<u>HIGH DEF</u>

written by

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REVISION 582

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ZHURA 18 Tremont St, Suite 310 Boston, MA 02108 www.zhura.com FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK- DAY

Two MOVERS unload a truck. They load professionally dressed MEN and WOMEN holding briefcases onto a dolly. Movers wheel the loaded dolly into a commercial high rise.

OLIVER PLUMM (25+) gaunt, unshaven, glasses, weaves through a sidewalk of human traffic.

He peers across the street at a gas station. Four PETROL CUSTOMERS are at four separate pumps with gas nozzles in their mouths filling up.

Ahead a SMOKER lights a cigarette and collapses. Another Smoker picks up the cigarette, inhales and collapses. Another and another until a pile of bodies forms which other pedestrians simply detour around.

Oliver moves along. Further ahead a PRETTY WOMAN applies lipstick. Closer She adds eyeliner and shadow. Closer still She puts on foundation and blush.

Across the street now, Oliver catches a glimpse of a JUNKIE carrying a five foot hypodermic needle on his back. Junkie wipes Her brow.

As the Pretty Woman passes by Oliver makes eye contact briefly. Her face now covered and dripping with a spectrum of paint.

> PRETTY WOMAN (Whispers) How do I look?

OLIVER (Whispers) You look scared.

A black Mercedes screeches to a stop beside Oliver. Two GANG MEMBERS get out and aim their pointer fingers like guns toward him. They start shooting their fingers.

Over his shoulder, Oliver finds two RIVAL GANG MEMBERS pointing their fingers back shooting. He bolts out of the cross fire. A silent finger shoot out ensues.

Looking back, all four Gangsters lay dead. A POLICE OFFICER runs to the scene in a crooked, zig zag pattern. A DOCTOR kneels to a dead Gangster offering a clipboard and a pen.

Oliver picks up speed along the sidewalk. A FLYER POSTER is stapling flyers to telephone poles. The flyers have a picture of an evergreen tree on them and reads "MISSING! IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION PLEASE CALL." A distant black hearse tails Oliver.

He stops, glares at a Military Enlisting office across the street which has two doors. NEW RECRUITS file in one door while weeping WIDOWS and RELATIVES carry folded flags out of the other.

Oliver moves along.

A MOTHER sits on the sidewalk with a cardboard box. Rimming the box are eight babies. A sign on the box reads "FRESH PURE BREAD LITTER." The Mother tends to a CUSTOMER.

Oliver marches on. Passing by a shop, he stops to read a message scrolling across a TV in the window that says, "ARE YOU AFRAID ENOUGH? CALL 1-800-???-???? AND FIND OUT TODAY."

INT. PHONE BOOTH DOWNTOWN- DAY

Outside the city plays like an off key orchestra. Oliver dials a one eight hundred number on his cell phone. Places cell at his ear.

Phone dials RING!

RING!

RING!

An OPERATOR answers.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Hello?

OLIVER Uh, yeah hi, hello-

OPERATOR(V.O.) -What's your name sir?

OLIVER Yeah, it's um, Oliver, uh, uh Oliver Plumm.

OPERATOR(V.O.) Hold please.

Outside a MAN hurries by surrounded by seven PEOPLE pointing their finger's at him.

The black hearse is parked in the distance.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Mr. Plumm?

OLIVER Uh, uh, I'm here, I'm still here-

A WOMAN stands with an acoustic guitar strapped to her back stops outside. Two MEN in black suits grab her arms and drag her away.

OPERATOR(V.O.) -Good. Now, I've pulled your file up on my screen here and apparently you were spotted smiling three days ago? Can you explain that?

OLIVER Um, uh well um, are you sure?

OPERATOR(V.O.) The cameras do not lie Mr. Plumm.

OLIVER Uh, well, I um, I don't remember being happy recently um-

OPERATOR(V.O.) -Have you been watching the news?

OLIVER Of course, everyday-

OPERATOR(V.O.) -Have you been reading the newspapers we send you?

OLIVER Uh, uh, yes avidly I-

Outside across the street a DOCTOR squeezes the trigger on a caulking gun aimed at a WOMAN'S face. Silicone covers Her lip's, and chest.

OPERATOR(V.O.) -Well, you must be missing something Mr.Plumm because your numbers are extremely low.

OLIVER Well, well, there must be a mistake I mean-

OPERATOR(V.O.) -What about televised news? Uh, uh-

OPERATOR(V.O.) -Three hours a day Mr. Plumm. As you know that is the minimum requirement for all of our citizens.

OLIVER Yeah I, I know and-

OPERATOR(O.S.) -I mean, if you don't do something soon to bring your fear to an appropriate level, we are going to have to revoke your public pass.

An ORGAN VENDOR with cooler strapped to his waist hustles on the sidewalk waiving a liver in a Ziploc bag.

OLIVER I understand but-

OPERATOR(V.O.) -I mean this, coupled with your public laughter conviction last November, you are not on a dangerous path Mr. Plumm.

OLIVER Well, well what do you suggest I do I mean? I'm trying my best to be afraid but I'm just going through a really good time right now.

EXT. CEMETERY-DAY

A weeping FAMILY dressed in black are gathered around an open plot with a casket hoisted above it. Oliver observes from a distance.

> OPERATOR(V.O.) If I was you I would start by attending some funerals, maybe visit the morgue.

> > OLIVER(V.O.)

Okay.

The black hearse parks in the parking lot.

A WIDOW steps towards the casket.

WIDOW

He was a model citizen. His fear was second to none. Everyday he grew more and more afraid. It's a shame he couldn't be here today, he would have been terrified.

INT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT- DAY

A clinical dwelling. Empty white walls, stainless steel appliances, black rubber baseboards. Oliver walks into the...

BEDROOM

He examines the closed closet door. He steps toward it slowly. Reaches for the handle. Grabs it and jerks the closet door open. ALEX (25+) jumps out wielding large knife.

ALEX

Die!

Oliver, feet planted, begins to laugh. Alex stops, lowers the knife.

ALEX Shh. What are you crazy?

OLIVER I'm sorry but, this isn't going to work. I don't know what's wrong with me Alex but-

Alex sneers at Oliver.

ALEX -This can't be funny Oliver.

Oliver puts a frown on.

OLIVER I know. What am I going to do?

Oliver moves toward a single person booth in the corner. He slides the door open and steps into the booth. A red ambient light turns on. A shoulder apparatus lowers onto him. A metal helmet lowers onto his head.

A COMPUTER VOICE recites from a speaker in the booth.

COMPUTER VOICE Analyzing. Fear volume for Oliver Plumm. You are fifteen percent below the acceptable minimum fear level. Status. Oliver Plumm is (MORE) COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D) classified as remotely happy. You have twenty three hours remaining on your public pass. Eventually, everyone will die. Be afraid.

The red light shuts off. The shoulder apparatus and helmet retract back into the booth ceiling. Oliver steps out.

ALEX You better figure something out.

INT. BANK- DAY

Oliver stands across the counter from a TELLER.

TELLER

It looks like your last payment was more then the minimum. That's probably part of your problem.

OLIVER I had some extra money this cheque-

TELLER -Shhh! Don't talk like that in here. Listen if you want the collection calls to keep coming in you have got to stop paying your bills with such diligence.

OLIVER You're right.

TELLER

If you skip one or two payments in a row we can send you a letter of intent. That should help raise your levels.

OLIVER

Right.

The Teller leans in close.

TELLER

(Whispers) Is this a robbery?

OLIVER What? No, what-?

The Teller sticks Her arms up.

TELLER -He's got a gun! (Whispers) Go with it.

BANK CLIENTS flatten out on the floor. OTHER TELLERS duck behind the counter. The Teller starts filling a bag with money.

TELLER Just take it, take it all. Just don't shoot.

OLIVER (Whispers) What are you doing? I don't want to rob you! What are you doing-?

She throws the bag of money at him. He catches it stumbling backwards.

TELLER -The cops are on their way you better run mister.

OLIVER I, I, I, shit!

EXT. BANK-DAY

Parked out front is the black hearse. Oliver bursts out of the bank with the money bag, the doors knock over two Men in black suits. He starts running down the busy sidewalk.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK-NIGHT

The black hearse turns over and tails him.

Oliver looks over his shoulder at the hearse. He looks forward. Collides with a BUILDER. They both crash into a six foot house of cards knocking it to pieces.

OLIVER

Sorry.

Oliver gets to his feet, grabs the money bag and starts running. The builder jumps up shaking his fist.

BUILDER That's exactly what I was afraid of! INT. JONI BELL'S APARTMENT-DAY

In her...

BEDROOM

The walls tacked full with collection notices in the shape of a happy face. A small TV has a hammer lodged in the screen.

JONI BELL(25+), jet black and red hair, slides an acoustic guitar's strap over her shoulder. She races to the...

LIVINGROOM

The words "YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR" are spray painted across a wall in different colors. She searches the room finding a set of keys. A large TV is a converted fish tank.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK-DAY

A MAN hurries past with seven PEOPLE pointing their fingers at him. JONI steps out of her apartment building. Guitar on her back she starts walking.

She stops beside a closed phone booth and looks over her shoulder. The black hearse is creeping forward in the distance. Oliver talks on his cell in the phone booth.

Two AGENTS OF FEAR grab her by the arms and drag her away towards the black hearse. She screams in silence.

AGENT 1

(Whispers) That's right Joni, show your fear to the public. Show them all just how scared you really are.

She closes her mouth and smiles. Agent 2 covers her mouth with his gloved hand.

INT. BLACK HEARSE-DAY

In the back seat Joni is sandwiched between the two Agents.

She takes a pen and paper out of her pocket, writes "I'm never afraid." She shows it to the Agents.

AGENT 1 You will be Ms. Bell. See, you've been selected for endorphin removal. (Beat)Come on now, show us a big crocodile tear. For old times.

She writes again. Holds it for them. It reads "Hahahahaha."

AGENT 1 I bet it stings doesn't it Joni? Having to write everything down all the time.

AGENT 2 Has she always been mute?

AGENT 1 Yes. The only person to ever resist the fear, and she can't even say it. Pity.

The hearse starts to move.

AGENT 2 So, if she can't talk then what's the threat?

Joni smiles.

AGENT 1 That. It's contagious, avert your eyes.

Agent 1 duct tapes Joni's mouth.

EXT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT- DAY

The black hearse stops outside. A HOMELESS person strums a guitar without strings silently.

INT. BLACK HEARSE- DAY

Joni still between the Agents.

AGENT 2 What's here?

AGENT 1 Write down his apartment number Joni.

She writes, "Whose?"

AGENT 2

Yeah whose?

AGENT 1 The man you've infected with your lunacy. A Mr. Oliver Plumm?

Agent 1 holds up the photograph of Oliver smiling under a traffic camera.

Joni smiles and writes "I don't know him. It wasn't me this

time. He found that on his own."

AGENT 1 You may think that you can protect your little cronies with your lies but you can't. Everyone submits to the fear.

Outside Oliver exits his building. Joni notices Oliver and invites the Agents to read as she writes," Okay, I do know him. Oliver that is."

She looks up, Oliver is still standing out front.

Joni adds, "We met a few years ago and I started trying to-" She checks on Oliver.

> AGENT 1 We don't care how you met, what's his apartment number?

Oliver is gone. She writes, "Oh wait did you say Oliver Plumm? I only know an Oliver Peach."

AGENT 2 Who's Oliver Peach?

Agent 1 dead-pans Agent 2.

AGENT 1 There is no Oliver Peach you idiot.

Agent one clutches Joni's face.

AGENT 1 I'm thinking of removing your eyes. What are you thinking of Ms.Bell?

EXT. BANK-DAY

The black hearse parks out front of the bank.

INT. BLACK HEARSE- DAY

AGENT 1 Lucky we have eyes everywhere in this city. We'll be right back with your friend. Sit tight and don't say a word.

The Agents exit the vehicle.

EXT. BANK- DAY

The Agents approach the bank doors. Crash! the doors burst open knocking the agents to the ground.

INT. BLACK HEARSE- DAY

The DRIVER turns His head. He smiles at Joni.

DRIVER There are others you know? Like us.

She smiles back suprised.

EXT. BANK- DAY

Oliver bursts out of the bank stepping over the fallen Agents with the money bag. He looks at the hearse for a second and then runs away.

The hearse turns over and follows Oliver.

The two Agents gather themselves and give chase.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK- DAY

Oliver glances back at the hearse and the Agents tailing him. He turns back around and collides with a Builder into a six foot house of cards.

He gets up with the money bag and continues running.

OLIVER

Sorry.

The builder stands shaking his fist.

BUILDER That's exactly what I was afraid of!

The hearse drives by, Joni smiles out the window holding a sign she wrote that reads, "DON'T BE SCARED! THE FEAR IS POISONOUS!"

The Builder smirks.

Oliver bolts along the sidewalk dodging human traffic.

He passes by a pet store. In the window a sign says, "NEW DOG CHOW MADE WITH 100% REAL STEVEN."

Oliver looks back again, the Agents are closing in.

OLIVER I'm afraid! I'm Afraid! I'm Afraid!

AGENT 1 Stop! There's nowhere to go Oliver!

Up Ahead Two other AGENTS appear from around a corner. Oliver stops.

The four agents walk towards him slowly. He backs into a store front window and stops.

AGENT 1 We know it's not your fault Mr.Plumm. We know about Joni Bell.

OLIVER I'm afraid, afraid okay? I'm terrified I promise. I'm sick with fear I swear.

The Agents close the gap a bit more.

The Black hearse stops beside the scene. Joni gazes at Oliver from the open rear window holding her sign up.

OLIVER

Who's that?

The Agents look at Joni.

AGENT 1 Put that away Joni! Now!

Agent 1 looks back at Oliver.

AGENT 1 Wait a minute, did you say who's that? But that's impossible. She's the one who taught you how to smile.

OLIVER What are you talking about?

AGENT 1 Stop lying! Tell us who taught you. Say her name Oliver.

OLIVER Uh, uh, nobody taught me, It just felt, rightAGENT 1 -Don't lie to me! Who taught you?

The Driver rolls his window down and smiles at Oliver. Oliver smiles back.

> AGENT 1 Stop it! All of you.

AGENT 2 What's going on sir?

CITIZENS are stopped in every direction watching the stand off.

A WOMAN'S mouth twitches awkwardly into a smile. A CHILD smiles. A MAN. And another person and another until everyone in sight is smiling except the Agents Of Fear.

AGENT 2

Sir?

AGENT 1 It's mutiny. She's infected the whole area. Call the fun police immediately.

Oliver steps forward off the wall.

AGENT 2 He's off the wall.

AGENT 1 They all are. Make the call.

OLIVER I don't think so.

AGENT 1

What do think you're doing Mr.Plumm. You submit to the fear immediately-

OLIVER

I've been afraid of you my whole life. Everyone has. How scared do you want us to be exactly. Look around you.

Smiling in the crowd are the Pretty Woman in paint, the Silicone Woman, the Builder, the Mother, the Crooked Cop, Alex, the Flyer Poster. OLIVER Look at the mess this fear has made of us. What's the point?

AGENT 1

The point? The point is order. Can you imagine a world where people are smiling and laughing anywhere they please? It would be utter chaos I assure you. No. People need fear Oliver. You need the fear to survive.

OLIVER I think I'd rather die smiling.

Joni smiles wide and opens her door. Oliver slowly steps through the circle of Agents toward the hearse.

OLIVER

Excuse me.

Agent 2 is thumbing through an Agents Of Fear Training Handbook.

AGENT 2 Um, sir this isn't in the handbook.

Oliver stops a few feet away from Joni.

OLIVER

Hi. I'm Oliver.

Joni shakes her head "no" and touches her throat.

AGENT 1 Do you know how many people die everyday Oliver? How many children? What about terrorism. Surely you are still afraid of the terrorists. Do you really want to be happy for the rest of your life?

OLIVER No. Just for some of it.

Joni shuffles deeper into the hearse making a space for Oliver. Oliver walks towards the hearse.

Agent 2 starts to smile. Agent 3 and 4 as well.

AGENT 1 Stop smiling you idiots! All of you.

Oliver gets in the car and closes the door.

INT. BLACK HEARSE- DAY

Oliver sits next to Joni on the back seat. They stare at each other.

OLIVER As I was saying. Hi, my name's Oliver.

She leans in for a kiss. He leans in.

A Computer Voice comes from a dashboard speaker.

COMPUTER VOICE Fear Level is approaching maximum capacity-

Smash! The Driver smashes the dash speaker to pieces.

DRIVER

Sorry.

Oliver and Joni smile and then kiss.

JONI (Whispers) My names Joni Bell.

Oliver grins.

THE END

FADE OUT: