

WHITE KNIGHT BLACK BISHOP

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FADE IN:

CHICAGO

EXT. INNER CITY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

We hear a SCHOOL BELL.

Swarms of HIGH SCHOOL KIDS exit the school grounds via the school's picturesque grand facade.

INT. STAFF ROOM - AFTERNOON

15 minutes later -

ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE SCHOOL sit or stand as school principal JOHN BRIDGES (61), large, African American, bow tie, carefully addresses his colleagues.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES

As you know some months back, all the male staff members - including the maintenance team and grounds-keepers - were subject to a DNA test. Reluctantly, all of us gave one.

There's not a staff member who hasn't got his attention.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES (CONT'D)

Let's not forget that three young girls were raped and murdered on these school grounds, forcing drastic measures from the police. That said, I can now inform you that the DNA found on the victims and the crime scene does not match any of the staff.

A huge smile breaks out across John Bridges' face as clapping of hands changes the sombre mood.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES (CONT'D)

Listen up! This isn't a time to celebrate.

There's a pause.

John Bridges places his reading glasses on and reads his notes on a table beside him. He steps forward.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES (CONT'D)

This is a good time to remind you about the upcoming staff costume party. It's on Friday week, so please get your costumes ready.

(MORE)

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES (CONT'D)

For those of you who were wondering
- which won't be many. My wife and
I are going as Spartan soldiers -
swords included.

We hear chuckles from the audience.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES (CONT'D)

Moving on... Sidney Bishop. Can you
please stand up?

In the middle of the crowd we see SIDNEY BISHOP reluctantly
climb to his feet. He's a 54 year old African American - very
conservative - borderline nerd, who has a heart of gold
tucked away in his 6'2 frame. He reminds you of "Sidney
Portier" in "To Sir With Love".

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES (CONT'D)

Sidney! Sidney! Sidney!

SIDNEY

What can I do for you, John? I must
say - I feel like I've been sent to
the principal's office.

The crowd chuckles as the comment is quite funny for Sidney.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES

Sidney visited my office last week
to advise me of his upcoming trip
to L.A. I was shocked.

Sidney feels uncomfortable with the attention.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES (CONT'D)

I asked him - Is it a funeral? And
he said -

SIDNEY

No.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES

I asked him - Is it a holiday? And
he said -

SIDNEY

No.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES

I asked him - Are you about to star
in the next James Bond movie? And
he said -

SIDNEY

No.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES

So why was my history teacher, whom I've known for 20 years, going to L.A? And he said -

SIDNEY

Um - Well - I must say nobody's more surprised than me about this. I bought a ticket in the national competition and, um - I was lucky enough to win a million dollars.

The crowd flick to overwhelming envious excitement with colleagues close by shaking his hand and patting him on the back.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES

Sidney! You don't have to answer this question now, but will you be back?

SIDNEY

Yes. I'll be back. I'm a simple family man. I love the school, I love Chicago and I love being a history teacher.

PRINCIPAL BRIDGES

On that note - that's something we can celebrate.

Principal Bridges holds up two bottles of cheap champagne.

SWAMP VALLEY, FLORIDA

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Randomly parked cars, including several pick-ups, sit outside a large old farm shed, located behind a beautiful homestead on a farmer's spacious property. Under a full moon, a muffled voice can be heard coming from the shed.

INT. LARGE FARM SHED - NIGHT

Ku Klux Klan paraphernalia hangs from old, dusty, timber rafters, with white candles burning brightly, revealing a crowd of around thirty - mostly men. They're randomly sitting in rows of half empty plastic white chairs, facing a makeshift stage made of hay bales.

Local farmer, JIM GREEN (63), wears a Ku Klux Klan gown and a 'Pope-like' hat, as he stands on stage passionately addressing his followers.

JIM GREEN

...Our small community continues to be under siege by these colored animals, especially with our governments letting us down. White power needs to show strength in our community. We can't afford to fall asleep at the wheel. At stake are our schools, our churches, and our livelihoods. Make no mistake - Satan has given us this problem. It's up to us and our almighty God, to remove them from our community.....

Jim Green catches a yawn from the corner of his eye - he turns and faces overweight, STANLEY KNIGHT (35). He has a goatee hanging from his rough face - a shaved head and tattoos on his neck, arms and even fingers. He looks like he belongs in the Hell's Angels, but is not without his charms.

JIM GREEN (CONT'D)

Am I boring you, Mr. Knight?

STANLEY

(sitting up straight)

Sorry, Jim - too many beers last night. Keep rolling.

JIM GREEN

Stanley Knight, for the sake of God, go home and get to bed. You need your rest.

STANLEY

I'll be fine, Jim. I'm wide awake. Please - keep going.

JIM GREEN

(Turning to the crowd)

For those of you who don't know - our local gas station worker, Stanley Knight - entered a national competition some months back. Well, two days ago, my friends - Stanley just happened to win a share in the competition. In other words, he's flying to Los Angeles tomorrow to pick up a million bucks.

The crowd turn to Stanley and give him their best wishes.

STANLEY

(sarcastically)

Thank you, Jim. So glad you told everyone. Thank you.

JIM GREEN

Relax, Stanley. Nobody's gonna ask you for a hand out.

Stanley reluctantly shakes hands with the OTHER FOLKS. Some of them mockingly hold their hands out.

TEN MINUTES LATER

INT. JIM GREEN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stanley sits across an old wooden table from Jim Green, drinking coffee. Jim takes a mouthful, before talking.

JIM GREEN

I don't know, Stanley. Numbers in the Klan seem to be dropping every year. The way it's going, we'll be down to less than fifty by the end of next year. What has happened to our community? Where is the fight? Sometimes I feel like the war is already over and we lost. It won't be long before I'm up on stage talking to myself.

STANLEY

Come on, Jim. Member numbers have dropped because the loggers left ten years ago.

JIM GREEN

That may be true but I don't think people care anymore. Let's face it! There must have been less than 30 locals tonight. I remember when you were a teenager and we used to have gatherings 500 strong. We were a powerful organization in this community. When we spoke, people listened. People gave us total respect. Where has that respect gone?

STANLEY

Unfortunately, Jim, the world has changed. You can't scratch your ass without some asshole making a video of it. And look at the kids today - all brain-washed by that social media bullshit.

JIM GREEN

Yes. Times have changed. Who said progress was good?

(MORE)

JIM GREEN (CONT'D)

Twenty-five years ago, the Klan was at the top of it's game. We were indestructible. Looking back, I guess we took it for granted.

STANLEY

Those were good times. Remember the bonfires we used to have?

JIM GREEN

What about the fireworks?

STANLEY

What about the year Ted and Billy drove through the bonfire?

JIM GREEN

(Laughing)
You mean when Ted's pick-up caught on fire!

STANLEY

(Laughing)
Remember them jumping out, yelling, "We're on fire! We're on fire!"

JIM GREEN

Talk about stating the obvious. How are we ever going to bring those days back?

Stanley swallows the last of his coffee and climbs out of his chair.

STANLEY

I'd better go. Thanks for the coffee, Jim.

Jim Green climbs up and shakes his hand. He has something on his mind.

JIM GREEN

It's a pleasure, Stanley. You know you're always welcome at my place.

STANLEY

I know. Well, I'll go home, rest up and get ready for tomorrow's flight. Give my regards to the ball and chain.

Jim Green grabs Stanley's arm and stops him from leaving.

JIM GREEN

Listen to me, Stanley. Los Angeles is the home of the Devil.

(MORE)

JIM GREEN (CONT'D)

Watch your back, and be very, very careful of those spicks and niggers. You understand me?

STANLEY

Jim, I'll say this - Los Angeles better roll out the red carpet, 'cause ole Stanley Knight is on his way.

LOS ANGELES

INT. OLD SMALL SECOND-HAND BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON

Sidney walks slowly along an aisle before reaching up and pulling down a book. He carefully reads the back of it, but decides to put it back. He grabs another one. THE BOOKSHOP OWNER (66), Asian decent, approaches him with a warm smile.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

Are you looking for anything in particular?

SIDNEY

No, not really. I just love books.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

Just to let you know - All books are fifty percent off today. I have the cheapest books in all of L.A.

SIDNEY

Okay! That sounds good. I'll keep that in mind.

The bookshop owner leaves the aisle. Sidney continues his book hunt. Moments later, the bookshop owner returns carrying a book in his hand.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

This might interest you. It only arrived this morning.

He proudly holds up a book titled, "BLACK POWER". It has an African American fist on the front cover.

Sidney awkwardly accepts the book. He looks at the front cover but hands it back.

SIDNEY

Thanks, but no thanks.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

Suit yourself.

Sidney rolls his eyes as the bookshop owner walks back to his counter. Sidney continues his search. He pulls out a book that gets his attention. He reads the back cover before making his way to the counter. He places the book down.

SIDNEY

I found one.

The bookshop owner curiously picks the book up.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

The Spartans - 480 to 360 BC.

SIDNEY

Yep!

BOOKSHOP OWNER

Suit yourself. Four dollar.

INT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

Stanley, dressed in blue jeans, black tank top and his hunting boots, walks awkwardly through Los Angeles airport carrying a gym bag. He can't help but stare at some of the hairdos and fashion in the crowd.

EXT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

Stanley, now wearing sunglasses, anxiously sits on a bench seat at the pick-up area. A stretch black limousine pulls into the curb, with Mexican driver, JOSE (27), climbing out. He approaches a BUSINESSMAN reading the paper.

JOSE

Stanley Knight?

The businessman waves him off. Jose walks past Stanley and asks an ENGLISH TOURIST.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Stanley Knight?

STANLEY O/S

I'm here.

Jose turns around and looks Stanley up and down. He slowly forces out a grin.

JOSE

It's a pleasure to meet you.... Mr. Knight.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Stanley climbs in the back before Jose closes the door. Jose walks around and jumps into the driver's seat.

JOSE

Where am I taking you Mr. Knight?

STANLEY

I've got an address in my pocket.
Just wait one minute, Amigo.

Stanley pulls a slip of paper out of his pocket.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Here we are. The Tower in Burbank.

JOSE

Yes. I know it.

STANLEY

I need to be there before four.

JOSE

We have plenty of time. You'll be early. I've dropped off many people there, Mr. Knight. Just so you know, it's company policy that you pay up front.

STANLEY

Up front?

JOSE

That's correct, Mr. Knight.

STANLEY

Let me tell you something, Speedy Gonzales. Right now you're looking into the eyes of a fucking millionaire. Yeah that's right. I'm a million dollar man. You want your money up front? Sure. I don't give a fuck. How much does your shithole company want?

JOSE

There's no need to be like that, Mr. Knight.

STANLEY

Save your violins. I'm a busy man.
How much?

JOSE

One fifty.

STANLEY

One fifty?

JOSE

That's correct, Mr. Knight.

Stanley pulls out his wallet and counts out one hundred and fifty dollars.

STANLEY

One fifty. Now let's get out of here, Amigo.

JOSE

My name is Jose.

STANLEY

No shit!

INT. CAB - AFTERNOON

A MEXICAN-BORN DRIVER parks in front of the main doors of 'The Tower', in Burbank. Sidney leans over and hands the driver a bundle of cash.

SIDNEY

Keep the change, my friend.

EXT. ENTRANCE - THE TOWER - AFTERNOON

The cab shoots off, leaving a curious Sidney on the wide sidewalk, holding a small suitcase and a yellow carry bag for his book. He checks the surroundings, including the small skyscraper's architecture, before tilting his face to feel the warmth of the Californian sun.

Stanley's limousine pulls up. Jose runs around and opens up the back door. Stanley climbs out and immediately heads for the entrance. Sidney drops his eyes and stares at Stanley.

STANLEY

What are you fucking looking at?

Sidney puts his hands up and quickly turns away, as Stanley enters the building.

SIDNEY

(To himself)
Jokers to left of me, assholes to the right.

INT. RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Sidney exits the elevator and walks down a small hallway, where "USA Lottery" signs hang on large glass doors.

A confident blonde RECEPTIONIST (41), with perfect teeth, sits behind a counter. She waves him in. He takes a deep breath and enters.

RECEPTIONIST

Hi, Sir. Welcome to USA Lottery.
May I help you?

Sidney approaches with a big smile on his face.

SIDNEY

My name is Sidney Bishop and I'm
here to -

RECEPTIONIST

- Yes, Mr. Bishop. We've been
expecting you.

SIDNEY

That's great! Fantastic!

RECEPTIONIST

Just take a seat over there and
we'll have one of our lottery
representatives attend to you
shortly.

SIDNEY

Thank you.

The receptionist grabs a phone -

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Bishop has arrived!

Sidney looks over at a row of seats and notices Stanley sitting at one end. Stanley stares him down which takes the smile off Sidney's face.

Sidney walks past Stanley, wondering what his problem is and sits down at the other end. The two men stare at each other for a split second, before Sidney looks away.

SIDNEY

(Under his breath)
I'm Captain Happy.

Suddenly a door opens up, revealing WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE (50). He's a tall and handsome man - dressed immaculately in a three piece designer suit. He approaches Sidney and Stanley, as if he's known them for years.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Gentlemen. Thank you for coming to
California.

(Shaking hands)
You must be Stanley and you must be
Sidney - follow me.

INT. OUTSIDES OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

William escorts the two men along a passageway and stops in front of a door with the number thirteen displayed.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Stanley. You're in this room.
 Sidney. You'll be in room fourteen next door. Now in these rooms we have to check ID's, social security numbers, etcetera, etcetera. Basically, we want to make sure the prizes don't fall into the wrong hands. By the way - I'm required to collect your smart-phones and any other electronic devices you may have on you. This is your typical standard procedure at USA Lottery. All good?

STANLEY/SIDNEY

All good.

Stanley and Sidney pull their smart-phones out and hand them to William Stockhouse.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Now that that's taken care of - I'll see you soon.

INT. SMALL OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Stanley and Sidney sit in separate rooms, across a desk, answering the same questions.

WE CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN STANLEY AND SIDNEY

STANLEY

Stanley James Knight.

SIDNEY

Sidney Leonard Bishop.

STANLEY

Born, August 7, 1981, Swamp Valley, Florida.

SIDNEY

Born, July 17, 1962, South Side Chicago, Illinois.

STANLEY

I live at 241 Swamp River Road, Swamp Valley, Florida.

SIDNEY
10 Melody Lane, Naperville,
Illinois.

STANLEY
My mother's maiden name was Knight.
My father shot through before I was
born, so I inherited the old girl's
surname. I've never met my father.
I don't intend meeting that
asshole. Total asshole.

SIDNEY
Ross. Like in, Diana Ross. In fact,
I think we could be related. I've
never met her though.

STANLEY
Divorced. No kids. I kicked the
bitch out because she got knocked
up by a douche-bag down the road.

SIDNEY
I'm happily married with three
beautiful girls. Jada is my oldest -
She's fifteen. Kayla is thirteen.
And my little baby is Javina -
she's eleven. And of course, my
beautiful wife's name is Pamela.

STANLEY
I work at a gas station.
(Laughing out loud)
Sorry. I did work at a gas station.
Underpaid, overworked! No more six
o'clock starts. No more bullshit
customers wanting their oil checked
or their tires pumped up - or their
fucking windshields wiped -- Lazy
assholes.

SIDNEY
I'm a history teacher. I love
teaching kids about the past. I've
been a teacher for almost 30 years
and never changed schools. I have
loved every minute of it. I find my
profession to be very rewarding. In
fact, I hope to continue for
another 30 years.

STANLEY
What will I do with the money?
Spend it.
(Laughing)
I want to buy some land and build a
house on it. And put the biggest
mother-fucking pool table in it.
(MORE)

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna buy a brand new Chevy pick-up with a big V8 underneath the lid. And a horse - a big stallion that I can ride with a big mother-fucking cowboy hat. I'll be the new 'John fucking Wayne' of Swamp Valley.

SIDNEY

I'm going to put some money away for my girls' education. I think that's the obvious thing to do. My baby brother desperately needs a new car. I'm thinking a Mazda or maybe a Hyundai. Pamela has always wanted to repaint the entire home so now we can do it. And I would love to convert some of the garage into a library. That would be something else.

Suddenly the rooms shake, surprising both men.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Man! What's going on?

STANLEY

What the fuck was that?

INT. HALLWAY - 20 MINUTES LATER

Both men simultaneously leave their rooms, holding a piece of paper. William greets them enthusiastically.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Gentlemen. How did everything go?
Did you feel the earth shake?

STANLEY

Yes! What's that all about?

SIDNEY

Was that an earthquake?

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Yes, it was. Welcome to Southern California, gentlemen. In this part of the world we have approximately ten thousand earthquakes a year. Most of them are so small you wouldn't even know. Occasionally, we do get one that you experienced before. The locals are used to it and it's part of the Southern Californian lifestyle.

(MORE)

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE (CONT'D)
Follow me, gentlemen.

William escorts them down a hallway and stops.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE (CONT'D)
Before I forget -

- William hands back the smart-phones to the two men.

SIDNEY
Thank you. An article I read on the
plane said there's a big one
coming.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE
Yes, there is. Scientists predict
it could happen between now and
2040. They predict it could be the
biggest earthquake man has ever
seen. It could potentially wipe out
most of L.A.

SIDNEY
Doesn't that make you nervous?

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE
Of course. But at the end of the
day you've gotta live your life and
I couldn't find a better place and
climate than Southern California -
I love it here!

William stops at the entrance of an elevator.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE (CONT'D)
This is it, gentlemen. Take the
elevator to the sixth floor - hand
over your authority letters and the
friendly accounts staff will hand
over a juicy check for one million
dollars to both of you. Best of
luck to you both.

William shakes their hands enthusiastically.

STANLEY
Thank you.

SIDNEY
Thank you, William.

William presses the button and the elevator doors open up
instantly.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

With sudden excitement, both men step into the spacious elevator, turn around to William, who has a massive smile across his face. The doors slowly close, as Sidney presses the number six button.

Stanley and Sidney glance at each other, making the smiles disappear.

The elevator motors start up and slowly the two men feel the floor moving upwards. Both men stare at the numbers. Number four flashes up, then number five, before the elevator comes to a halt. Suddenly the elevator starts to tremble. Both men glance at each other, unsure of the situation. The intensity of movement dramatically rises, causing the lights to flick on and off.

SIDNEY

It must be an earthquake. We better get out of here.

Sidney leans over and frantically presses the 'open door' button. But the shaking intensifies and both men lose their balance.

STANLEY

Fuck! What's going on?

SIDNEY

This door won't open.

But the shaking becomes unbearable.

STANLEY

Ahhhhhhhhh - Fuck!

Stanley bumps into Sidney, causing both men to fall onto the floor. The ferocity of the earthquake throws both men around, as they feel the elevator falling quickly.

SIDNEY

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh - We're falling.

The elevator crashes hard, bouncing the two men off the floor. The shaking stops and a light at the back of the elevator, different to the normal lights, turns on. Next to the light, a countdown clock illuminates in red numbers, counting back from 60 minutes.

Both men, feeling a little sore, slowly stand up. Explosions from outside can be heard.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

It sounds like the building's collapsed. We've gotta get out of here.

Stanley desperately bangs on the doors.

STANLEY
Help! Somebody help!

Sidney steps forward and bangs on the doors as well.

SIDNEY
Help! Help!

Sidney steps away and thinks about the situation. He pulls out his smart phone.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
I'll call 911. Shit! I don't have a
signal - check your phone.

Stanley pulls out his smart phone.

STANLEY
No. No signal.

Sidney dials 911 anyway. It fails.

SIDNEY
Nothing. Let's see if we can pull
these doors open - but we've got to
be careful of the dust and smoke.

With barely their fingertips in the groove of the doors,
Stanley and Sidney try to pull them open - but to no avail.

STANLEY
Fuck! Now what?

Sidney looks around the room searching for answers.

SIDNEY
Don't elevators have phones?

He notices a little door below the push buttons. He opens up
and finds a phone inside.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Hello. Hello. Anybody there?
(Looking up at Stanley) There's no
dial tone. Nothing.

STANLEY
Fuck! Don't they have maintenance
staff to check this shit?

SIDNEY
Can anybody hear me? We're stuck in
an elevator. If you can hear me,
we're at The Tower, in Burbank. It
appears we've experienced an
earthquake. Please help us. Hurry!

Sidney puts the phone back. Stanley steps over, pulls out the phone from the box and double checks there's no dial tone. He slams it back down. Sidney rolls his eyes.

STANLEY

What's with the countdown clock?

SIDNEY

I have no idea.

Sidney looks up at the ceiling.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

What about the ceiling? All elevators have trap doors in the ceiling, right? There must be a trap door here somewhere.

STANLEY

How the fuck are we gonna get up there? That's got to be at least nine feet.

Sidney reaches up and touches the ceiling.

SIDNEY

You get on all fours and I'll use you as a step ladder.

STANLEY

Are you out of your fucking mind?

SIDNEY

You can use me as a step ladder.
(Crouching down on all fours)
Let's just get out of here.

Stanley cautiously climbs on Sidney's lower back.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Ouch! Get off! Get off!

Stanley steps down.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Take your boots off.

Stanley removes his boots and steps on Sidney's lower back again.

STANLEY

Just remain still. Don't fucking move.

SIDNEY

Yeah! Easier said than done. You may be shorter but you're a lot heavier.

STANLEY

And stronger, old timer.

SIDNEY

Whatever!

Stanley stands up and reaches for the ceiling, almost falling off Sidney's back. He bangs on the hard mesh several times.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Hurry up. You're killing me.

STANLEY

There's no use. It's built like a tank up here. This ceiling is covered in solid steel mesh. They've built a fucking cage.

Suddenly, Stanley loses his balance and crashes to the floor. Sidney, concerned, checks his condition and notices a tattoo on Stanley's lower back - "Soldier of the KKK". He rolls his eyes.

SIDNEY

You okay?

STANLEY

(Groaning)
No thanks to you.

Stanley rolls over and sits against the wall. Sidney climbs to his feet - hands on his hips, with his mind ticking over.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

What now?

SIDNEY

I really don't know. I'm from Chicago. Earthquakes ain't my specialty.

Sidney walks over to the phone again.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Hello. Can anybody hear me? Hello.
Hello.

He puts the phone back, but notices a book in the bottom of the box. He pulls it out.

STANLEY

What is it?

SIDNEY

Not sure. It's a service manual for this elevator. It says this is a specially built elevator, that can withstand a magnitude 9.5 earthquake.

STANLEY

It might tell us how to get out of this deathtrap.

SIDNEY

That's what I'm thinking.

Sidney eagerly skips through the paragraphs.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

It says....the countdown clock on the wall indicates our oxygen supply.

STANLEY

What? Are you out of your fucking mind? We've got less than 60 minutes of air?

SIDNEY

(Skimming)

And once the clock starts, a signal will be sent to the local fire department and the only way out is help from the outside.

STANLEY

So there's no way out? Is that what you're fucking saying?

SIDNEY

That's what this is saying from our end. Let's hope the fire department is still standing.

STANLEY

What's the fucking point in having a super elevator that you end up suffocating in? What a bullshit idea this is! Out of all the fucking days to come to L.A - I came today. It's bullshit.

SIDNEY

It's not over yet. We're not going to drop dead at the 60th minute. Who knows? It might be only this building that's collapsed. And if that's the case, they're probably sifting through the rubble as we speak.

STANLEY

We're as good as dead. Fuck!

SIDNEY

Listen to me. As long as there's air, there's hope.

STANLEY

Listen to Nelson Mandela! What happens if L.A. is completely fucked? We're fucked.

Sidney doesn't answer. He sits down and leans on the opposite wall, thinking about that question.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

This is just my fucking luck. The day I became a millionaire is the day I fall off the god-damn perch. Jesus fucking Christ. So I wonder what asshole back home is going to get my money? Money that I fucking deserve. What a fucking joke!

SIDNEY

They'll come. Trust me. They'll come.

STANLEY

We've got no chance. No fucking chance.

SIDNEY

Time will tell. Right now we just sit tight, listen and wait.

Stanley notices Sidney's carry bag. He picks it up and pulls out the book.

STANLEY

The Spartans - 480 to 360 BC. What's this shit? Are you fucking serious?

SIDNEY

Give me that. It's none of your business.

STANLEY

Hang on a minute - you bought a book before you came here?

SIDNEY

Yes I did. I love books.

STANLEY

On the biggest day of your life, you go and buy a fucking book?

SIDNEY

Marrying my beautiful wife and having three wonderful girls are the biggest days of my life. Winning a million dollars doesn't compare.

STANLEY

Married with kids or a million dollars? I know what I'd be banging my drum to.

Sidney pulls out his wallet and grabs a photo.

SIDNEY

You got kids?

STANLEY

No.

Sidney slides over to Stanley.

SIDNEY

These are my daughters.

Stanley doesn't accept the photo.

STANLEY

Look. Don't take this the wrong way but I'm not interested. I'm trapped like a sardine in a can and the last thing I want to do is look at kid photos. You understand what I'm saying?

Sidney's silence is deafening as he slides back. He stares at Stanley, bemused by his attitude. He looks at the photo and breaks into a smile. He rubs his finger over the girls' faces.

FLASHBACK

INT. BAR N GRILL - NIGHT

KITCHEN

A KITCHEN HAND (21) places a large extravagant birthday cake on a trolley, which is surrounded by Sidney's girls, JADA (15), KAYLA (13) and JAVINA (11). All the daughters are dressed in Supergirl costumes with huge excitement across their faces. Sidney walks through a swinging door and notices his girls around the cake.

SIDNEY

Girls! Don't touch. Fingers away from Mom's cake - and that goes for you, Javina.

JADA

Can we put the candles on now?

SIDNEY

Sure. But be very careful.

Sidney lights up a long match and hands it to her.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

When I give the signal - we start singing 'Happy Birthday'.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

The lights dim and Sidney and the girls stroll out of the kitchen, pushing the candle-lit cake with them. Sidney's wife (50), pretty African-American, PAMELA BISHOP, sits at a table with friends and suddenly sees her husband and kids - she starts laughing.

SIDNEY

(singing)

Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you....

They carefully push the birthday cake to a proud Pamela. A big '50' stands on top of the cake. The singing finishes and Pamela attempts to blow out the 50 candles, eventually getting help from her three daughters. There are cheers and hands clapping. Sidney bends down and gives his wife a loving kiss.

PAMELA

Firstly, I'd like to thank my loving husband, Sidney, for delivering this wonderful, enormous birthday cake - and also his three Super-girl helpers, who have reminded me that I've just turned 50. Thank you.

The small crowd clap their hands as Sidney gives her another kiss - then kisses his daughters, who in turn kiss and hug their mother.

INT. ELEVATOR - BACK FROM FLASHBACK - PRESENT TIME

Sidney slowly walks around the elevator touching at panels, feeling the grooves, kicking the doors - not giving up hope of getting out. Stanley, in frustration, bangs his fists on the floor.

STANLEY

Can you give it a fucking rest,
man? Come on!

Sidney stops but doesn't turn around. He continues on.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Seriously - this banging is really
getting on my nerves. You're making
my fucking head explode.

SIDNEY

We can't leave any stone unturned.

STANLEY

What does that fucking mean?

SIDNEY

We must try everything to get out
of here.

STANLEY

You're wasting your time.

SIDNEY

Time will tell.

STANLEY

The manual said there was no
fucking way out. You read it out to
me so give it a fucking rest.

Sidney quickly spins around and faces Stanley.

SIDNEY

Let me tell you something. I ain't
a quitter. The clock may be
ticking, but guess what? I'm still
kicking. As long as we're
breathing, we have hope, man.

STANLEY

Hope?

Stanley quickly climbs to his feet.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

You call this hope? We are fucking
trapped and we are going to die.
This may be a fucking hard pill for
you to swallow, but we are going to
die. Are we unlucky? Absolutely.
But, we all have to die sometime
and this is, unfortunately, our
fucking time. So get your head out
of your ass, open your eyes and
accept it. You got it?

SIDNEY

No, man. I ain't got it. Let me tell you something about hope. Hope means we've got a chance. The odds of us surviving may be a million to one - may be ten to one. Who knows? To sit on our butts and accept this situation is just wrong, man. Just wrong.

STANLEY

I'm sitting on my butt. Fuck you.

SIDNEY

Fine.

Sidney stares in disbelief at Stanley's defeatist attitude. Sidney turns back around to the wall to continue on, but hesitates. He spins around again.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

You know what, man? Maybe we need to talk.

STANLEY

What?

SIDNEY

Maybe we need to talk and get to know each other.

STANLEY

Are you a fucking faggot?

SIDNEY

Are you always this difficult?

STANLEY

I can't see the point.

SIDNEY

The point is - it will take our minds off the situation.

STANLEY

I still can't see the point.

SIDNEY

Are you this stubborn back home?

STANLEY

Wait just a god-damn minute. We're probably gonna die. Do you really fucking care what my favorite color is?

SIDNEY

Yes! Yes I do. What's your favorite color?

STANLEY

This is bullshit and you know it. Next you're gonna ask me what color briefs I like wearing.

SIDNEY

Okay. What color briefs do you like wearing?

STANLEY

Fuck you. You wanna know the contents of my pants? You really are a faggot.

Sidney turns around in complete frustration. He throws his arms in the air, before slapping them on his hips.

SIDNEY

(Facing wall)

I think I could just about sum you up, man.

STANLEY

Bring it on. You won't even get close. I'll give you a clue. I ain't a faggot like you, so cross that off your fucking wish list.

Sidney ignores the response and turns around.

SIDNEY

Going by your accent, you're probably from a southern state. You're into car racing - but not basketball. You love beer and bourbon - but hate wine drinkers. You live in a small town, predominately full of white folks. You hunt. You drive a Chevy pickup and you will never vote for a black president. How close am I?

Stanley looks up at Sidney with wide eyes, before bursting into laughter.

STANLEY

You're actually on the money, but I do like a red wine occasionally.

Sidney paces up and down, looking at the floor, hands on his hips, wondering what to say next.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Green.

SIDNEY
Green? What?

STANLEY
Green. My favorite color is green.

SIDNEY
Green. Okay. Green isn't the color
I thought you'd choose, but -

STANLEY
- And let me guess. Your favorite
color is pink.

Sidney stretches a smile across his face.

SIDNEY
Red. My favorite color is red.

STANLEY
Well then. Now that we know each
other's favorite colors - we can
finally shut up and die. You don't
want to know my favorite color
briefs do you?

SIDNEY
No. No, I don't. Where do you live?

STANLEY
Really?

SIDNEY
Come on, man.

STANLEY
Florida. Swamp Valley, Florida.

SIDNEY
You married?

STANLEY
Are you fucking crazy?

SIDNEY
There's nothing wrong with being
married.

STANLEY
You are fucking crazy.

SIDNEY
I'm married.

STANLEY
I've never wanted kids. I was
married to some low down bitch but
I got rid of her quick smart.

SIDNEY

Let me guess. She couldn't handle your positive attitude.

STANLEY

No, asshole. She was fucking one of my pals up the road and got knocked up with twins.

SIDNEY

Sorry to hear that.

STANLEY

Bullshit. You couldn't give a flying fuck about me.

SIDNEY

That's not true. This might be hard for you to believe, but I'm a half full kind of guy.

STANLEY

Fuck! I'm stuck with Mr. Positive.

SIDNEY

Is your ex-wife still with your pal?

STANLEY

No. He took off with some whore and moved to Texas.

SIDNEY

The world is full of assholes.

STANLEY

You wanna hear something funny? The ex tried to come back with me. She said we could raise twins together. Can you fucking believe that?

SIDNEY

What did you say to her?

STANLEY

Nothing. I hocked one right in her pig-dog ugly face and dragged her off my property.

SIDNEY

You spat at her? You are a piece of work.

STANLEY

Fuck you. Alright, then - tell me this - what would Mr. Positive have done in that situation?

SIDNEY

I wouldn't have spat at her. A simple - no - would have been sufficient.

STANLEY

Listen to you - standing on your high moral stage and looking down on the world. Fuck you.

SIDNEY

I'm far from perfect - but to spit at another person - let alone a woman? Come on!

STANLEY

You think women are perfect, do you?

SIDNEY

I'm not saying that. I'm just --

STANLEY

-- Women can be fucking monsters. You listen up!

FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stanley sits at a kitchen table with KELLY WALLACE (35), blonde, cute, sad eyes - playing cards and drinking beer. Suddenly her smart phone rings.

KELLY

Shit! It's him.

STANLEY

Relax. Just answer it.

KELLY

And say what?

STANLEY

You're a big girl, now. Tell him you're with me.

KELLY

Stanley, I don't think that's a good idea.

STANLEY

Fuck him.

KELLY

I won't answer it.

Suddenly, Stanley grabs the phone, much to the surprise of Kelly, who wrestles with him. Stanley answers.

STANLEY

Hello. -- It's Stanley -- She's sitting right next to me -- No. She doesn't want to talk to you. -- James, I'll pass on a message. -- No. No. -- Tell me the message and I'll pass it on. -- Really? -- You're gonna shoot me, are you? -- Listen here you fucking asshole. Who the fuck do you think you're talking to? -- Hello. Hello. --

Stanley hands the phone back to Kelly.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

The fucker hung up.

KELLY

Great! Now that you've stoked the fire - life in Swamp Valley will be heaven.

STANLEY

Listen to me. You have to stand up to this asshole.

KELLY

Stanley. I'm sick of it. I'm sick of going to bed scared that he's hiding in the garden or watching me from the street. He's threatened to kill me so many times. Stanley, I can't live like this anymore. I just wanna get up and go and start a new life as far away from this place as possible.

Stanley stands up and gives Kelly a hug.

STANLEY

It's alright. Big bad Stanley ain't scared of anyone. If that fucker wants a fight - I'll give him world war one, two and fucking three.

Stanley's dog, SPIKE, enters the room and puts his front paws up onto the table.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Spike. What is it?

KELLY

He's such a cute dog.

STANLEY

I think he's after a snack. This dog knows how to get his own way.

Stanley walks over to the refrigerator and pulls out some small pieces of fresh meat.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Open up. Don't drop it on the floor.

Stanley throws it in the air for Spike to catch it in his mouth.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Spike! That's enough - can't you see I've got company. Out you go - come on - get out of here.

Spike walks out of the room, chewing the meat.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Beer?

Kelly wipes away the doom and gloom.

KELLY

Why not!

LATER IN THE NIGHT

Stanley and Kelly are playing drinking games with 'Trivial Pursuit'. Kelly grabs a card from the pack.

KELLY

Stanley. I can barely read it. Here we go. What is the capital of California?

STANLEY

God-dammit! I have no idea on these things. Hang on a minute. Los Angeles.

KELLY

Los Angeles is incorrect. The correct answer is Sacramento.

STANLEY

Sacra-fucking-mento.

KELLY

Drink up, cowboy.

Stanley grabs his beer and empties the bottle down his throat. He finishes with an ugly burp that sends Kelly into fits of laughter. Stanley grabs a card from the deck.

STANLEY
Your turn. You ready?

KELLY
I'm ready.

STANLEY
Who invented mini skirts?

KELLY
What? Get out of here.

STANLEY
Who invented mini skirts?

KELLY
I couldn't even guess.

STANLEY
It was Dr. Seymour Legs. Anyway -
Kelly goes into fits of laughter again.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Don't you know Dr. Seymour Legs?

KELLY
Dr. Seymour Legs? That's so funny.

STANLEY
Okay. I'll give you the real
question. Who was the ninth
president, who lasted only 30 days
in office?

KELLY
That's an easy one. Henry Harrison.

STANLEY
Correct. You've survived the round.
Suddenly gunshots explode from outside in the street.

KELLY
Oh my God.

Stanley quickly jumps up, opens up a cupboard and pulls out a
12 gauge shotgun.

STANLEY
Wait here.

KELLY
Stanley! Wait a minute!

Stanley busts through the screen doors with Kelly cautiously
following.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Stanley sees the tail lights of a car speeding away. He checks the street, only to be joined by Kelly.

STANLEY

Go back inside - I'll handle this.

KELLY

What's that on the street?

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Stanley steps off the porch. He holds the gun close to him, as he moves to the object on the street. Kelly waits on the porch.

Spike lays on the road - dead and bleeding. Stanley races over and cradles the dog in his arms.

STANLEY

Spike! Spike! No! No! Fucking no!

Kelly joins him on the road.

KELLY

Oh my god!

STANLEY

I'm gonna kill that mother-fucker.
I am gonna rip his fucking heart
out. He will pay for this. I will
torture that mother-fucker.

Kelly puts her arm around Stanley for support.

INT. ELEVATOR - BACK FROM FLASHBACK - PRESENT TIME

Sidney hangs on Stanley's story - expecting a happy ending.

STANLEY

A month later, she went back with
him.

SIDNEY

What? She went back with him?

STANLEY

She went back with him. That
cocksucker sold her a happy-ever-
after-picket-fucking-fence story,
and she fell for it. It was like I
didn't exist anymore.

SIDNEY

What a bitch!

STANLEY

You know what really got to me? She said it wouldn't work because I work in a gas station.

SIDNEY

She wasn't for you, man.

STANLEY

I'm a fucking low income loser. Of course not. In the end, that bitch got what she deserved.

SIDNEY

I'll check that phone again.

Sidney walks over and pulls out the phone.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Hello. Hello. Can anybody hear me? Hello. Is there anybody listening? Anybody? If you can hear me, we're stuck in an elevator in The Tower building in Burbank. It appears an earthquake has collapsed the building. We need to get out of here. Can anybody hear me?

Sidney gives up and puts the phone back.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

You never know, man. Somebody at the other end may have heard me. You just never know.

STANLEY

Nobody heard you. We're as good as cooked in here. We're nothing more than another two unlucky assholes in this shithole world.

SIDNEY

Well, I ain't giving up, man.

STANLEY

Whatever you think, Mr. Positive. But may I remind you that we have 43 minutes of air?

SIDNEY

43 minutes is a long time.

STANLEY

Have a listen to you. You won't surrender, will you? I hate people like you.

SIDNEY

Just drop it, man.

STANLEY

No, I won't. Occasionally, I meet guys like you. You paint the world as this beautiful fucking rainbow, where every asshole holds hands, hugs trees, saves fucking whales, and rams down our throats that we're united as one. I could just fucking throw up.

SIDNEY

There's nothing wrong with having a positive outlook on life.

STANLEY

But it ain't reality, is it?

SIDNEY

How can you be so bitter?

STANLEY

Maybe it's the cards I was dealt?

SIDNEY

But that's no excuse, man. You might look at your cards, but then you move on. You just have to make the most of the situation.

STANLEY

And what does Mr. Positive do to make Mr. Positive so fucking positive?

SIDNEY

What do I do?

STANLEY

Yeah. What line of work are you in?

SIDNEY

I'm a school teacher. History is my expertise. I love it.

STANLEY

A school teacher? It just sounds so boring.

SIDNEY

I find my job very rewarding. In fact, if we get out of here, I'll continue doing it.

STANLEY

You've got to be joking?

SIDNEY

You don't get it.

STANLEY

And what exactly don't I get?

SIDNEY

It's the joy I get when kids take a real interest in my class. It's that feeling that I've made a real difference.

STANLEY

What?

SIDNEY

I take it you didn't like school.

STANLEY

I hated it. Too many rules. I dropped out in the ninth grade.

SIDNEY

Did you like history?

STANLEY

I hated all of it.

SIDNEY

Hey! School isn't for everyone. I get that. But now that you're older and perhaps wiser, do you wish now that you completed high school?

STANLEY

Nope!

SIDNEY

No?

STANLEY

Hey! I can say no. What? Do you think I cry myself to sleep each night wishing I completed fucking high school? Not a fucking chance.

SIDNEY

Anyway, what did you say you do?

STANLEY

I'm a gas station attendant.

SIDNEY

Yes. You did say that before. How's that going?

STANLEY

Look at you. Now you're fucking looking down at me.

SIDNEY

What? I'm not looking down at you.

STANLEY

Yeah, right. You think you're better than me?

SIDNEY

What?

STANLEY

You're a big shot school teacher and you think you're better than me?

SIDNEY

I didn't say anything.

STANLEY

I could tell by your body language.

SIDNEY

Are you on medication?

STANLEY

I'll tell you something. No fucking nigger is gonna look down at me.

SIDNEY

Now I'm looking down at you.

Sidney steps over to Stanley, steaming with rage.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Listen here, you red-necked hillbilly. You have to earn the right to call me a nigger - Asshole!

STANLEY

You be very careful how you speak to me, nigger. Have a look at me! You may be fucking taller, but you won't be able to handle me - you old piece of shit.

SIDNEY

I was waiting for the racist card to come out. It took you this long? So, you're a member of the KKK - Home of America's number one assholes.

STANLEY

I've been a proud member for nearly 20 years. America was a great place, but for too long your type have eroded this once great nation.

SIDNEY

The quicker we remove scum like you from society, the better this country will be.

STANLEY

Keep flapping your fucking mouth and I'll put my fist through it, nigger.

SIDNEY

I haven't finished. You call yourself a soldier. I saw that cheap tattoo on your lower back. 'Soldier of the KKK'. So, you're in a warzone and putting your life on the line for your almighty cause.

Sidney claps his hands, sarcastically.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Tell me this! You ever put on a uniform and stood post, asshole?

STANLEY

Have you, nigger?

SIDNEY

No. I haven't. But I haven't got a billboard on my body advertising that I'm a soldier. You're not a soldier. You're a minority little skid mark, living in the pants of racist asshole America.

Stanley jumps up and eyeballs Sidney.

STANLEY

What'd you call me, nigger?

Sidney moves closer, clearly not intimidated by Stanley's aggression.

SIDNEY
I called you a minority little skid
mark, mother-fucker!

Stanley steps away, then throws a punch into Sidney's face,
dropping him to the floor.

STANLEY
Now, who am I, nigger?

Sidney shakes off the blow and climbs to his feet. Without
hesitating, he throws a punch, hitting Stanley on the nose.
Stanley comes back and it turns into a violent street fight.
Both men bounce from wall to wall. Punches are thrown with
nobody getting the upper hand. The fight turns into a wrestle
with both men falling to the floor, rolling around from wall
to wall. With bloodied faces, the fight becomes a strenuous
struggle with both men exhausted, as they stop each other
from getting a cheap punch in.

However, Stanley's age and strength get the better of Sidney.
Stanley slowly rolls on top of Sidney. He pins him down and
is about to throw a punch -

- The elevator's phone rings, surprising both of them. They
look at each other's bloodied faces. Both exhausted and
gasping for air.

SIDNEY
I'll get it.

The struggle dissipates as Sidney crawls over to the phone.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Hello. Hello.

We hear the soft voice of CAPTAIN THOMAS on a bad connection.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
(Filtered, through phone)
This is - - - Can you hear me?

SIDNEY
Yes. Yes. I can just hear you. Can
you please speak up?

There's no answer.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Hello. Hello.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
This is Captain Thomas of the L.A
Fire Department. Is there anybody
there?

SIDNEY

I'm here. I'm here. Can you hear me?

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)

This is Captain Thomas of the L.A. Fire Department. Is there anybody there?

SIDNEY

Yes, we're here. I can hear you, Captain Thomas. Can you hear me? Hello. Hello. Captain Thomas, are you there? Talk to me. God-dammit!

STANLEY

Jesus fucking Christ.

SIDNEY

Captain Thomas. Can you hear me?

There's silence at the other end.

STANLEY

Hang up the phone and call the fucker back.

Sidney disconnects the line and tries to call back.

SIDNEY

There's no dial tone. There's nothing.

STANLEY

Shit!

SIDNEY

Hey! He might call back.

There's an eerie silence, as both men stare straight ahead, waiting for the phone to ring. Impatiently, Stanley lifts his head up.

STANLEY

Captain Thomas is clearly an asshole. That was probably our last chance.

Sidney looks over at Stanley, but decides not to respond.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I know! You were about to give me the 'hope' speech again. And yes! Captain Thomas was our hope. So, what do we do now?

SIDNEY

Well, I don't want to spend my last hour fighting - that's for sure. Man, I think you broke my jaw. It's killing me.

STANLEY

Well, you busted my fucking nose.

SIDNEY

Alright. Let's just cool it from now on.

STANLEY

For an old timer you throw a good punch, nigger.

Sidney gives Stanley a mean stare.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Just relax.

SIDNEY

The name's Sidney Bishop, not nigger.

STANLEY

I'm Stanley. Stanley Knight.

SIDNEY

You must be thinking you're in some nightmare. Here you are, man - Klan employee of the month and stuck in an elevator with a black man. Ouch!

STANLEY

It did cross my mind.

SIDNEY

Level with me. The KKK are irrelevant. You must acknowledge that.

STANLEY

I wouldn't say that. Right now numbers are down - I'll give you that. But we'll rise again, especially with these Middle Eastern spooks starting to appear.

SIDNEY

The KKK is just an excuse for small town white folks to dress up in colorful robes, light fires and drink whiskey.

STANLEY

Well, we certainly know how to party. I'll give you that much.

SIDNEY

You know what, Stanley? If that's the life you want to choose, man - I say, go for it.

STANLEY

Go for it? Have a fucking look at the clock.

Sidney looks up at the clock. It reads: 31.18 and counting.

SIDNEY

We have 31 minutes of air left, Mr. Knight.

Sidney pulls out the photo of his three girls again. It sparks an idea. He slides over to the phone box and pulls out a pen.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

It might be a good idea to leave a note. Just in case we don't make it.

Stanley reluctantly agrees without saying anything.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

I'm leaving my million to my wife and kids. What about you?

STANLEY

I don't know.

SIDNEY

Your mom?

STANLEY

She died years ago.

SIDNEY

Your father?

STANLEY

I have no fucking father.

Sidney starts writing on the back of the authority letter.

SIDNEY

I might as well write to my wife, my mom, and my brother. I guess it's worth letting them know that I'm at peace.

Sidney starts to laugh, as he pretends to write.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Dear Kenny. Kenny's my baby brother. I'll give you a million dollars if you can guess where I ended up. *Eeewwtt*. Wrong answer. The correct answer is - I died, trapped in an elevator with a member of the KKK. And to top it off, we were about to become millionaires. God bless America.

STANLEY

That's the one thing that really sucks about this whole fucking situation. Just once, I wanted to feel important again. I wanted people in Swamp Valley to sit up and take notice when I walk into a room. This may surprise you but I have lost my edge in that town. None of the new folks respect me. This new generation drive into fucking work, in their Benz, BMW's, Porsches, Range Rovers - and they look at Stanley Knight behind the counter and they give me a look, as if I belong in the fucking gutter outside.

SIDNEY

Hang on. Let me cut in here. Let's put the KKK to one side and concentrate on you and the gas station. You don't need money to get respect. I've only known you for 5 minutes, man. But something - no, everything - tells me that you are so bitter with the world. I get the impression that you can't stand yourself and at every opportunity, you automatically bark at everything and everyone.

STANLEY

You try doing my fucking job. I've come to the conclusion that I just hate people. I hate that small talk when they approach the counter.

(Changing voice)

Did I tell you little Jimmy got an 'A' in chemistry? Did I tell you about my mom's hip surgery? These people start blabbering on about their lives and all I want to say to them is - I don't fucking care, so shut the fuck up. That'll be \$20 for gas, thanks. Give me the money and fuck off.

SIDNEY
You're in the wrong job.

STANLEY
No shit, Einstein.

SIDNEY
You mean Sherlock?

STANLEY
What?

SIDNEY
Nothing.

STANLEY
If I get out of here, I won't be going back.

SIDNEY
And what will you do?

STANLEY
I'd move out of Swamp Valley for starters.

SIDNEY
But isn't that just moving your problems, man?

STANLEY
Maybe. But I need a change anyway.

SIDNEY
Maybe you should go back to school.

STANLEY
What? I'm thirty five years old. Are you out of your fucking mind?

SIDNEY
You could study from home. The net has thousands of courses.

STANLEY
Yep! I might do that. I'll go home, study hard and become this country's number one fucking porn star.

SIDNEY
Joke all you want. It's your future.

STANLEY
Future? Have a look at the clock. There's my fucking future.

The phone starts ringing. Sidney dives over to the box and pulls out the phone.

SIDNEY
Hello. Hello.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
This is Captain Thomas speaking.

SIDNEY
Captain Thomas, I can hear you.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
And I can hear you. Who am I speaking to?

SIDNEY
Sidney. My name's Sidney - Sidney Bishop.

Sidney looks over at Stanley with a huge smile across his face.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
Are you alone, Sidney?

SIDNEY
No. I'm with another person.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
And what is the name of that person?

SIDNEY
Stanley Knight.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
Okay. Sidney there's something you should know.

SIDNEY
Right?

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
The area around The Tower has been hit by a massive earthquake. I understand that you are in one of those super elevators.

SIDNEY
Yes. That's correct.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
Sidney. How much air do you have left?

SIDNEY
It says 27 minutes.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
27 minutes.

There's silence.

SIDNEY
Captain Thomas. Are you still
there?

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
I'm here, Sidney. Sidney, I'm gonna
level with you. You won't be out in
27 minutes.

SIDNEY
How long before you can get us out?

There's silence.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Captain Thomas. How long?

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
It looks like a war zone out here.
Thousands of people have already
perished. We're doing our best.

SIDNEY
Surely there's something you can
do?

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
The army has just arrived, so that
should speed things up, but the
magnitude of this situation is
enormous. I ask you to sit tight.

SIDNEY
Captain Thomas, I have three young
girls. I need to get out.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
I understand, Sidney. All I can say
at this time is - we're doing our
best.

Stanley rushes over and grabs the phone.

STANLEY
Hello.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
Who am I speaking to?

STANLEY
This is Stanley Knight. What the fuck is going on?

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
Stanley. Please remain calm.

STANLEY
Remain calm? We have 26 minutes to live and you want me to remain calm?

Sidney wrestles Stanley for the phone.

SIDNEY
Give me the phone.

Stanley brushes Sidney off and keeps talking.

STANLEY
Listen here, Captain Thomas. Don't give me bullshit. Start digging and get us out of this can. Hurry the fuck up.

Stanley hands the phone back to Sidney and sits back down.

SIDNEY
Captain Thomas. I just want to say--

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)
--I understand his frustration. As I said, we're doing all we can. Sit tight.

SIDNEY
(Conceding)
Okay.

Captain Thomas hangs up. Sidney keeps the phone on his ear and stares into the moment. He slowly puts the phone back in the box.

STANLEY
We're fucked.

Sidney slowly slides over to the wall with a dazed look on his face.

SIDNEY
That's one way of putting it.

STANLEY
No doubt those fucking movie stars will be the first on the lifeboat.

SIDNEY
Who knows?

STANLEY

Maybe I should have answered the phone.

SIDNEY

What?

STANLEY

Come on. Think about it. Captain Thomas may have picked up that you were black and put us down the list.

SIDNEY

(Shaking his head)
You're unbelievable! And what if Captain Thomas is black?

STANLEY

No. He didn't sound black.

SIDNEY

How do you know?

STANLEY

Come on. Your type talk differently to white people.

SIDNEY

I can't believe I'm having this conversation. Am I in a bad dream? Please wake up! Please wake up!

STANLEY

I'm just saying. I'm not trying to steam you up here. You guys talk a lot differently to us.

SIDNEY

Us? You know what? You're right! And we swing from trees and drive cars differently as well.

STANLEY

Now that's another issue.

Sidney looks at Stanley in total disbelief.

SIDNEY

Tell me something, Stanley - because I really, really, really need to know. What were your parents like? I have to know! Were they like you?

STANLEY

Well, my mom was an alcoholic and my father was the invisible man.

SIDNEY
Is your mom still alive?

STANLEY
No. The old girl died years ago.

SIDNEY
I'm sorry to hear that.

STANLEY
She had her demons but would never talk about them. She was a nice lady. I miss her a lot.

SIDNEY
Have you got a photo of her?

STANLEY
Sure have. I keep it in my wallet at all times.

SIDNEY
Can I have a look?

STANLEY
Nope!

SIDNEY
Sure. Did your mom like black people?

STANLEY
What are you getting at?

SIDNEY
I'm trying to work out where this hatred of black people came from.

STANLEY
What? Do you think you're a doctor?

SIDNEY
No! Look - you could be the very last person that I see before I die - God help me - I'm just trying to ascertain who you are. Nothing more, nothing less.

STANLEY
How about we talk about you?

SIDNEY
Sure. What would you like to know?

STANLEY
Do you wish you were born white?

SIDNEY
Born white?

STANLEY
Yeah! Born a white man.

SIDNEY
That's something I haven't really
thought about.

STANLEY
Really? It's never crossed your
mind, what it would be like to be a
white man in this country?

SIDNEY
No.

STANLEY
Bullshit!

SIDNEY
Stanley. You talk as if white
people are the super heroes of the
universe.

STANLEY
Superman was white. Batman was
white. Spiderman was white. End of
story.

SIDNEY
You, you can't be--

STANLEY
--There's no black Superman. Don't
try and sell me that bullshit.

SIDNEY
You do know they were cartoon
characters, right?

STANLEY
(Chuckling)
You had Fat Albert. Hey! Hey! Hey!

SIDNEY
(Talking to the wall)
I'm talking to a 4 year old.

STANLEY
Spiderman was my favourite. He
seemed so much cooler than the
other two. All that web spinning
and swinging off the buildings.
Spidey was the best. I'll tell you
something - Spidey would have got
us out of this fucking mess.

SIDNEY

Yeah! You're right. Spidey would have. Sorry, but where's Spidey at the moment?

STANLEY

How the fuck do I know? I'm trapped in here.

SIDNEY

(Talking to the wall)

I must have been such an asshole in a previous life.

STANLEY

What? Now you're gonna say you were white in a previous life, are you? You're full of shit.

SIDNEY

It's a known fact, Stanley. Black people can run faster, jump higher and are physically stronger than white people.

STANLEY

Bullshit!

SIDNEY

Clearly you don't get sports channels in Swamp Valley.

STANLEY

I only watch NASCAR.

SIDNEY

Stanley, you ever seen a pro football or basketball game? Some of those black players are super humans, man.

STANLEY

Super humans? They're not super humans. You wanna know who's a super human?

SIDNEY

Oh, this'll be good. Who is it Stanley? Put me out of my misery and tell me who your super human is? Let me guess Stanley! - They're white?

STANLEY

John Wayne.

SIDNEY
John Wayne?

STANLEY
You got it. John Wayne. The Duke.
That's a super human.

SIDNEY
John Wayne?

Sidney rolls his eyes and wipes his forehead.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
(Muttering)
I'm about to suffocate and I'm
talking about John Wayne.

STANLEY
You'll never admit it, but you wish
you were like John Wayne.

SIDNEY
Stanley! The way it's heading,
we'll both be like John Wayne.

STANLEY
Long live the Duke.

SIDNEY
I'm proud of the color of my skin.
Let me tell you something. Would I
swap my life and skin color for
yours? No way. However, would you
swap your life and skin color for
mine? Man, you would consider it.

STANLEY
Don't make me fucking laugh.

Sidney pulls out a photo of his wife. He slides over and
hands it to Stanley.

SIDNEY
Have a look at her - she's 50 and
beautiful, man.

STANLEY
I'd fuck her.

SIDNEY
You're all class, Stanley.
Seriously, man. You'd put your dick
in a hornet's nest.

STANLEY
Is she good in bed?

SIDNEY
None of your business, Stanley.

STANLEY
I'm just asking. Remember, you
wanted to talk.

SIDNEY
Okay then. Let's talk about you.

STANLEY
There's nothing to tell.

SIDNEY
You're a disgruntled gas station
worker from Swamp Valley. You don't
have children. You hate customers
and unfortunately, you don't have a
dog anymore. Do you have any
brothers or sisters?

STANLEY
Nope.

SIDNEY
What do you do in your spare time?

STANLEY
I go hunting and fishing -
something you've never done.

SIDNEY
What do you hunt?

FLASHBACK

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Stanley, dressed in army gear, slowly steps through the trees carrying a high powered rifle. He stops and surveys the area. He sniffs the air and continues walking. Moments later, he almost steps in animal droppings. He bends down and investigates the samples. He feels it in his fingers, suggesting it's fresh. He listens for a few seconds, until he sees a deer grazing on the forest floor to his left.

He lifts his rifle and looks through his high tech scope.

In the scope we see Kelly Wallace's face. Stanley pulls the trigger.

INT. ELEVATOR - BACK FROM FLASHBACK - PRESENT TIME

Sidney claps his hands to get Stanley's attention.

SIDNEY
Are you there, Houston?

STANLEY
I hunt all sorts of critters. Hey!
We've got less than 20 minutes. Who
gives a fuck?

Sidney looks up at the clock. The time remaining hits him
hard with a reality punch.

SIDNEY
20 minutes?

STANLEY
That's what it says.

Sidney pulls out the photo of his three girls.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Any more questions?

Sidney puts the photo back in his wallet.

SIDNEY
(Change in mood)
No. No more questions.

STANLEY
Spit it out. What were you gonna
ask me? Come on - What was it?

Sidney looks up at the clock and then down at Stanley. He
carefully thinks through his next sentence.

SIDNEY
Do you believe in God, Stanley?

STANLEY
Not the same God you believe in.

SIDNEY
When I was young, I believed. Our
parents used to take my brother and
I to this beautiful church. It was
one of those churches you see in
the movies. Huge cathedral
ceilings, gigantic stain glass
windows and a grand entrance.

STANLEY
You're telling me this because..?

SIDNEY

Let me finish. I've carried this around with me for so long - I feel now is the best time and possibly the only time that I can tell somebody.

STANLEY

What? What is it?

FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

It's the 1970's - Sidney's mother, CARMEL (39), dressed up in her best church outfit, wipes down a table and straightens up the chairs.

CARMEL

Sidney! Kenny! Are you ready?

In walks Sidney's father, GEORGE (46), frustrated with his inability to tie his tie.

GEORGE

Baby! Can you help me with this?

CARMEL

George Bishop - What am I going to do with you? You're 46 and still can't dress yourself.

GEORGE

I hate wearing suits. It reminds me of funerals.

CARMEL

May I remind you, you wore a suit at our wedding.

GEORGE

As I said...

Carmel fixes his tie.

CARMEL

I should have pulled it tighter.

GEORGE

Are the boys ready?

CARMEL

Sidney! Kenny! Hurry up!

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A YOUNG SIDNEY (13), smartly dressed, stands in front of a mirror - straightening up his shirt.

YOUNG SIDNEY
Kenny! That's the second time Mom's called. Hurry up!

YOUNG KENNY (11), sad and worried, sits on the end of his bed, staring.

YOUNG SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Can you snap out of it? What's wrong with you?

YOUNG KENNY
I don't want to go to church. I hate church.

YOUNG SIDNEY
How do you think that will fly with the old man? Come on - get dressed.

Kenny gives in and starts putting on his shirt.

YOUNG KENNY
Sidney!

YOUNG SIDNEY
What?

YOUNG KENNY
It doesn't matter - I'll tell you later.

YOUNG SIDNEY
Okay. Tell me later - but hurry up.

EXT. CHURCH - LATE MORNING

George and Carmel walk up the steps to the church with young Sidney and Kenny walking close behind. At the entrance stands FATHER KARLIN (55). He's a small man that holds his hand out and greets George.

FATHER KARLIN
George and Carmel Bishop. Thank you once again for attending.

GEORGE
Thank you Father.
(Turning to Carmel)
I need the bathroom.

FATHER KARLIN
It hasn't moved. Down the end to
the left.

George pushes forward and leaves the family with Father
Karlin.

FATHER KARLIN (CONT'D)
How are you, Mrs. Bishop?

CARMEL
I'm fine, Father Karlin. Thanks for
asking.

Carmel steps into the church.

FATHER KARLIN
Boys. How are we?

YOUNG SIDNEY
Fine.

Sidney walks in with Kenny following, but Father Karlin stops
him from going in.

FATHER KARLIN
And how are you today Kenny?

Kenny doesn't look happy. He looks at the ground.

YOUNG KENNY
I'm fine.

Father Karlin grabs his chin and lifts his head up to face
him.

FATHER KARLIN
I'll be seeing you after church.

Kenny doesn't answer. He just moves forward and walks in.

INT. CHURCH - EARLY AFTERNOON

Large gatherings congregate in a room adjacent to the altar,
as a spread of sandwiches and cola entice the churchgoers.
George and Carmel stand with RICHARD (55) AND BARBARA BROWN
(54) - Both African Americans and good friends of the
Bishops. The men are talking to each other simultaneously
with the girls.

RICHARD
And what did you say to your boss?

GEORGE
I told him the nigger fell over.

RICHARD
Did he believe you?

GEORGE
Shit no! But the nigger was too
scared to talk, so the incident was
closed.

RICHARD
You dodged a bullet, man.

CARMEL
Barbara. You're looking good.

BARBARA
Thanks Carmel. I've lost 40 pounds
and I feel great. Oh my God - I
sound like a commercial.

RICHARD
And what about the boys?

GEORGE
They're going okay. Sidney's in
high school and doing well. Kenny
hasn't the brain power of Sidney
but he gets through.

EXT. CHURCH GROUNDS - SUNNY AFTERNOON

Swarms of well dressed children play all sorts of ball games
whilst their parents socialize inside.

Young Sidney catches a football and immediately throws it
back.

YOUNG SIDNEY
I'm going to the bathroom.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Young Sidney walks down a hall and opens a door - only to
find Kenny rushing out.

YOUNG SIDNEY
What the...? Kenny - Come back
here.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kenny runs outside. Young Sidney continues on into the room
and is surprised by Father Karlin stepping out of a cubical,
zipping up his fly.

YOUNG SIDNEY
What's going on?

FATHER KARLIN
Son. This bathroom is out of bounds. The signs clearly show the bathroom is to the left. You went right.

YOUNG SIDNEY
Yeah - but what happened to Kenny?

FATHER KARLIN
I don't know. Kenny's probably realized he's in the wrong bathroom. You kids are so unpredictable.

Young Sidney stares at him before turning around and leaving.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Young Kenny sits on the bed and takes his shirt off. Young Sidney steps into the room and closes the door behind him.

YOUNG SIDNEY
Kenny! Is there anything you want to say to me?

YOUNG KENNY
No.

YOUNG SIDNEY
Kenny! Listen to me. You were acting strange before church - and rushing out of the bathroom? What was that all about?

Young Kenny looks up at young Sidney. He starts to cry.

YOUNG SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Did Father Karlin touch you?

YOUNG KENNY
Yes.

YOUNG SIDNEY
How many times has he done this, Kenny?

YOUNG KENNY
I don't know - five or six.

YOUNG SIDNEY
I'm gonna tell Pop. This is not on.

YOUNG KENNY

You can't Sidney. You can't. He said he has contacts in the government and he has the power to kill Mom and Pop.

Young Sidney walks around the room and decides what course of action to take.

YOUNG SIDNEY

You know what? I won't say anything. But promise me you stay close to me at church - you got it?

YOUNG KENNY

Yes!

YOUNG SIDNEY

I will not let you out of my sight. Dry your eyes.

YOUNG KENNY

Okay.

YOUNG SIDNEY

All good?

YOUNG KENNY

Yep!

Sidney opens the bedroom door to exit but is stopped in his tracks by George, who has a strange look on his face.

YOUNG SIDNEY

Oh! Pop?

GEORGE

Um - yeah. What are you two boys up to?

YOUNG SIDNEY

Nothing!

GEORGE

What's going on? Have you been crying Kenny?

YOUNG SIDNEY

Yeah! Pop - I accidentally bumped into him and his leg hit the side of the drawers. Isn't that right, Kenny?

YOUNG KENNY

Yeah! I hit my leg on the drawers.

George doesn't buy it. With a strange look on his face he turns around and walks away.

FIVE DAYS LATER

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

George, young Sidney and young Kenny lounge around watching TV.

GEORGE
Your mom will be home shortly. Are those dishes done?

YOUNG SIDNEY
Yeah Pop. All done.

The front door opens and in rushes Carmel crying profusely.

CARMEL
George! George! Father Karlin is dead. Father Karlin is dead.

YOUNG SIDNEY
What?

GEORGE
What happened?

CARMEL
He was shot. He was murdered in his own bed.

George stands up and comforts her.

CARMEL (CONT'D)
What's the world coming to?

GEORGE
I don't know.

CARMEL
Why would anybody want to hurt such a warm-hearted man?

Young Sidney looks over at young Kenny, before noticing George's eyes fixed on him. It's a look of 'I did it'. Young Sidney wells up as he sees a tear fall from George's eye.

INT. ELEVATOR - BACK FROM FLASHBACK - PRESENT TIME

Sidney pulls out a handkerchief from his pocket and wipes the sweat off his forehead.

SIDNEY
I have no doubt that my father shot him.

STANLEY
Sounds like Father Karlin got all
he fucking deserved.

SIDNEY
Maybe.

STANLEY
Did you say maybe?

SIDNEY
Stanley--

STANLEY
-- Your old man showed you he had
balls. As far as I'm concerned, the
people have spoken and justice has
been served. End of fucking story.
Let me put this to you - What would
you do if you found out some
fucking monster was touching your
girls?

SIDNEY
I'd be outraged.

STANLEY
Outraged?

SIDNEY
Yes! Outraged.

STANLEY
When you say outraged - does that
mean you'll hunt the fucker down
and cut him up in pieces?

SIDNEY
I wouldn't go that far.

STANLEY
What is fucking wrong with you?

SIDNEY
I'm a peaceful man. I'd call the
police and have him locked away.

STANLEY
Somebody give me a fucking bucket
'cause I'm about to spew up with
disgust.

SIDNEY
Killing somebody in the name of
revenge isn't the answer.

STANLEY
You're a fucking pussy.

SIDNEY

I'm a history teacher. People have been killing each other since day one, and yet, we're meant to be smarter than ever before - but the killing continues. We haven't learnt a god-damn thing.

STANLEY

There's nothing wrong with killing somebody who fucking deserved it.

SIDNEY

You see Stanley, that's where you and I differ. I don't believe in violence. We have a justice system in place. Sure - it isn't perfect, but most of the time it works. Ninety five percent of the population has goodness in their hearts-

STANLEY

-And they wear flowers in their fucking hair and hug whales.

SIDNEY

Hug whales?

STANLEY

Fuck! - Does it matter?

SIDNEY

If revenge killing was accepted in our community, where does it stop? Do we kill our neighbors 'cause their music is too loud, or kill another driver 'cause they cut you off on the freeway?

STANLEY

Now you're being stupid.

SIDNEY

No I'm not, Stanley. If you tell people they can kill for revenge, then it opens up a whole new world centered around the word 'revenge'.

STANLEY

You're just complicating it.

SIDNEY

Being a history teacher, there are so many examples of where revenge didn't work. Remember this, Stanley. History has the answers to today's questions.

STANLEY
(Confused)
History has the answers to today's
questions? What?

SIDNEY
Let's take the example of Adolf
Hitler.

STANLEY
I love Adolf Hitler. He's one of my
heroes.

SIDNEY
Let's forget about Adolf Hitler.

STANLEY
But I like Adolf Hitler.

SIDNEY
Forget it. I don't even know why
I'm going down this track. Just
forget it.

STANLEY
And you call yourself a history
teacher?

SIDNEY
Whatever.

Suddenly the countdown clock clicks to zero before a buzzer
goes off. Both men look up. There's a slight pause.

STANLEY
Now that we've run out of fucking
air - maybe now's a good time to
look at death and just simply
laugh.

SIDNEY
Laugh away, but I have three
daughters.

STANLEY
How long can we survive without
air?

SIDNEY
I would say we've got about 20
minutes left.

There's an eerie silence, as both men stare into the future.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Tell me something, Stanley. Did the tough talking Stanley Knight seek revenge for Spike's death?

STANLEY

Maybe.

SIDNEY

I've known you for five minutes and it's fair to say, man, you wouldn't let a person 'off the hook' for killing your dog.

Stanley looks Sidney in the eye, before looking away.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

You wanna add something?

Stanley stares into the distance.

STANLEY

Spike was my best buddy. You know, the only true friend you will ever have in life is a dog. He was loyal. He was fun to be with. He had my back. Yeah! Spike definitely had my back.

SIDNEY

So what did you do?

STANLEY

I couldn't fucking stand it much longer. No Spike around was getting me down. One night I stole a van from Russell County and brought it back to Swamp Valley. I wanted blood.

FLASHBACK

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Stanley climbs out of a van, dressed in black, wearing a wig and hat, as he crosses the road.

Stanley slows down his walk, as he peers through the front window of an Italian restaurant. He notices Kelly Wallace and her controlling husband, JAMES, with his arm around her, laughing. Stanley continues on.

AN HOUR LATER

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Stanley sits in the driver's seat and views the restaurant from a 45 degree angle on the other side of the road. He waits patiently as he taps along to a song on the radio.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Kelly and James Wallace walk out of the restaurant, holding hands.

KELLY

That risotto was to die for.

JAMES

They need to work on their wine list, though.

KELLY

James - We're in Swamp Valley, not Paris.

JAMES

True. Hey! How about we go to Paris for the summer? What do you think?

Kelly leans forward and gives James a passionate kiss.

KELLY

(Speaking French)
Vous êtes une bel homme.
(You are a beautiful man)

JAMES

(Speaking French)
Je sais. Je sais.
(I know. I know.)

James leans forward and hugs Kelly. He lifts his eyes and views the street cautiously.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Have you seen that creep lately?

Kelly breaks out of the hug.

KELLY

What?

JAMES

It's been a month since his dog died.

KELLY

You said you didn't do it.

JAMES
I didn't do it. I swear to God.

KELLY
Okay. I believe you. No I haven't
seen him.

Kelly becomes apprehensive.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Let's just get out of here.

MOMENTS LATER

Kelly and James reach their brand new Maseratti. James flicks the doors open with his key and they both climb in.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

James starts up the sports car and adjusts the radio.

JAMES
I just think that waiter was a
jerk. He couldn't stop looking at
you.

KELLY
Come on, James. I have no interest
in that waiter. Let's not spoil a
good night.

JAMES
Hey! I just thought you laughed far
too much at his lousy jokes.

KELLY
They weren't lousy. They were
funny. Even you laughed.

JAMES
I'm telling you now - They weren't
funny! What a jerk!

James looks in his side mirror. Suddenly, Stanley's stolen van pulls up, blocking him in.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Look at this fucking asshole.

James puts the window down, only to be greeted by a glove holding a pistol, with a silencer on the end. Two shots fire off, before James and Kelly can react, killing them instantly as blood splatters across the interior. Moments later the van shoots off.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Stanley's van cruises past a sign that reads,
"Welcome to Russell County"

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Stanley drives the van behind a gas station. He turns the lights off and climbs out.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Stanley walks through an eerie park, checking the surroundings, making sure he's not seen. He approaches his pick-up, climbs in and drives away.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Stanley drives past a sign that reads,
"Thank you for visiting Russell County"

INT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Stanley drives down the main street of Swamp Valley and stops at a traffic jam. He sees in the distance police cars, an ambulance and flashing lights, where the shooting occurred.

A young POLICE OFFICER, approaches Stanley's vehicle.

STANLEY

What seems to be the problem officer?

POLICE OFFICER

There's been a shooting. We've blocked off the street and diverting traffic along Valley Road. Just be patient.

STANLEY

A shooting in Swamp Valley? Get out of here.

POLICE OFFICER

I'm afraid so. I've gotta keep moving - have a good night.

STANLEY

You too.

The Officer walks down to the vehicle behind Stanley.

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

Stanley sleeps when suddenly he's awoken by a knock at the door. Moments later he opens up to DETECTIVE WEBSTER (52) and female DETECTIVE HITCHENER (40).

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Stanley sits across a table from the two detectives in an interview room.

DETECTIVE HITCHENER

Just admit it Stanley. You couldn't handle Kelly Wallace dumping you. She told a friend you were a time-bomb waiting to explode. You were unstable. You couldn't control your temper. Is it true? Hey, Stanley?

Stanley sits silent.

DETECTIVE HITCHENER (CONT'D)

Did you ever beat her up? Is that how you treat women, Stanley? Is that how you get your kicks? You beat 'em up? I'm a big gas station worker and I beat up women because it makes me a man. Hey, Stanley?

Stanley sits silent.

DETECTIVE HITCHENER (CONT'D)

I think Kelly mentioned to her friend that you were a terrible lover, especially in the sack, and struggled to get a hard-on. Is that true, Stanley?

STANLEY

Why don't you find out Detective? Are you free Friday night?

DETECTIVE WEBSTER

You think this is a fucking joke, asshole? Let me tell you something Knight - You will fry when we find proof, you son-of-a-bitch.

DETECTIVE HITCHENER

You're going down, Knight. You're going down.

STANLEY

Is that all, detectives?

DETECTIVE WEBSTER

Get this piece of shit out of here!

INT. ELEVATOR - BACK FROM FLASHBACK - PRESENT TIME

Stanley looks up at Sidney and gives him a smile of satisfaction.

STANLEY

The cops followed me 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for 3 fucking months. But they had no physical evidence. I shot the fuckers on the main street of Swamp Valley, yet there were no witnesses, no conclusive video - nothing! I committed the perfect murder and got sweet fucking revenge.

Sidney paces up and down, thinking of his reply.

SIDNEY

That's quite a story, Stanley. I'm shocked. The only thing that I would say in response is this - Was it worth it? Was it worth two lives?

STANLEY

(Turning to anger)

Yes! It was fucking worth it! Spike was fucking family to me. Imagine if some asshole kidnapped and killed one of your daughters? Hey? Imagine that? Let me tell you something - You'd pull the trigger. And if you say you wouldn't, then you're a fucking lying son-of-a-bitch.

SIDNEY

Stanley, why did you kill the girl? Come on, man - She is the innocent person here, but you killed her.

STANLEY

Innocent? Don't you get it? She was there when Spike was shot. She saw Spike on the road with fucking blood gushing out of him. That fucking bitch disrespected Spike, not to mention me, for taking back that asshole. Now, tell me again how that cunt was the innocent person in all this?

SIDNEY

I don't even want to think about it.

STANLEY

Then don't judge me.

SIDNEY

I'm not judging you. Look, for what it's worth - if some animal took one of my kids, I'd want answers - I'd probably...

STANLEY

You'd pull the trigger.

SIDNEY

I don't know and the way it's going it doesn't matter.

STANLEY

If you push someone too fucking far they'll eventually pull that trigger. You should be so proud of what your old man did. I'm telling you now, it's in your blood. You're putting on this lovey-dovey-flower-power face, but in the end - you'll pull that fucking trigger. Bang! Bang! Revenge is complete. Justice has been served.

SIDNEY

My father had an aggressive streak and was a little hot headed. I'm the complete opposite, Stanley.

STANLEY

It doesn't matter.

SIDNEY

Stanley, with all due respect, you're uneducated, yet you've suddenly become an expert on human behavior - I don't think so.

STANLEY

Is it my fault that the truth hurts you?

Sidney rolls his eyes.

SIDNEY

Let's change the subject.

STANLEY

Have it your way.

SIDNEY

Are you scared of dying, Stanley?

STANLEY

Nope!

SIDNEY

It's a funny feeling. We're looking the Grim Reaper in the eye and we haven't so much as blinked. Both of us are so calm.

STANLEY

I'm more pissed off than calm. We're instant millionaires and we're not gonna spend a fucking dime.

SIDNEY

Money's not everything.

STANLEY

What the fuck?

SIDNEY

Forget it.

STANLEY

Forget it?

SIDNEY

We never had the million bucks in our hands, so technically you could say we never became millionaires.

STANLEY

Now you're dribbling.

SIDNEY

I guess it doesn't matter what either of us say anymore.

Stanley opens up his wallet and pulls out a photo of his mother.

STANLEY

This is my old lady.

He hands the photo over to Sidney.

We see a photo of Stanley's mother, SANDRA KNIGHT (40), dressed as a waitress.

SIDNEY

She's beautiful. She's nothing like you. I mean that in a good way. Look at her - she's blonde, blue eyed, fair complexion.

STANLEY

She certainly was beautiful. She never had a shortage of guys chasing her.

Sidney looks closer at the photo.

SIDNEY

Where was this taken?

STANLEY

At a local diner. She worked there for about 10 years. That photo was taken in the morning and she died that night.

SIDNEY

How did she die?

STANLEY

She was drunk, ran off the road and hit a tree. She died instantly.

SIDNEY

That's sad. Do you miss her?

STANLEY

Yeah. Everyday I think about her. You know what the funny thing is? It's her fucking birthday today. I got this feeling that she was throwing some overdue lucky dust at me. Riding in the limo I felt like she was sitting in the back with me.

SIDNEY

She probably was.

STANLEY

Fuck! I wish she could throw me some lucky dust right now.

Sidney hands back the photo.

The phone starts ringing.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

What do you know? The old lady came through.

Sidney slides over and grabs the phone.

SIDNEY

Hello.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)

Is that you Sidney?

SIDNEY

Yes it is. Is that you Captain Thomas?

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)

Yes Sidney. It's great to hear your voice.

SIDNEY

Same here. Same here. Can you get us out of here?

Stanley slides over and listens to Captain Thomas.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)

We're close. In fact we're only minutes away. We need you to stand away from the door and face the other way. There will be dust and smoke billowing through so we'll ask you to put a gas mask on as soon as possible.

STANLEY

Let's hurry up. There's not much fucking air left.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (V.O.)

Move away from the door.

Captain Thomas hangs up.

Sidney puts the phone back as Stanley puts his boots on and walks to the back wall.

STANLEY

What are you doing?

Sidney starts crying.

SIDNEY

We're gonna make it. Can you believe it? We're gonna make it.

STANLEY

Not if you stay there. Come on. Move your ass.

Sidney climbs up and joins Stanley.

SIDNEY

Has this experience changed you, Stanley? It's changed me.

STANLEY

Yeah. I'll take the stairs next time. I just wanna know when I'll get my million bucks?

SIDNEY

It's changed me forever. I'm not gonna take anything for granted. I'll hug my wife and kids every day until I die. I'll put kindness ahead of everything. I'll--

STANLEY

--Oh please! You sound like such a fucking pussy. Let's just get the fuck out of here and get our money. The problem with you is you get too deep with this shit.

SIDNEY

(Sarcastic)

Thank you Stanley. I can always trust you to say the right thing.

STANLEY

My advice to you is - grow some balls like your old man and don't take shit from anyone.

SIDNEY

Does that include the KKK?

Stanley hesitates before he answers.

STANLEY

Anyone.

SIDNEY

Stanley. That's the best thing that's flown out of your mouth since I met you.

STANLEY

I'm starting again. No Klan, no gas station, no Swamp Valley. It's time old Stanley boy moved on.

SIDNEY

And where is that?

STANLEY

Alaska.

SIDNEY

Alaska?

STANLEY

I'm a hunter and fisherman.

SIDNEY

So you'll go from Florida to Alaska? You do know about the weather in Alaska?

STANLEY

Seriously - Do you think I'm a total fucking retard? I know about Alaska. We do have an invention called TV. Those Canadians will love me.

SIDNEY

Canadians?

Activity from the outside halts the conversation.

STANLEY

Finally.

We hear several banging noises before the doors slide open.

FOUR FIREFIGHTERS wearing gas masks storm in through the haze outside. They quickly place a gas mask on Sidney and Stanley.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Gentlemen. I'm Captain Thomas. Are any of you injured?

STANLEY

No.

SIDNEY

We're fine.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Are you both capable of walking out of here? If not, we can arrange for you to be carried out.

SIDNEY

We can walk out.

Stanley nods in agreement.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Gentlemen, when we exit the elevator I ask you to be extremely careful. We will escort you out slowly. Are we ready?

SIDNEY

Yes.

STANLEY

I'm ready.

Two firefighters stand in front of Sidney and Stanley, and the other two behind them. Captain Thomas, leading, turns around.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Put your hands on our shoulders.

Sidney and Stanley acknowledge, with the two firefighters behind placing their hands on their shoulders.

EXT. OUTSIDE ELEVATOR - DUSK

The double convoy of men exit into a hazy dark environment with low visibility.

Captain Thomas holds a flashlight to the uneven rubble.

CAPTAIN THOMAS
Nice and slow now. Watch your step.

After a short walk the flashlight reveals the back of a white van.

Captain Thomas opens up the side door.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, jump in. Keep your masks on.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Sidney and Stanley climb in and take a seat, followed by two of the firefighters. There are no windows and they can't see the other two firefighters climbing into the driver's cabin.

Both men sit anxiously as the vehicle travels a short distance, before coming to a stop. The engine turns off.

The door slides open and out climb the four men.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Captain Thomas takes off his mask. He's an African American.

CAPTAIN THOMAS
You can remove your masks now, gentlemen. Follow me.

Sidney and Stanley follow Captain Thomas behind a line of office partitions to a large desk. There are two chairs in front of it.

CAPTAIN THOMAS (CONT'D)
Take a seat, gentlemen.

Sidney and Stanley sit down, curiously looking around. Captain Thomas walks away.

SIDNEY
So Captain Thomas is black. Who would have guessed?

STANLEY

Remind me later to buy him some flowers. What are we doing here?

SIDNEY

No idea. Maybe they're marking off survivors?

William Stockhouse walks out from behind the partition and takes a seat at the desk.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Gentlemen. What a time you guys have had!

SIDNEY

William. I don't understand. You survived. How could you? You were outside the elevator when the building collapsed.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Sidney. Miracles happen everyday around the world. How many times have we heard of how a little child survived an earthquake stuck underneath all that rubble? Or the miracle stories of a person stuck in the desert for weeks, only to walk out. Miracles are something special. However, me surviving wasn't one of them. In fact, the complete opposite. We have the ability to manipulate the human mind to every extreme. Convince somebody that they're watching an eagle, when in fact it's just a butterfly. Gentlemen - I'd like you to meet a few people.

From behind the partition steps Detective Webster and Detective Hitchener.

STANLEY

What the fuck?

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Stanley. You've met Detective Webster and Detective Hitchener.

STANLEY

What are they doing here?

DETECTIVE HITCHENER

Hello, Mr. Knight.

DETECTIVE WEBSTER

You piece of shit.

STANLEY
Fuck you and fuck you.

SIDNEY
What on Earth is going on here,
William?

FOUR POLICE OFFICERS, including Captain Thomas step out from behind the partition. They automatically surround Sidney and Stanley. William Stockhouse jumps out of his chair.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE
A butterfly, Mr. Bishop. This is California, gentlemen. This is where dreams are created and where anything's possible.

William Stockhouse turns to the detectives and nods.

Detective Hitchener steps forward as Detective Webster walks around the back of the two men.

DETECTIVE HITCHENER
Stanley Knight. You are under arrest for the murder of James and Kelly Wallace. You have the right to remain silent...

Detective Webster pulls out his handcuffs.

DETECTIVE WEBSTER
Let me see your hands.

STANLEY
This is fucking bullshit.

DETECTIVE WEBSTER
Get your hands up, Knight.

DETECTIVE HITCHENER
...Anything you say or do may be held against you in a court of law...

Stanley quickly stands up, flicking the chair away.

STANLEY
Fuck you all. I'm out of here.

Captain Thomas and his officers tackle Stanley to the ground but he refuses to surrender.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Fucking assholes. Get off me, you fuckers.

SIDNEY
Is this necessary?

DETECTIVE WEBSTER
Stand aside, Bishop!

SIDNEY
You're hurting him.

STANLEY
You're a bunch a fucking assholes.

They eventually get the cuffs on Stanley as he lays on the carpet face down.

DETECTIVE HITCHENER
Sidney, when you fly home, I can assure you that detectives will be greeting you in relation to your father.

SIDNEY
I don't believe it. There was no earthquake?

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE
None at all.

DETECTIVE WEBSTER
Okay, Mr. Knight. You're coming with us. Get this piece of shit up and shut it all down.

SIDNEY
Hang on. So there's no million dollar prizes?

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE
Nothing - Not a dime.

The police officers aggressively escort Stanley around the desk past Detective Hitchener and William Stockhouse.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE (CONT'D)
Wait a minute.

They turn Stanley around.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE (CONT'D)
Sidney! Is there anything you want to say to Stanley?

Sidney looks at Stanley with sadness in his eyes, but he's lost for words.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE (CONT'D)
I guess that's a no. Stanley! Have you got anything to say to Mr. Bishop?

STANLEY

I'll see you around.

Sidney nods his head.

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

I don't believe it. Is that all you're going to say to your father? - I'll see you around? You've finally met your father after 35 years and that's all you got to say, Knight?

SIDNEY

What?

STANLEY

What are you fucking talking about?

WILLIAM STOCKHOUSE

Sidney Bishop - this is your son, Stanley Knight.

SIDNEY

What? No!

DETECTIVE HITCHENER

It's true. DNA confirms it.

SIDNEY

There must be some mistake!

DETECTIVE HITCHENER

There's no mistake.

DETECTIVE WEBSTER

(Smiling)

What's that saying? Like grandfather, like grandson.

STANLEY

You're pulling our fucking chains - It's all bullshit - I'm gonna fucking smash you motherfuckers-

DETECTIVE HITCHENER

-Did you attend North Eastern Illinois?

SIDNEY

Yes, but-

DETECTIVE WEBSTER

-So did Sandra Knight.

Sidney's face changes as it jolts a memory.

FLASHBACK

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

At a college house party, 18 YEAR OLD SIDNEY, very drunk, has sex with SANDRA KNIGHT (18) from behind. We hear music in the background. He climaxes, as a PARTY-GOER walks in on them.

PARTY-GOER

I need to take a pee. I'm about to explode.

Sandra quickly pulls her panties up and leaves the room without saying anything.

INT. STUDIO - BACK FROM FLASHBACK

Stanley realizes it's true as he reacts to Sidney's facial expressions. It steams Stanley up to uncontrollable rage as they struggle to hold him.

Stanley kicks and screams as several more POLICE OFFICERS race in to restrain him.

Voices from all angles are yelling.

The anger levels flow through to the officers holding Stanley. They start throwing punches - felling Stanley to the ground.

Sidney leaps in to help him but ends up out of his depth as he receives several punches to his face. Knocked out, he falls dramatically to the floor.

They drag an unconscious Stanley through the studio, past STUDIO HANDS who carry out desks, chairs, walls, indoor plants and 'USA LOTTERY' signs.

They drag Stanley past the elevator where MORE STUDIO HANDS inside are dismantling hidden cameras and microphones.

EXT. STUDIO DOORS - CONTINUOUS

A white police van comes to a sudden halt. THE DRIVER jumps out and slides open the side door, as they drag Stanley into the vehicle with several officers climbing in.

10 YEARS LATER - FLORIDA STATE PRISON

INT. PRISON CELL - MID MORNING

Stanley sits at his tiny desk reading The Spartan. He's lost a lot of weight, grown a lot of grey hair and shaved his face. Next to his bed are several novels. Stanley turns the page before a GUARD opens up the viewing panel.

GUARD
Knight! Visitor.

Stanley grabs a playing card (Jack of Spades) and marks the page before he puts the book down. He climbs up, steps over to a mirror and checks his appearance.

INT. CELL BLOCK - MID MORNING

TWO LARGE MALE GUARDS, JOE and LENNY, escort Stanley who shuffles along with handcuffs and ankle chains. They walk past the cell of MEAN MOOCHO (38), African American, who's standing in his cell, leaning against the bars.

MEAN MOOCHO
You're going to the chair to fry,
white-boy. Your skin will be darker
than mine soon.

Stanley ignores him.

MEAN MOOCHO (CONT'D)
I'm talking to you, motherfucker!
You're going to the chair, you
white ass faggot!

JOE
Give it a rest, Moocho!

MEAN MOOCHO
Fuck you!

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A DOOR GUARD opens up as they leave the cell block.

JOE
I hear your execution was delayed
again. You're one lucky son-of-a-
bitch, Stanley.

STANLEY
You must be putting in a good word
for me - Hey, Joe?

JOE
I wish I had that power, Stanley.

INT. VISITOR'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The guards escort him to a visitor's booth that's separated by thick glass.

He sits down to see, a smiling older Sidney and older Pamela, with their GROWN-UP GIRLS - JADA (25), KAYLA (23) and JAVINA (21). They're all wearing 'happy birthday Stanley' T-shirts.

Stanley breaks into a laugh and claps his hands.

FADE OUT