

NEW YEAR'S EVE

By

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FADE IN:

INT. WILL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

A hairy hand drags a razor across a stubbly neck.

A droplet of blood falls... slowly... and crashes into the porcelain basin.

WILL STEWART, late 20s, tall and spindly with tufts of thin dark hair, bores his narrow eyes into his reflection. He scoops a handful of water to his face and brushes the trail of blood from his neck.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY (TEN HOURS EARLIER)

Will, in a dark overcoat, walks briskly alongside TY, a smooth-shaven African-American in his early 20's wearing a brown overcoat, as they dodge heavy pedestrian traffic.

TY

Man, this is bullshit. Why the old man holding this meeting on New Year's Eve day?

WILL

Because we have to be ready to move on this client by next week.

TY

Yeah, move-schmoove, I got plans. Yo, you down for tonight, right?

WILL

Ah, I don't know, I -

TY

C'mon, y'all! I'm tired of making excuses for your skinny white ass.

WILL

Guess I'm just a private person, Ty. Parties are not my thing.

TY

Yeah, what is your thing then?

Will purses his lips and thoughtfully scratches his chin.

WILL

I'm not good at meeting people. But I have plans with someone.

TY

You playin'? Not that chick from online?

Will nods yes.

TY (CONT'D)

Yo man, I told you, you can't be messing with that shit. What if the bitch is crazy?

Will shrugs his shoulders.

TY (CONT'D)

Well you just gonna miss all the happenin' then. Yo, bring her by afterwards? It's on third and fourteenth.

Will gives a slight chuckle.

WILL

I'll see how it goes.

INT. JENNY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

A makeup case that looks like it was borrowed from Ringling Brothers sits on the edge of the tub.

JENNY DOYLE, early 30s, applies liner under her sparkling green eyes. The thick, white bathrobe struggles to hide her ample bosom and caboose.

She tosses her wet, sandy blond hair back. She smiles as she reaches for the lipstick.

I./E. WILL'S CAR - NIGHT

Will sits parked outside a Brooklyn brownstone. Jenny emerges. She navigates the stairs carefully in her high heels. Her short black jacket does not hide her tight red dress, which reveals more curves than bulges.

Jenny sticks her head through the open passenger side window.

JENNY
Will? I'm Jenny.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - NIGHT

A black awning, lit from above, says ELIO'S. The restaurant glass, nearly opaque, allows shadows to move behind it.

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Will, in a sport coat and open-collared shirt, sits across from Jenny at a table near the kitchen.

JENNY
So why this place?

WILL
It's close by. I hate long drives. And I like to be close to my apartment.

JENNY
And why is that?

WILL
Well, home is a safe place, no?

Jenny reaches into her purse for a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. She stares Will straight in the eyes.

JENNY
Depends on whose home it is.

Jenny lights up and takes a long drag, exhaling toward the wall. The WAITER, early 20s with beach-boy good looks and wall to wall muscles, sets down two menus.

WAITER
Good evening, sir, madam. Can I start either of you off with a cocktail?

Jenny defers to Will. He stares at the menu.

WILL
Guess I'll have... a Bass Ale?

WAITER
Excellent sir. And for you madam?

Jenny takes a drag and exhales through her nose.

JENNY
Cutty and water.

WAITER
I'm sorry, there's no smoking
anywhere in the restaurant.

Jenny looks at Will, then stares at the waiter for what
feels like an hour...

She gives the waiter a playful head nod and a half smile.

JENNY
Just let me finish this one if no
one complains, okay hon?

The waiter turns to leave. He flashes Jenny a smile over his
left shoulder. Jenny catches his glance, then looks down at
the menu.

JENNY (CONT'D)
So, what looks good.

WILL
Besides you?

Will laughs nervously, covering his embarrassment.

WILL (CONT'D)
Sorry. I'm not really good in
social situations. That seemed like
the cool guy thing to say.

Jenny purses her lips and stares straight at Will. She blows
smoke through her smile.

JENNY
No... that was cute.

Will tries to return the smile, but ends up clearing his
throat and fumbling with his menu. He gets up quickly.

WILL
Will you excuse me for a minute?

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Will, in full panic, splashes water on his face. He stares
at his wet face in the mirror.

WILL
 (whispering)
 C'mon, c'mon... stay in
 control. She's only a girl. Only a
 girl. Control...

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A light staff of plain-clothes detectives mill about. A
 PHONE RINGS in the background.

DETECTIVE KEITH CROWDER (mid 30's) sits, legs akimbo,
 staring into a file. He has a swimmer's build and he rocks
 the Caesar haircut and the shrimp-colored silk shirt.

DETECTIVE SHERRY LOPEZ (late 20s) approaches. A brunette
 who's streaked blond, dressed in a tight gray skirt and pale
 blue blouse - she's a complete knockout.

LOPEZ
 Not again, Crowder. You've been at
 that file since last January.

Crowder taps the file with his fingers.

CROWDER
 Something's off, Lopez.

LOPEZ
 We've been over this, man.

CROWDER
 Two unsolved homicides. Gunshot
 victims, same rounds, likely the
 same gun, almost the same time of
 night, a mile and half apart. On
 consecutive New Year's Eves.

LOPEZ
 Brooklyn's a dangerous place,
 detective.

Lopez leans in to take a look at the file. Crowder's vantage
 point to the inside of her blouse improves. She turns,
 smiles at him and stands back upright.

LOPEZ (CONT'D)
 Coincidence. Two murders is not a
 pattern.

Crowder tosses the file on his desk and rubs his face with
 his hands.

CROWDER
But three is.

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Will is back. Jenny takes a long draw from her Cutty through a thin straw, and a long drag off the cigarette. She ashes in the butter dish and exhales through her nose.

JENNY
You still nervous? I'm only a girl.
I won't bite.

WILL
Sorry. I don't get out much.

Will drinks the Bass Ale from the bottle.

JENNY
Me either. Guess that's why we met
online, huh?

WILL
I don't see it.

JENNY
See what?

WILL
Look at you. Why would you have to
meet a guy in a chat room?

Jenny takes another drag and exhales out the side of her mouth.

JENNY
I could say the same thing about
you. You're cute enough.

Jenny finishes her drink with a flourish.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Look, lots of people meet online
for lots of different reasons.
Doesn't mean they're undateable.

WILL
Can I ask what your reason is?

Jenny puts her cigarette out and reaches for another. She lights up and stares straight at Will.

JENNY

You first.

Will squirms a bit in his chair. He clumsily grabs the Bass and takes a long swig.

WILL

What happened to small talk?

JENNY

Honey, there ain't any such thing.
Least with me, anyway.

The waiter approaches the table, pad in hand. Jenny hides the new cigarette between her and the wall.

WAITER

Are you ready to order?

JENNY

I still need a few minutes.

Will nods and moves the empty bottle towards the waiter.

WILL

Another Bass please, and... another
Cutty?

Jenny nods, then looks sideways up at the waiter.

WAITER

Very good.

Jenny returns her cigarette to the table.

JENNY

So, Will, does the fact that you
don't date much mean you're a
psychopath?

Will jumps a bit in his seat, his eyes big as saucers.

WILL

Why would you say a thing like
that?

Jenny takes a drag, then laughs the smoke out her mouth.

JENNY

Jesus, relax. It's a joke. Just
wondering what this big, dark
secret is that makes you hate
meeting people.

WILL
It's not dark.

The waiter sets down the Cutty and the Bass Ale. Jenny tilts her glass toward Will, then drinks.

JENNY
Isn't it?

WILL
Can't a guy just be shy?

JENNY
It's okay, Will. We all have them.

Will pours the Bass into a glass this time.

WILL
Have what?

JENNY
Secrets.

WILL
Even you?

Jenny takes a long, satisfying drag, then smashes out the cigarette in the butter dish. Smoke pours out along with her answer.

JENNY
Especially me.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Crowder sits on his desk, the file in hand. Lopez is in his chair.

CROWDER
First victim. No next of kin. Body went unclaimed in the morgue until buried at Potter's Field.

LOPEZ
Yeah, like a lot of murders in this borough, Crowder.

CROWDER
Shot at close range.

LOPEZ

Okay, what? The perp knew there'd
be no one to interview?

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The waiter stands by the table, pen to pad.

JENNY

I'll have the mixed greens, and the
angel hair in garlic and oil.

WAITER

Sir?

WILL

Um, the tomato soup, and the veal
marsala, please.

WAITER

Very good. Another round as well?

Jenny and Will both nod. The waiter exits.

WILL

So how come you're not spending New
Year's with friends or family?

JENNY

I don't have any family, Will. That
subject is off limits.

Will shifts in his seat, slightly intimidated. He takes an
unusually large gulp of Bass, which steadies him a bit.

WILL

I'm sorry to hear that.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Crowder paces with the file. Lopez remains seated.

CROWDER

Victim number two. Moved here from
out of town. Had a sibling in a
foster home - down's syndrome.
Mother deceased, father
institutionalized with Alzheimer's.

LOPEZ
Jesus Christ! Poor kid.

CROWDER
Also shot at close range. See
anything here?

LOPEZ
Both had sad stories. Close range.
If they're related, the perp knew
both victims well enough to get
close.

CROWDER
And maybe the perp knew the sad
stories too.

LOPEZ
From where?

CROWDER
Internet?

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

WILL
I can't believe I'm even
considering telling you this.

JENNY
Why is that, Will?

WILL
This is extremely personal. I
hardly know you.

Jenny sips at the cutty daintily.

JENNY
You know me, Will. And I know you.
We're alike. You just don't know it
yet.

WILL
No one knows me.

JENNY
Try me.

Will reaches for his glass and polishes off the Bass. He
wipes his chin with the back of his hand.

WILL
This is hard for me.

JENNY
Take your time, honey.

Will adjusts himself in the chair. He clears his throat.

WILL
I seem to have a fear of women...
because...

Jenny leans forward, glass in hand, mouth on straw.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Crowder is seated. Lopez sits on the edge of his desk.

LOPEZ
So what do you want to do? Throw a
dragnet around the entire city? Hit
the database until midnight? If
this shit's gonna go down, Crowder,
it's too late to stop it.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)
Lopez! Get him outta here. His
shift ended two hours ago.

LOPEZ
On it, cap!
(to Crowder)
C'mon Keith, you got a 6:00 a.m.
tomorrow.

CROWDER
Yeah. What am I supposed to do
until then, go to some lame party
or a crowded bar?

Lopez leans in and smiles. She touches him on the shoulder.

LOPEZ
You could take me to Rockaway and
fuck me in the lifeguard chair.

Crowder looks down with a Cheshire Cat grin.

CROWDER
Yeah, that was a good time.

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Will stares straight at the table.

WILL

When I was eleven I had this
babysitter. God, she was cute! I
would love to snuggle up to her on
the couch while we watched movies.
I knew I was probably a bit old for
that, but...

JENNY

How old were you, Will?

WILL

Eleven.

JENNY

And how old was... ?

WILL

Candy. She was nineteen.

JENNY

What happened, Will? Tell me.

Will stares at his empty beer glass. He picks it up and
looks around.

Jenny waves in the direction of the waiter. Will returns his
eyes to the table.

WILL

She... did things to me.

JENNY

What kind of things, Will?

WILL

You know... things.

JENNY

You were raped, Will.

Will's eyes shoot forward at Jenny. She returns a look
that's almost sympathetic.

WILL

Don't say it like that!

JENNY

Will, guys can be raped, too.

The waiter places two fresh drinks down along with the soup and salad, then exits.

Jenny reaches for the Cutty. She drains a quarter of it through the straw, then picks up her fork and goes to work on the salad.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Course some eleven-year-olds would consider that a helluva Friday night.

Will's face screws into a knot.

WILL

Are you making fun of me?

Jenny puts the fork down and looks up from her plate. She manages a smile.

JENNY

Nah. I'm sorry. I'm just surprised it still bothers you so much.

WILL

How would you feel if someone took your... innocence... like that?

Jenny's smile fades. She reaches into her bag for the pack of cigarettes, then stares straight into Will's eyes.

JENNY

Honey, my innocence has been gone a long time.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Crowder and Lopez stand near the elevator.

LOPEZ

We gotta swing by my place so I can pick up a few things.

CROWDER

We'll take your car, then.

The elevator doors open. DETECTIVE REILLY, early 50s with a watermelon-sized belly, gets off. He walks past as Crowder and Lopez get on.

REILLY
Don't break him, Lopez.

LOPEZ
Fuck you, Reilly.

The doors close.

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Both plates of food are almost empty.

Jenny folds her hands and stares intently at Will.

JENNY
My father was a cop. A cop who
drank. And a cop who had a habit of
leaving his gun lying around.

Will starts as if to say something, but Jenny holds up her hand to him.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Let me finish. I've never told this
to anyone before. So I was thirteen
and my brother was ten...

Jenny reaches into her bag and produces a wad of tissue.

JENNY (CONT'D)
It was New Year's Eve. And my
father, drunk as usual, was
upstairs with my mom. They were
getting ready for a party. The
babysitter hadn't arrived yet.
Guess they thought I was too
immature to take care of my
brother, huh?

Will feels the intensity of Jenny's stare. He realizes his gaze is just as intent, and turns to look away.

JENNY (CONT'D)
So my brother and I - Danny, that's
my brother's name - we were in the
kitchen, and we hear them arguing.
Nothing new, you know? 'Cept my
brother thinks he's getting older.
He thinks he should be protecting
my mom. And me.

WILL

What happened to you, Jenny?

Jenny touches the tissue to the corner of her eye. No tears yet.

JENNY

So Danny sees the pistol in the holster. Hanging on the back of the kitchen chair. So he decides to play, I don't know, cobs and robbers, or cowboys and Indians. He's still a kid, right?

Jenny blows her nose with the tissue.

JENNY (CONT'D)

So Danny decides my mom is in trouble, and he's going to save her... He grabs the gun from the holster...

Jenny reaches for more tissues and brings them to her eyes.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I swear, Will, it was an accident!

Will's eyes plead for Jenny to continue. She dabs at real tears this time.

JENNY (CONT'D)

So I grab Danny by the arm to stop him. I spin him around and try to get the gun from him... oh my God, my sweet little baby!

Jenny breaks into choking sobs. Will's face is frozen mix of resolve and sympathy. He reaches forward to pat Jenny's hand.

Jenny composes herself a bit. Will retracts his hand.

Jenny throws the tissues into the butter dish. She takes a sip from her Cutty.

JENNY (CONT'D)

So that's why I hate New Year's Eve, Will.

WILL

Why did you tell me that?

JENNY

Because you told me your secret. I told you we all have secrets.

Will struggles to maintain control of his emotions. His expression vacillates between concern and apathy. Finally his eyes bore into Jenny with a steely gaze.

WILL

I'm not sure I believe you.

JENNY

What?

WILL

Why are you here then? If you hate New Year's Eve so much.

Jenny looks at Will quizzically, her mouth open.

JENNY

I do. I guess I thought it was time... Honestly, Will. Why would I make something like that up about my baby brother of all things?

Will stares down while he twirls his fork.

WILL

If it's true, then I'm sorry. But you know what I think? I think you wanted to tell me a sadder story than mine.

Jenny reaches for her purse and puts it on her lap.

JENNY

Now why would I want to do that, Will?

WILL

I'm not sure.

Will looks up and smiles, suddenly confident.

WILL (CONT'D)

Maybe you wanted me to feel sorry for you. Or to make me like you.

Jenny brings her elbows close together on the table and smiles over both fists.

JENNY

I'm not sure if I like you yet,
either. I may have just trusted
you. But like? Jury's still out.

EXT. ROCKAWAY BEACH - NIGHT

The full moon acts as a spotlight as the surf pounds the sand.

LIFEGUARD CHAIR

Lopez, a thick wool blanket draped over her body, straddles a seated Crowder. She gyrates on his lap while he cups her ass through the blanket. Lopez pants, her breath hitting the icy air in smoky rings.

Crowder suddenly seems distracted. He looks away. Lopez stops bouncing and takes his face in her hands, turning his gaze toward her.

LOPEZ

What?

CROWDER

I can't get this out of my head.

LOPEZ

I gotta tell you Crowder, this does wonders for my ego.

CROWDER

Sher, listen to me. Why a snub nose .38?

LOPEZ

Off duty-cop? Security guard?

Crowder shakes his head no.

LOPEZ (CONT'D)

Okay. Light weight. Limited accuracy from a distance.

CROWDER

But we have close range victims here.

LOPEZ

Right... Easy to conceal?

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Will stands near the restroom doors. He surveys the restaurant, nervously tapping his foot. He checks his watch.

EXT. ROCKAWAY BEACH - LIFEGUARD CHAIR - NIGHT

Lopez, wrapped in the blanket, sits beside a fully-clothed Crowder. His leather jacket is draped over the seat ledge.

CROWDER

Fits easily in a purse.

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - WOMEN'S RESTROOM - NIGHT

Jenny reaches into her purse and produces her lipstick. She stares into the mirror and applies a smooth, thin sheen. She smacks her lips in approval.

Jenny checks each stall for patrons. She returns to the sink and rests her purse on it. She returns the lipstick to her purse... and pulls a snub nose .38 to the top.

EXT. ROCKAWAY BEACH - LIFEGUARD CHAIR - NIGHT

Lopez snuggles up against Crowder's arm.

LOPEZ

Both victims were male. It could fit. We can run gun permits on addresses near the shoots.

CROWDER

And cross reference them with internet profiles.

LOPEZ

Sounds like a plan.

Lopez looks up at Crowder with a "do me" smile.

LOPEZ (CONT'D)

This mean we're finished here?

Crowder returns the smile and tussles Lopez's hair.

CROWDER

Aren't you interested in fighting crime, detective?

INT. ELIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jenny emerges from the women's room and taps Will on the shoulder. He turns with a start.

JENNY
You okay, honey?

WILL
Oh. Yeah, I was just thinking. You probably want me to take you home.

Jenny smiles. She clutches her purse to her stomach.

JENNY
Nah. If that's okay?

Will smiles, as if he's surprised by his good fortune.

WILL
Sure. There's a party on third and fourteenth in the city.

JENNY
Great. Go pull the car around? I think I forgot something.

Will walks past the tables. He waves to the waiter as he passes.

Jenny watches Will exit. She heads slowly past the tables. The waiter grabs her arm.

WAITER
So, you like that guy or what?

JENNY
What's it your business?

WAITER
I thought we shared a moment back there, that's all.

Jenny bites her lip and smiles. She checks the beach bod up and down.

JENNY
No, no - you'll do. You'll do just fine.

WAITER
What about the stiff?

Jenny looks toward the door. She can see Will's headlights flash across the street as he reaches for the door handle.

JENNY

I don't think we'll be together
much longer.

WAITER

Come and look me up, then.

JENNY

I think I just may do that.

Jenny drags her hand down across the waiter's chest, then walks past him.

Jenny gets to the restaurant door and stops. She undoes the clasp on her purse and carries it in front of her. She reaches for the door.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(singing)

"Should auuuuld acquaintance be
forgot..."

FADE OUT.