

DESPERATE MEASURES

Written by

Pranil Nand

FADE IN:

INT. BROWN'S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

RODGER BROWN (35) paces in his living room, his face is tired and haggard, dark circles around his eyes from lack of sleep.

He looks to a clock on the wall, 2 a.m.

Hearing a car door SHUT, Rodger looks out the window.

A woman starts up the steps as a taxi drives off.

Rodger sits in a chair.

Keys jingle as the woman tries to open the door, a moment later the door gives way and KIM BROWN (32) stumbles through the door.

Dressed in a tiny red outfit with mascara smudged on her face, she looks more like a prostitute from the red light district than a married woman with a child.

KIM
(slurring)
Hey, baby. You still up?

She stumbles forward, and almost falls to the ground.

Rodger looks at his pathetic wife, he feels sorry.

RODGER
Do you know what time it is?

KIM
Why should I care? I don't have
anything to do tomorrow.

Rodger gets up and grabs Kim by the wrist, hard.

RODGER
You forget about your little
daughter? Huh, you think you can do
whatever the fuck you want?

KIM
Let go of me.

RODGER
You think you can go out all night,
get fucked up. Shoot that shit into
your arms.

Rodger pulls hard on Kim's arm, reveling fresh needle tracks.

KIM
I said let go of me.

She shakes hard and frees herself from Rodgers grip.

KIM (CONT'D)
You're a piece of shit you know
that?

RODGER
How are you getting the money? You
selling yourself?

KIM
No!

RODGER
You sucking dick for your fix? Cuz
god knows I'm not giving you any
money.

KIM
(crying)
No!

RODGER
Well how then? You still begging
your mom for handouts? Don't you
have any respect? For me? For this
family?

Defeated Rodger backs off.

RODGER (CONT'D)
Don't you love us anymore? Don't
you love SALLY?

KIM
I do love you. You know my problem,
why do we have to do this every
time.

Rodger drops to his knees.

RODGER
Then please, if you love us, please
get some help.

KIM
You know I can't, you know I won't.

RODGER
Why? Why can't you?

Kim hugs him, pressing his face gently against her body.

KIM
The devil, has a hold of me.

RODGER
I don't have much left in me.

KIM
Neither do I.

Kim releases him and disappears into the kitchen.

Rodger looks up and sees Sally (5) staring down at him from the upper floor.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Rodger sits in a office, he is in a well pressed suit but still looks tired and emotionally drained.

Sally sits on a chair in the office, coloring in a book.

He is on the phone.

RODGER
I know dad, I don't know what else to do.

DAD
(phone)
I've been telling you for the past three years, you need to end it.

RODGER
But how? It's all my fault.

DAD
(phone)
You can't keep beating yourself up like this, you got over your addiction. You cleaned up son and I will tell you everyday that I'm proud.

Rodger looks at sally, lost in her beauty.

RODGER
How can I let Sally grow up without her mother?

DAD
That's not your decision. That's
Kim's decision.

RODGER
I know but--

DAD
Listen, there are a lot of people
who love you and support you, and
one thing is very true, there is
not one among us who has the
strength to carry on like you have,
including me. You need to do what's
right by Sally and you, end it now
before your world really ends.

RODGER
Alright dad, thanks, I'll call you
later.

Rodger hangs up the phone.

He looks to Sally with a big smile.

DAD
Feel like some ice-cream?

Sally looks up from her book and smiles.

SUPER: 2 weeks later.

INT. BROWN'S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rodger, Kim and Sally all sit on the couch, BARNEY plays on
the TV as the three watch.

The screen goes blank and a warning displays on the
television.

An emergency broadcasting tone is heard and a man appears on
the television.

TV REPORTER
We are bringing this to you live
over the emergency broadcasting
system.
(beat)
A lethal gas has been accidentally
exposed to the atmosphere causing
weather patterns and wind to carry
the dangerous materials over
largely populated areas.

The man circles an area on a map in the contaminated zone.

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)

Residence are required to evacuate these largely populated areas.

The reporter then produces another map.

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)

Residence in these areas are in the immediate effected zone, and will require to take shelter in underground bunkers or strong holds with independent ventilation systems.

The three sitting on the couch inch closer to the TV.

KIM

Oh my god. That's us.

Outside a loud piercing emergency horn like that of nuclear warning starts to go off.

TV REPORTER

Make your way to the closest bunker or stronghold, may god be with you.

The screen goes blank and the emergency broadcast system starts to play over again.

Kim grabs the remote and starts to flip the channels, each channel plays the same thing.

KIM

What are we going to do? We have no bunker.

Rodger gets up and grabs Sally.

RODGER

Get some warm cloths and get in the car.

KIM

What do you mean? You heard him, were fucked!

RODGER

Kim! Get something warm and meet us in the car.

Kim leaves the living room.

Rodger grabs the keys and exits the house.

EXT. CAR - DAY - LATER

The trio sit in silence, neighbors are rushing about and clamoring to get into their vehicles.

Rodger pulls out his phone and dials some numbers.

RODGER

JIM? Thank god, are you okay? You still in Cabo? Ya, well there's some kind of gas effecting our area, we need a bunker, yours still functional?
(beat)
Thank god.

The siren still sounds outside, filling the air with dread.

EXT. BUNKER - EXTERIOR DAY

Rodger stands in front of a panel, he starts to type in numbers, pressing enter, the door beside him pops open with a hiss.

RODGER

Get inside, make sure there is a radio and supplies like food and water. I am going to make a few phone calls, I will be inside in just a few minutes.

INT. BUNKER - KITCHEN - DAY

Rodger looks through cupboards inventorying food and supplies, a radio sits by his side the station only produces static.

Sally sits on the counter beside the radio playing with a doll.

Kim approaches from behind.

KIM

Do you know how long we'll have stay here for?

RODGER

I don't know, it all depends on how serious the situation is outside.

KIM
It can't be that serious right?

RODGER
I don't know.

KIM
Have you heard anything on the radio?

RODGER
I'm only getting static.

KIM
It'll blow over soon right?

RODGER
Damn it Kim, I have no idea. Let me just make sure we have enough food and water.

KIM
How much is enough?

RODGER
I don't know at least for a few months.

KIM
A few months? You can't be serious.

RODGER
It's better to be prepared for the worst.

KIM
The worst would be staying here for months.

RODGER
Why don't you go and unpack, okay?

Kim leaves to the bedroom.

INT. BUNKER - BEDROOM - DAY

Kim takes a case out of her purse and opens it, inside are needles and a bag of whitish powder.

She takes a spoon and dumps some of the powder into it. Retrieving a syringe she takes a match and heats up the spoon

Taking a cigarette she tares off the butt and places it in the liquid, the butt expands as it soaks up the opiate.

A syringe enters the butt and the liquid is drawn into the cavity.

Exhaling, Kim hits the bed in a euphoric sigh, her deposition vanishes as the warm feeling of dopamine being released takes hold.

A slight creek of a door opening causes Kim to turn slowly.

Sally, cautiously peers into the room, has she been there the whole time?

KIM

Baby, what did mommy say about knocking?

Sally's vacant eyes pierce Kim, a flash of anger briefly crosses her face and she leaves.

Kim turns inwards again as the ecstasy grips her being.

SUPER: 1 week later.

INT. BUNKER - KITCHEN - DAY

Rodger and Kim sit closely to a radio, sally sits in the common area watching a kids programme on TV.

Rodger scans a few channels.

RODGER

Sierra one, calling foxtrot 2,
sierra one, calling foxtrot 2,
over.

The line hisses and some static pops start to come in.

FOXTROT2

This is Foxtrot2, how you folks holding up? Over.

RODGER

Same as before, we're fine, just getting a little restless. Over.

FOXTROT2

Well that's good to hear, not much has changed as far as the contamination goes, you guys better hunker down, best to get comfortable. Over.

RODGER

Has any word come in? How long till it's safe to leave? Over.

Static fills the room, Kim purses her lips in anticipation.

Rodger looks to Kim.

RODGER (CONT'D)

Over.

FOXTROT2

I don't know how to tell you this, but word came in a few hours ago and frankly, it's going to take a year for the gas to become inert. Over.

Kim snatches the radio out of Rodger's hands.

KIM

You better be kidding me, there is no way I can stay here for a year. I need to get out of here, I'm going to go crazy.

FOXTROT2

I'm sorry ma'am, nothing can be done, I would take a full inventory and portion it, no one can get to you. I'm sorry. Over.

Kim drops the radio, her face says it all, this is going to be hell.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY - LATER

Rodger posts up a calendar, he flips to April and marks the 15th with a red X, the start of their one year hiatus.

Sally stands beside her dad, curiously looking at him marking the days.

Rodger sees her keen interest and removes the calendar from the wall.

RODGER
How would you like to have a very
important job?

Sally looks confused but doesn't say a thing.

RODGER (CONT'D)
Everyday I would like you to mark a
new day, because when this calendar
fills all the way up, we can leave.
Do you think you can do that for
me?

Sally smiles and nods enthusiastically.

Rodger hands her the pen and places the calendar to her
height.

RODGER (CONT'D)
Can you mark today for me?

Sally removes the lid and puts a big X on the 16th.

Replacing the lid, she puts the important pen in a box for
safe keeping.

RODGER (CONT'D)
That's my girl.

INT. BUNKER - BEDROOM - DAY

Kim sifts through her case, she pulls out the bag of heroin,
nothing is left, she breaks down and starts crying.

Her anger grows and she throws the case against the wall, the
contents spill out.

She crawls to the spilled contents and sifts through the
mess.

Feeling someone behind her Kim turns around, standing at the
doorway is Sally, staring at her.

KIM
What the fuck did I tell you about
knocking, you little shit.

Sally stares at her in disbelief.

KIM (CONT'D)
Get the hell out of here!

Sally turns and runs away.

Kim goes into the fetal position and starts to sob.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

The calendar hangs on the wall, a little hand with a marker puts an X through the 17th of April.

INT. BUNKER - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kim lays in bed, she looks worse then before, all the color is drained from her face and she stares at the ceiling.

Rodger walks in with a glass of water.

Sally follows with a little brown strip on a dish.

He sits beside her.

RODGER

I know how you are feeling.

KIM

I wanna die, please Rodger, is there anything left, do you have any?

RODGER

I have something for you that will help.

KIM

What is it?

Rodger produces the little brown strip and shows Kim.

RODGER

This is Suboxone, it will help with your cravings and help reduce your withdrawals. All you have to do is place it on your tongue and let it do its thing.

Kim takes the strip and examines it.

KIM

Did this help you?

RODGER

I used methadone, but this will do the same thing.

Kim takes the strip and places it on her tongue.

RODGER (CONT'D)
Now get some rest.

Rodger leans over and kisses her on the forehead.

KIM
Don't leave, I feel so cold, am I
going to die?

RODGER
I won't let anything happen to you,
I swear.

Rodger takes her hand in his, their wedding bands visible as she holds on for dear life.

Sally crawls into the bed and lays down beside her.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

Sally marks another day, 18th of April.

INT. BUNKER - AIR LOCK DOOR - DAY

Kim stands by the door, she punches random numbers on the keypad and wrenches at the door, it doesn't open.

She tries another set of numbers, still nothing.

Frustrated she violently pulls on the handle, heaving with all her might.

KIM
Fuck!

She starts to sob, her hands red from forcing them on the door.

Rodger runs up the stairs and envelops her in his arms.

She pushes off of him and storms down the stairs.

INT. BUNKER - KITCHEN - DAY

Kim props herself up against the counter, fatigued and breathing heavy.

Rodger approaches her from behind and places his arm on her shoulder.

She pulls away and faces him.

KIM
Please, I need to get out of here.

RODGER
You know if I open that door we
will never survive.

KIM
I don't care, I need to get out of
here.

Kim is hysterical.

KIM (CONT'D)
Please let me go. I wanna die. You
did this to me, it's all your
fault. If I had never met you I
would have never been addicted to
this shit. I fucking hate you!

Rodger looks wounded, his eyes wet with sorrow.

KIM (CONT'D)
I wanna die, I wanna die.

Rodger hugs her, Kim tries to free herself, he won't let go.

Tired of struggling Kim gives up and both of them sob
uncontrollably.

Sally watches, as her family falls apart.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

Sally marks the 28th of April.

INT. BUNKER - BEDROOM - DAY

Sally sits with Kim on the bed, she combs Kim's long hair.

Kim looks frail and unhealthy, her eyes are sunken and void
of emotion.

Kim turns around and faces Sally.

KIM
I love you, you know that?

Sally only stares at her.

KIM (CONT'D)
You know that right?

Sally shrugs.

KIM (CONT'D)
Say it baby, say I love you.

Sally shakes her head and leaves the room, Kim puts her head down and quietly sobs.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

Sally marks the 15th of July on the calendar.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY - LATER

Rodger sits with Sally, he reads a book titled "Furry Fred."

RODGER
Hi, my name is Furry Fred and my fur is colored red. But at night when I try to sleep, my fur shines bright from head to feet.

Rodger turns the page.

RODGER (CONT'D)
I try to sleep and its so very bright, I cannot dream with this awful light. So my mom who loves me so made me pj's that cover head to toe.

Rodger flips another page.

RODGER (CONT'D)
Now my fur does not shine at night, as I am free to dream of flight, or race cars and horses that gallop through.

KIM (O.S.)
Just so you know mom, I love you too.

Kim stands by the kitchen, she looks healthier and not as pale.

Rodger stands up.

RODGER
Hey baby, did you sleep well?

KIM
Ya, I think so, I can't remember
the last time sleep felt this good.

Rodger goes over and kisses Kim on the cheek.

RODGER
Coffee?

KIM
Yes, please.

Kim sits beside Sally.

KIM (CONT'D)
Is daddy reading you Furry Fred?

Sally shakes her head in agreement.

KIM (CONT'D)
It's your favorite right?

Sally nods.

KIM (CONT'D)
Mine too.

Rodger walks over with some coffee and another strip of
Suboxon, he takes the strip and cuts in a quarter.

He hands her the coffee and places the strip on the counter.

KIM (CONT'D)
Thanks baby.

She sips on the hot coffee and smells it in. She looks happy
and content.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

Sally marks the 22nd of October, this time she puts a heart
around it.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

Rodger wears a blindfold and Kim excitedly guides him
forward.

KIM
Okay now stop.

Kim goes around front and we hear a clicking.

KIM (CONT'D)
You may now take off your
blindfold.

Rodger nervously pulls his blindfold off.

In front of him a bunch of twinkies are arranged in a square
with a candle burning in front of him.

KIM (CONT'D)
Happy birthday baby.

Rodger looks around, he is touched and feels like the
happiest man in the world.

Kim kisses him passionately.

Rodger picks up Sally.

RODGER
Did you know about this?

Sally nods slyly.

RODGER (CONT'D)
You sneaky devil.

Rodger buries his face into Sally's belly and give her a
strawberry.

She giggles in delight.

KIM
I have a present for you.

RODGER
Is it a pool table?

KIM
Ha, funny.

Kim produces a box and hands it over to Rodger.

KIM (CONT'D)
It's from both of us.

RODGER
I wonder what it could be?

Rodger opens the box, he is floored.

He pulls out three paper cranes.

KIM

That was the first present I ever got from you. You remember?

RODGER

Ya, I remember, only the dumbest gift ever, but I knew I had to give you something, couldn't even afford a flower, so I made a paper crane for you, the only origami I knew.

KIM

Now there are three, and we can all fly away together.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

Sally crosses the 31st of December.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - NIGHT

Rodger sits on the couch, he looks nice, a bottle of wine sits on the counter.

Sally sits beside him in a nice dress, she looks very pretty.

He nervously sets everything up on the counter, making sure everything is perfect.

An array of snacks are set out with some food.

Kim enters the room.

KIM

What do you think?

Kim looks gorgeous, she is positively glowing.

She wears a tight dress which accents her figure.

She is not the same woman.

Rodger gets up and is completely lost for words.

KIM (CONT'D)

Well?

She spins to show off her figure.

RODGER

I think you should hide before my wife walks in.

Kim laughs.

Sally gets up and claps, her smile says it all.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - NIGHT - LATER

Rodger hovers over a record player, he pulls a vinal and places it on the player.

Aerosmith's "*I don't want to miss a thing*" starts to play.

Rodger looks to Kim, his eyes shine with the fire of a thousand candles.

RODGER
May I have this dance?

Kim sets her glass of wine down and gets up.

She steps into Rodger, their hands join and they start to sway.

RODGER (CONT'D)
How's the wine?

KIM
It's been so long, I almost forgot
the taste.

Sally dances with her doll, swaying, trying to copy her parents.

KIM (CONT'D)
It's going straight to my head.

RODGER
All part of the plan.

KIM
Why, Mr. Brown, are you trying to
seduce me?

RODGER
Is it working?

KIM
I'd be lying if I said no.

Rodger kisses her long and passionately, soaking up every moment.

The music abruptly stops, Rodger looks to the record player.

Sally stands beside the record player and point to the clock on the wall. Ten seconds past midnight.

RODGER
We missed the countdown.

KIM
Well, lets get this party started.

The trio dance wildly to Will Smith's "will 2k"

Kim and Rodger grab Sally's legs and arms and swing her back and forth, a huge smile is seen on her face.

Kim jumps on Rodgers back while Sally grabs his leg.

Rodger tickles Kim and Sally as they try to escape.

Kim and sally pin Rodger and tickle him, he looks like he is going to die laughing.

INT. BUNKER - COMMON AREA - DAY

April 14th is the next in line, the last day, sally doesn't cross it.

Sally looks to Rodger.

He sees how hesitant she is and goes to her.

RODGER
Last day Kiddo.

Sally shakes her head no.

RODGER (CONT'D)
Look I know how things are, and its really great, but now we get to go out there again and I promise, nothing will change, we will all be together.

Sally looks deep into his eyes, burning this promise into her head.

She grabs the felt and put's an X through the day.

INT. BUNKER - KITCHEN - DAY

The three are now ready, they have all their things and the place is tidy.

Kim looks into Rodgers eyes.

KIM
I'm so nervous.

RODGER
You have no idea.

He lets out a shuddered sigh and holds Kim's hand.

RODGER (CONT'D)
Are we ready?

KIM
Ya.

Rodger looks to Sally, she nods her head.

The three walk up the stairs.

INT. BUNKER - AIR LOCK DOOR - DAY

Rodger punches in the numbers. The door hisses and it opens up.

EXT. BUNKER - ENTRANCE - DAY

The three exit into the open area.

Standing in a circle the neighbors, the man from the TV friends and family all stand in.

Kim is in total shock.

Everyone starts to clap, signs saying "you made it" and "we love you" adorn the crowd.

Kim looks to Rodger in disbelief.

RODGER
It's the only thing I could think
of to save our family.

SALLY
(Narration)
Sometimes everything needs to end
for things to start again.

FADE OUT.