sweaty, exhausted -- suppresses tears. Velvet looks
on, angry -- key in hand.

VELVET
I was your social experiment?
That's what this was?

CALLUM
I'll make it right.

Callum loses the gloves, exposes his wrist to her. We notice
the same perpendicular scars as before.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
I've been at this a long time. I'm
not wired the same as other people.
I'm a coward. No matter how many
times I've tried it -- I could
never...get over the hump. You're
stronger than me, Velvet...You were
gonna do it. *I stopped you.*

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - FLASHBACK

Callum CRADLES Velvet in his lap as he turns her on her side
-- desperately trying to EXPEL the pills she's taken.

Callum CRIES out loud, deep in anguish.

BACK TO:

INT. GARAGE, MAKESHIFT DUNGEON - FLASHBACK/NIGHT

Callum's words register across Velvet's face. *She understands
now. He saved her.*

CALLUM

Even the train...said I was drunk.
But I just parked there. Heard the
train coming...but at the last
minute, I threw it in reverse.

Callum laughs weakly at the memory. *A painful one.*

CALLUM (CONT'D)

I do just enough to torture myself.
All these scars -- constant
reminders of how weak I am.

Velvet inserts the key into the lock, unclasps the cuff --
massages her reddened ankle.

VELVET

Tomato on Rye cut in fourths. You
know, I put that on instagram as a
joke. It kinda took off from there.
My boyfriend even ran with it...
(beat)

I've seen your face. If you let me
go, your life will be over.

CALLUM

I know.

VELVET

And you're okay with that?

CALLUM

It's the bravest thing I've ever
done.

On those words, Velvet rises to her feet -- her legs beneath
her weak and frail, but *functioning*.

Callum stands, joins her.

Is he for real? Velvet is hesitant, *lost*.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

The door's on the other side of
that plastic.

Callum points to the opposing wall.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

The dirt driveway will lead you
down to 25. From there, take a
right and you'll find town a few
miles down the road.

(beat)

(MORE)

CALLUM (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna make this up to you,
 Velvet. I swear it.

BACK TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Callum is seated, gun in hand, across from Velvet -- who is all dolled up and surprisingly -- *not scared*.

The music has stopped -- the record still spinning.

CALLUM
 Told you I'd make it up to you.

VELVET
 You think this makes us square?

Velvet contemplates the knife in her hand once more. Callum notices her infatuation with it.

VELVET (CONT'D)
 You kept me caged like an animal
 for months. You let that monster
 put his hands on me...

CALLUM
 I didn't know...

VELVET
 No, *I know*. I figured it out.
 Figured out there were two of you.
 It all made sense. One of you was
 nurturing and kind. The other was
 pure evil.

Still cradling the knife -- spinning it on its handle. The dancing light glimmering off its blade with every rotation--

Callum watches, mesmerized.

VELVET (CONT'D)
 You don't get a pass for what
 you've done just because you didn't
 touch me.

(beat)

Maybe it was his plan all along.
 Maybe you didn't kidnap me. Maybe
 you didn't chain me to that god-
 forsaken safe. Maybe, just
 maybe...at some point, you tried to
 stop him and he overpowered you.

(beat)

(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)

Whatever the case, it was all a cry for help. You should've been calling the lifeline you worked for. The whole time you're the one that needed the help...You should've been the one chained to a safe with a masked man handing you razors. You're the one who needs help, Callum...

Callum is hanging on her every word. Overwhelmed. Consumed.

CALLUM

(choked whisper)

...I'm supposed to be the grease.

Velvet's eyes go COLD. Something dark stirs beneath them. *We haven't seen her this composed and in control in a long time.*

VELVET

Are you thinking of suicide?

Beat. Callum grows confused -- but he remains silent.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Have you thought about Suicide in the last two months?

Callum finds his tongue, speaks through the pain:

CALLUM

Every day.

VELVET

Have you ever attempted to kill yourself...*I mean, really attempted to kill yourself? Not some backing off the railroad tracks at the last second bullshit -- have you given it a real...college...try?*

Callum considers the gun. *He understands now. He's the one that needs help. This was his destiny all along...*

-- he raises the barrel to his mouth. Holds it there, trembling in fear.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Just let go. It's so simple.

(beat)

This is what you want. What you've always wanted. Pull the trigger, Callum. *You'll finally be free.*

Callum pauses. *He can't do it. He's never been able to and this time's no different--*

CALLUM
...I'm too weak...

Gun still trembling uncontrollably in hand, tears starting to fall--

CALLUM (CONT'D)
...I can't...I'm not like you.

VELVET
You can.

Velvet stands and replaces the needle to the beginning of the record where the song starts back up--

--scratchy music blaring, Velvet kneels down in front of Callum--

--singing gently along with the track--

♪ *She'll be coming around the mountain when she comes...* ♪

Velvet sings along and smiles assuredly as Callum cautiously raises the gun back up to his mouth.

Her eyes -- gentle and persuasive -- urge him on.

♪ *She'll be coming around the mountain...* ♪

Callum forces a smile through fearful eyes -- wide and begging. Velvet reassures him through her loving countenance -- a beautiful smile.

A **SHOT RINGS OUT** as the music CRESCENDOS--

--and BLOOD SPLATTERS across Velvet's SMILING FACE, which--

-- finally dwindles to anger and *something way more sinister.*

TIGHT ON Callum's hand as it falls to his seated side -- GUN SMACKING the linoleum. Blood cascading down in peppering droplets.

PUSH IN on Velvet's blood-speckled face. Her emotions shift once more from angry to utter sadness.

Callum's bloodied HEAD in front of her, lifeless.

That horrible song plays on. It's tune -- in complete dissonance with the moment.

The stylus on the record player gets STUCK in a groove, plays the same part over and over in an eerie high pitch.

PUSH IN on Velvet's saddened face. She approaches the camera.

SOLID RED LIGHT. STILL ROLLING.

Velvet opens her phone -- plays an old message from her father.

VELVET'S DAD

(over the speaker)

Hey honey, just calling to check in on you. It's been a few weeks now and I was just worried. It's not like you to not come and see me, so I know something must be holding you up. I know whatever it is...It's really important. So, I hope you take care of whatever it is. Anyways, *good news*. The doctors say I might have a little more time. Let's hope so! Right? Anyways, I love you. I miss you, honey. And just always know, no matter how bad it gets, I'll always be there with you...*even when I'm not. Remember, just keep that promise you made me and everything will work out.*

Velvet lowers the phone, tear-filled eyes.

VELVET

(into the camera)

I kept your promise, daddy...

Approaches the camera.

POV OF THE CAMERA -- We see a bloodied-face Velvet smile into the lens and reach around to--

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.

