Dani's Love

Written By

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1 EXT-PATHWAY-EVENING

TWO FEMALES (late teens) within close proximity to each other ARGUE. One of the girls is taller and apparently angrier, using her hands and body to attempt to express herself.

WE ZOOM BACK TO:

2 INT-DORM ROOM-EVENING

Looking out the window at the girls, we pull back and we are actually in a dorm room. WE turn to see:

A HOODED FIGURE TUCKING an OBJECT into his or her waist. Could be a boy or a girl, it's unclear from the baggy attire and heavy jacket.

The figure pulls out a phone, answers it and says something we cannot hear. The person places the phone inside their pocket and turns to the door to EXIT.

CUT TO:

3 INT/EXT-HALLWAY/STAIRWELL/BREEZEWAY-MOMENTS LATER

P.O.V. FOLLOWING FIGURE:

The figure is now promptly walking down a HALLWAY, through a DOORWAY, down a STAIRWELL and out into a LOBBY and furthermore, the NIGHT.

They confidently APPROACH a CAR waiting on them. A SLEEK SPORTS CAR. They OPEN the PASSENGER DOOR and sit inside.

The car races off.

CUT TO:

4 INT-INSIDE THE CAR-CONTINUOUS

A CLOSE UP of DANI ROTTO (early 20's):

We now see: The figure take off their hood and its:

DANI ROTTO has big round eyes that observe the world and everything that occurs. She is deeply routed in her emotions and follows her feelings before her morals.

(CONTINUED)

The DRIVER is LANCE BERGUIT (early 20's).

LANCE BERGUIT is quite charming to his peers and the locals which makes him very cocky.

DANI ROTTO

So what's this new look?

Lance pulls a pair of DARK SUNGLASSES out of his jacket and puts them on.

DANI ROTTO

(giggles) You look like a pedophile.

LANCE BERGUIT

No way, I look good.

DANI ROTTO What about the rules?

LANCE BERGUIT

I'm not breaking my rules.

A beat.

LANCE BERGUIT

Are you ready?

DANI ROTTO

I think so.

LANCE BERGUIT

Nervous?

DANI ROTTO

A little.

LANCE BERGUIT

Good. You're more observant when you are nervous. Read that in a magazine.

DANI ROTTO

You can read?

LANCE BERGUIT

Lame joke. You really are nervous huh?

Dani NODS her head slightly and then looks out her WINDOW.

EXT-CAMPUS-NIGHT

P.O.V. High Above the Street:

The car exiting a COLLEGE CAMPUS, onto a MAIN ROAD:

DANI ROTTO (V.O.)

Lance's rules are his "brilliant" way to not get caught stealing. He thinks they are perfect, and standing by them will keep him out of trouble. His first rule is "don't be stupid" so...they are not exactly well crafted.

A beat.

DANI ROTTO (V.O.)

Lance thinks I "roll" with him because this is a sure way to make easy money. He doesn't realize I'm not here for that.

FADE TO:

OPENING TITLES OVER: pictures of robberies, the greatest heists of history, men in ski masks, guns and money. Particularly focus on famous robberies, etc.

FADE BACK TO:

6 INT-DARK CLASSROOM-FLASHBACK

Lance and Dani SIT at desks face-to-face staring at each other.

LANCE BERGUIT

We walk in, you...?

DANI ROTTO

Scope the place out, linger until there are no more customers inside. Take position one, grocery aisle.

LANCE BERGUIT

Then?

DANI ROTTO

Find something small, any indulgent
 (stops herself)
That's kind of dumb though.

5

LANCE BERGUIT My rules, Dani.

CUT TO:

7 INT-CONVENIENT STORE-PRESENT TIME

Lance is in the grocery aisle, chucking SMALL CANDIES and GUM into his POCKET.

Dani looks over at him and ROLLS HER EYES.

CUT BACK TO:

8 INT-DARK CLASSROOM-FLASHBACK

LANCE BERGUIT

When I approach the counter.

DANI ROTTO

(with attitude)
I take my position by the door,
position two: the look out.

LANCE BERGUIT

What's your attitude for?

DANI ROTTO

I know what to do, we've been going over this for hours.

LANCE BERGUIT

Stop whining. I want to perfect this with you. It's the first time you are inside. And things are going down a little differently this time.

DANI ROTTO

How so?

LANCE BERGUIT

This time, I'm looking the attendant in the eye and telling her she's getting robbed.

DANI ROTTO

Why?

LANCE BERGUIT

I want to know what that feels like.

DANI ROTTO

And when she describes you to the cops?

LANCE BERGUIT

I'll disguise myself differently this time, somehow.

Dani shakes her head, EXASPERATED.

CUT TO:

9 INT-CONVENIENT STORE-PRESENT TIME

Lance turns to the CASHIER and smiles at her, a charming smile. He approaches the COUNTER. We see that Lance is wearing white gloves.

MEGHAN, the cashier is very attractive, in her late teens or early twenties, appears bored but condones innocence in her gaze. She is out of place in this environment and sticks out like a sore thumb.

LANCE BERGUIT

Hey. How you doing?

Dani moves to a NEWSPAPER RACK near the door. She pretends to read while keeping an eye on Lance.

MEGHAN

Good. Can I help you?

LANCE BERGUIT

Yeah, pack of Newports please?

Meghan gives Lance a PROLONGED LOOK of contemplation. Then turns to the cigarette rack.

CUT TO:

10 INT-DARK CLASSROOM-FLASHBACK

LANCE BERGUIT

I'll reach across, cut the cord.

CUT TO:

11 INT-CONVENIENT STORE-PRESENT TIME

Lance LUNGES his body across the COUNTER TOP and picks at something on the other side. He SLIDES BACK to his side of the counter before:

Meghan turns back to face him.

MEGHAN

That will be seven thirty five please.

LANCE BERGUIT

Actually, can I get them in one hundreds? (smiles)

Meghan again GLARES questionably at Lance for just a moment, then TURNS to get him his CIGARETTES.

Lance turns and NODS to Dani.

CUT TO:

12 INT-DARK CLASSROOM-FLASHBACK

DANI ROTTO You nod if you're going for it, I nod back if we're clear on my end.

CUT TO:

13 INT-CONVENIENT STORE-PRESENT TIME

Dani NODS back to Lance.

Lance pulls out a PAPER BAG from his jacket. He PLACES it on the COUNTER TOP. Meghan turns back to face him. She PLACES the one hundred Newports on the counter.

She NOTICES the BAG, then looks back up at Lance.

MEGHAN

Eight twenty four please.

Lance SLIDES the PAPER BAG forward towards Meghan, PRESENTING it to her.

LANCE BERGUIT

You wanna know what's in here?

6.

MEGHAN

Uhm.

LANCE BERGUIT

(cutting her off)
It's a gun. Put your hands on the
counter.
 (slower)
Put your hands on the counter, now.

Lance SLAMS HIS HANDS on the counter. Meghan jumps and places her hands on the counter as fast as she can.

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D)

You're 911 dial out button is disabled, I cut it while your back was turned to me. Don't fuck around and I won't hurt you.

A beat.

Meghan still does not move. She glances over at Dani. Until now, Dani could be an unaffiliated customer.

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D)

(to Dani) Hey babe, throw me your phone.

Dani tosses her PHONE to Lance who catches it.

He HOLDS IT UP for Meghan to see.

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D)

Meghan FLINCHES at the word "robbed".

DANI looks confused.

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D)

You've never been robbed? In this city?

Meghan SHAKES her HEAD extremely nervous.

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D) Well now I feel bad. Money on the counter, virgin. Meghan, FLUSTERED, looks down at her CASH DRAWER and starts to place BILLS on the counter. She is PANICKING.

She DROPS some MONEY to the floor.

MEGHAN

I'm sorry, I'm really sorry.

Meghan REACHES to the floor for the MONEY.

LANCE BERGUIT

Stop. Forget about that money. I need to see your hands. Just take the rest of the money in the drawer and place it on the counter, okay?

She glances up at him, and then CONTINUES placing MONEY on the COUNTER.

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D)

(to Dani)
Baby, could you come collect this
money for me?
 (to Meghan)
This is my friend the tax
collector. Your store is paying an
extra tax tonight.

Dani APPROACHES the counter, and pulls a SMALL DUFFEL BAG out of her WAIST. She COLLECTS the MONEY without looking up at Meghan.

Lance takes a STEP BACK and glances out the MAIN DOOR, covering Dani's post as the "look out" while Dani is stuffing the MONEY into her BAG.

LANCE BERGUIT

That went smoothly right...

Lance looks at her NAME TAG that reads "Meghan"

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D)

Meghan? No harm, no serious threats, no animosity I hope?

Dani FINISHES putting the MONEY into the BAG. She backs up. She gives Meghan a look, they MAKE EYE CONTACT.

Lance picks up the PAPER BAG on the COUNTER with the GUN in it.

Dani and Lance exit the CONVENIENT STORE.

CUT TO:

14 INT-DARK CLASSROOM-FLASHBACK

CLOSE UP:

Lance performs a drum roll with his hands on the desk.

LANCE BERGUIT

Boom.

MOVE IN CLOSER:

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D)

We're out faster than we were in.

Lance smiles BUOYANTLY.

CUT BACK TO:

15 EXT-PARKING LOT OF CONVENIENT STORE-CONTINUOUS

Lance and Dani JOG around the CORNER of the STORE to their CAR parked.

DANI ROTTO

Holy shit.

LANCE BERGUIT

(sarcastically) Do you think she liked me?

DANI ROTTO

No.

LANCE BERGUIT

She was pretty cute though. Surprised I picked her as our mark huh?

DANI ROTTO

Yeah, where did you find her?

They get into the CAR. The CAR jerks onto the ROAD and speeds away.

CUT TO:

16 EXT-CAMPUS QUAD-NEXT DAY

Dani, with her book bag slung off her shoulder, and a textbook in hand WALKS up a concrete stairwell and onto a PATH where:

Her eye is caught by a GIRL: The cashier, Meghan from the convenient store.

Dani throws the HOOD OF HER SWEATSHIRT over her HEAD in one furious jerk in attempt to CONCEAL her FACE. She turns her back to Meghan as Dani is crossing her PATH and continues down the STAIRWELL.

Dani again turns to: looks back down as she walks opposite Dani's position.

CUT TO:

17 INT-CAMPUS CENTER REC ROOM-LATER

Lance Berguit and another STUDENT are playing ping pong at the PING PONG TABLE in the REC ROOM of the college. The ROOM has many entertaining features including a television, wii system and fuzzball game.

Lance skips a PING PONG down off the OTHER STUDENT's side which is game point and:

OTHER STUDENT

Ah shit!

LANCE BERGUIT

Woot woot! Pay up man.

Lance drops his PADDLE to the table CHARISMATICALLY and throws his ARMS up in the AIR, indignant, yet humorous.

OTHER STUDENT

Asshole.

The Other Student drops a few BILLS on the ping pong table and starts to walk away, up a flight of STAIRS.

LANCE BERGUIT

Just like my Mama use to say, can't handle the heat, get the fuck out my kitchen boy.

AS the Other Student EXITS: Dani enters, coming down the STAIRS into the REC ROOM.

DANI ROTTO

You knew huh?

LANCE BERGUIT

(counting his money) Knew what?

DANI ROTTO

That Meghan goes here.

LANCE BERGUIT

(half heart-ed) She looked sort of familiar now that I think about it.

DANI ROTTO

Wow. You did know.

LANCE BERGUIT

She was so delectable though. Brand new to the store, working nights, a college girl of all people. I followed her one night after I saw her working in the store. Smoking hot too.

DANI ROTTO

(sighs) Does she know you?

LANCE BERGUIT

No. Don't worry. She wont recognize us either, we kept to the playbook and didn't break the rules baby.

Dani UPROOTS the conversation by turning her BODY away.

A beat.

LANCE BERGUIT (CONT'D) What did you do?

DANI ROTTO

We made eye contact.

LANCE BERGUIT

Shit.

DANI ROTTO

I wasn't wearing sunglasses or anything like you, just keeping my head down out of the camera. But she looked me in the eye Lance. I got nervous. A GROUP OF BOYS walk down the STAIRWELL into the rec room. Lance notices the boys and lowers the volume of his voice.

LANCE BERGUIT

You broke my rules. What do you expect me to do?

DANI ROTTO

I didn't mean to! I accidentally glanced up at her. It's your fault really, for using a student as our mark!

Lance shrugs off the verbal attack. Lance cannot sit still, he paces. He notices the group of boys SITTING at a table with another boy who was previously sitting there: CHARLIE HERTZ.

MALE BULLY

Charlie my man, how they hanging? You try fucking that girl?

DANI ROTTO

What do we do?

CHARLIE

N-N-N-O-O-O man. Leave me alone please.

LANCE BERGUIT

I don't know!

MALE BULLY

Okay Charlie, here is the secret to getting laid, you just show her your thing.

The three boys LAUGH. Charlie does not.

LANCE BERGUIT

Nope. Nope. Nope.

Lance turns, storms up to the boys, and ATTACKS them. Lance puts the Male Bully on the ground and:

LANCE BERGUIT

You're a real annoying kid huh? Shut the hell up leave this kid alone.

The Male Bully nods his head.

Lance quickly turns to EXIT, but not before shooting Dani a glare.

18 MONTAGE-NIGHT

WE HAVE A MONTAGE: Dani's DELIBERATION. COLLEGE STUDENTS, Dani amongst them paces around different locations around the CAMPUS. It's NIGHT and she SMOKES her cigarettes and LURKS in dark corners, keeping to herself. Techno-Edgy Music. Fast Forward motions.

19 INT-ACADEMIC BUILDING HALLWAY-NIGHT

Meghan is walking down a hall, with a bag over her shoulder late at night. She hears a NOISE BEHIND her. She looks back and sees a door slowly close. She turns back and SUDDENLY is face to face with Dani.

She is startled by Dani, but Dani is not startled by her.

DANI ROTTO

Did you know I go here when we robbed you?

MEGHAN

Your boyfriend send you to threaten me?

DANI ROTTO

No.

MEGHAN

No what?

DANI ROTTO

No he didn't send me.

MEGHAN

Is he your boyfriend?

DANI ROTTO

(hesitant) No. Why? Trying to fuck him too? Get on the list.

MEGHAN

You on that list?

DANI ROTTO

Listen bitch, you think you know me? You don't. I'm here for myself.

MEGHAN

Okay. What do you want?

DANI ROTTO

I wanted to see if you told anyone about me.

MEGHAN

Maybe I told everyone.

DANI ROTTO You wanna fuck around? We can fuck around.

Dani pushes Meghan back, Meghan falls to the floor.

MEGHAN

I didn't tell anyone Danielle.

Dani shoots Meghan a look.

MEGHAN (CONT'D)

I looked you up in the yearbook.

Dani places a CIGARETTE in her mouth, she toys with it as if it were a tooth pick.

DANI ROTTO

(satirical) You have great detective skills. Searching through a yearbook. When you grow up are you going to be a cop?

MEGHAN

I couldn't sleep that night. I knew I recognized you from school.

DANI ROTTO

What about Lance?

MEGHAN

That's his name?

DANI ROTTO

You recognize him?

MEGHAN

He's a little too tall to miss.

DANI ROTTO

Honestly, this shit you're giving me, isn't helping. I'd kick your (MORE)

DANI ROTTO (CONT'D)

fucking face in right now if I thought it would help.

MEGHAN

You think I respect you because you held me up.

DANI ROTTO

You don't?

MEGHAN

No.

DANI ROTTO

Then why are you still laying on the floor?

Meghan stands.

MEGHAN

Alright, let's talk without threats. Okay?

DANI ROTTO

No I don't know what you think happened, but I'll tell you the correct version. I was in that store, some guy held you up, I lent him my phone and he made me take the money out, at gun point. Got it?

MEGHAN

Yeah.

CUT TO:

20 INT-CLASSROOM-MORNING

Lance parades into an EMPTY CLASSROOM where Dani is standing at the WHITE BOARD, mapping out something.

DANI ROTTO

Lance sit down.

LANCE BERGUIT

Whoa baby, why don't yeah ask with a little please at the end of that command. 15.

DANI ROTTO

(yelling) Sit the fuck down Lance!

Lance is not intimidated by the yelling. He stands for a moment then cooly slides into a desk facing the WHITE BOARD.

LANCE BERGUIT

What's all this chicken scratch? I thought we were going to plan our next job.

DANI ROTTO

It's an outline of the psychological and subconscious influences for why you steal. Environmental influences are the most prominent. Were you ever witness to a close family member or role model stealing in front of you at a young age?

LANCE BERGUIT

What the hell are you doing Dani?

DANI ROTTO

I'm going to teach you why you steal, why you like it. And how to stop it.

LANCE BERGUIT

You're trying to explain to me why I steal? You steal too now Dani. Why don't analyze that before you analyze me. You've had some lapse in judgment because you made a mistake.

DANI ROTTO

I made a mistake because I love you.

Lance throws his hands in the air.

LANCE BERGUIT

I'm not going to listen to this. Peace.

Lance turns to leave.

DANI ROTTO

So you're just going to ignore what I just said?

Lance stops. Spins back around to face Dani.

LANCE BERGUIT

As far as I'm concerned, you just said you don't care about everything we've worked for.

DANI ROTTO

Are you stupid? I'm just here for you. I don't give a fuck about the money, I just want you.

Lance storms towards Dani and grabs her by the neck and presses her against the wall.

LANCE BERGUIT

You...you are a liar. Don't tell me you love me cause I don't care.

DANI ROTTO

I confronted her. She knows who we are and she's going to the police.

Lance pauses before slowly RELEASING his grip on Dani and stepping back. Dani's eyes are cascading with tears.

Lance exits.

Dani falls to the floor in TEARS. Her back pressed against the wall.

WE SEE: A CLOCK, the time ticking by, several different times, from eight thirty to nine thirty to ten thirty and so on.

FADE OUT on Dani's face.

21 INT-MEGHAN'S DORM ROOM-LATER

Meghan places cloths in her closet, organized by color each on a cloths hanger perfectly placed.

Meghan pulls her work shirt out of her laundry bin.

FLASHBACK TO THE ROBERRY: Dani and Lance, quick fragments. and THEN:

A KNOCK on the DOOR.

Meghan is reluctant before opening the door to: Lance Berguit standing in her doorway.

LANCE BERGUIT

Hey.

P.O.V. Close up of Meghan:

She looks shocked, but not scared.

LANCE BERGUIT

You're silent, but you don't look scared to see me. Can I come in? Thanks.

Lance takes a STEP FORWARD, Meghan moves in his way.

MEGHAN

Did you want to steal something from my room now too?

LANCE BERGUIT

This is just awkward and unnecessary really. You talked to Dani, Dani talked to me. You know who I am, I know who you are.

MEGHAN

Want to get to the point?

LANCE BERGUIT

What did she say exactly?

MEGHAN

She didn't tell you?

LANCE BERGUIT

You ask a lot of questions.

MEGHAN

So?

LANCE BERGUIT

So I want answers not more questions. What did she say?

MEGHAN

Nothing. She said stay away from her.

LANCE BERGUIT

And not me?

MEGHAN

She just said her.

LANCE BERGUIT

And what about going to the police?

MEGHAN

What about it?

LANCE BERGUIT

Are you going to?

MEGHAN

Are you going to leave?

LANCE BERGUIT

So I guess I have to persuade you myself not to turn me in.

MEGHAN

Why do you have to persuade me? Maybe I just don't care?

LANCE BERGUIT

Enough with the fucking questions. You like me huh?

MEGHAN

You're an idiot.

LANCE BERGUIT

If I kiss you will you promise not to turn me in? I could be eternally in debt to you.

Lance moves in to KISS her. Meghan BACKS UP against her dresser. Meghan SLAPS HIM. He doesn't draw away, but attempts again to kiss her, this time he contacts her lips. They make out AGAINST HER CLOSET door.

FADE OUT on her WORK SHIRT.

22 EXT-OUTSIDE LIBRARY-LATER

Dani sits on a bench alone, in the silent NIGHT. She is contemplating everything that has happened. Meghan, Lance the stealing.

Dani notices:

Charlie Hertz, standing in front of the library with a COFFEE CUP.

DANI ROTTO (V.O.)

Charlie Hertz, comes from a rich family, his parents invented something big and made a lot of money. Everyone on campus knows about Charlie. He's got a mental disorder but he's brilliant. He's the Stephen Hawking type, but with the mechanical body skills.

Charlie approaches Dani's bench and SITS DOWN next to her.

DANI ROTTO

Hey Charlie, how you doing buddy?

CHARLIE

I've got this present for you.

DANI ROTTO

Yeah what's that?

Charlie pulls a coffee cup out of his POCKET and sorts through it and pulls a LOLLIPOP out. He hands the LOLLIPOP to Dani.

Dani takes the LOLLIPOP and smiles.

CHARLIE

I have this plan to give all the students who go into the library to study a lollipop so that they have something to play with in their mouth while studying. Research shows that studying while chewing bubble gum, or paying with a toothpick increases student's focus. I'm writing my thesis for psychology on it. This is my research stage.

DANI ROTTO

That's interesting Charlie. Thanks for the lollipop, but I'm not going in to study.

CHARLIE

I know you just looked like you needed one.

Charlie abruptly stands and walks away.

Dani's PHONE RINGS and we hear:

LANCE BERGUIT (O.S.)

We need to talk.

DANI ROTTO

(sarcastic) Yeah, because I want to talk to you.

LANCE BERGUIT (O.S.)

You love me. Of course you wanna talk to me.

DANI ROTTO

You're a dick.

LANCE BERGUIT (O.S.)

She told me you threatened her. I know you, you were not going to leave it on a good note. So I banged her.

DANI ROTTO

You what?

LANCE BERGUIT (O.S.)

I had to watch my own back since apparently you went to talk to her just for yourself. Oh and holding you at gun point making you help me. Wow.

DANI ROTTO

Lance I....

LANCE BERGUIT (O.S.) Nah, shut up. Even if you held me at gun point, I couldn't love you. Bitch.

Dani HANGS up her phone slowly.

A moment of CONTEMPLATION with Dani, then:

TRANS TO:

23 EXT-OUTSIDE ACADEMIC BUILDING-NIGHT

Dani is leaning against a building, waiting on someone. A cigarette in her mouth.

Meghan exits the building. She see's Dani and SIGHS.

While walking:

DANI ROTTO You fucked Lance.

MEGHAN

That's not your business.

DANI ROTTO

I warned you! I told you to leave us alone.

MEGHAN

(turns, while still walking) You told me to leave you alone. Lance is a big boy, he figured out how to persuade me from telling anyone, just like you did.

Meghan turns HER BACK TO Dani and walks away.

TRANS TO:

24 EXT-WALKWAY TOWARDS DORM-SAME NIGHT

Dani cooly walking along for a short interval until:

Dani in slow motion:

Walks down a path as we hear SOMBER MUSIC. POLICE LIGHTS filter the night skies as we hear:

DANI ROTTO (V.O.)

Lance does know me, and I know him. He picked Meghan as our mark cause he wanted to sleep with her. That whole robbery was about getting to Meghan, and in some sick backwards way it worked. I mean nothing to him. But I know he will never forget me now.

Now we see:

A POLICE CRUISER in front of the DORM shows a POLICE OFFICER ARRESTING Lance. We cannot hear him BUT we can see Lance SCREAMING at Dani from the distance. Resisting arrest.

Dani approaches the police cruiser and surrenders herself. Dani is arrested.

Meghan comes running out to see the SCENE. Dani with her HOOD now on, glares at her, the same way he had in the convenient store.

Meghan gets closer.

DANI ROTTO (V.O.)

This whole thing for me was about being with Lance. He still doesn't realize how much I care about him. (sighs) Crazy the things we do for love.

Dani is placed into of the POLICE CRUISER with Lance. The CRUISER takes off as we:

FADE OUT on POLICE LIGHTS

ROLE END TITLES.