

Mister Sunshine

written by

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INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - BACKROOM - DAY

It is a cold winter midday. JACK, 40, a cynical office clerk whose wife is pregnant, is getting up to get a coffee.

STEVE, 45, a black man with nothing going for him except having a nice car, which he saved 10 years for, is there getting a coffee too.

JACK

Fuck you, Steve, how's the car, did you fix her yet?

STEVE

(With resignation)

Fuck you too, Jack. Well, I did, but apparently the mechanic screwed me over 'cause he fixed me up with cheap knock-off brake pads and they broke down immediately.

Jack laughs at Steve. It's his turn to get a coffee and he gets in front of Steve to get it.

JACK

Again?! Didn't he screw you over last time as well?

STEVE

Yes, well, apparently he takes me for a fool just because I'm new to the neighborhood. He's not wrong.

Steve sips his coffee.

JACK

Have you tried going to a different mechanic?

STEVE

No, but it's not going to make a difference. Guys like me always get played. I feel like I have a target on my back.

There's a small pause as Jack smiles at Steve. Jack's coffee is finished, he puts the sugar and cream in.

JACK

I know what you mean, buddy.

Jack sips his coffee too.

STEVE

(Sighs)

Anyway, I'm gonna get back to work before the boss sees the target and shoots for it. Oh and fuck your wife nearing labor, you know I don't give a shit.

JACK

(Exhumes)

Fuck you and your car too Steve, talk to you later.

Steve gets back to his desk. Jack does the same.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - FRONT DESK - DAY

There's an APPLICANT, white, looks to be in his early 30's, waiting for him.

APPLICANT

Fuck you and bad day to you sir. I'm here to pick up my driver's license?

JACK

(Sighs, obviously distraught with the way people greet in this world)

Fuck you and bad day to you too sir. Could you give me your name and date of birth?

APPLICANT

November 10th, 1993. Name's Gilbert Spencer.

Jack types his name in the computer as he sips his coffee. He finds him in the system.

JACK

Ah yeah, Gilbert. Gilbert, Gilbert, Gilbert. It seems you're a few days late to pick your license up. Let me check if it's still there, but usually we throw it out if you're late.

GILBERT

Throw it out? I only missed the appointment by two days, you must still have it. Could you go and check?

JACK

I can, sometimes they forget to do it, but the policy is if you're not on time we throw it out and you have to apply again.

GILBERT

(To himself)

Ahh, this is bullshit.

Jack gets up and goes to check the cabinet in the back.

He opens the drawer and finds a bunch of licenses and passports all in the same drawer.

He checks them all but can't find one that says Gilbert Spencer.

He checks the bottom two drawers. It's not there either. He concludes they must have thrown it out and walks back to his desk.

JACK

(Reluctantly)

I'm not so sorry buddy, but it's not there.

GILBERT

Oh come on, you've got to be kidding me. Can I see your supervisor?

Jack gets uncomfortable at this request.

JACK

(Uncomfortably)

My supervisor's probably the one who threw it out. We have a policy, if you're not on time, your documents get thrown in the garbage bin, there's nothing I can do for you.

GILBERT

(Angrily)

Oh for fuck's sake does everything have to go by the book?

(MORE)

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Don't you people understand shit gets in the way and you have to catch people a break?

JACK

(Visibly distraught but holding firm)

Uhh, evidently we do catch people a break. But not you. Not this time. Sorry not sorry, you're gonna have to go fuck yourself, make a new appointment and pay again.

GILBERT

Yeah, hope you die slowly of explosive diarrhea and exhaustion. Goodbye.

Gilbert leaves the office frustrated and bangs the door.

Jack smiles an uneasy smile and gets on with his coffee.

Suddenly his phone vibrates. It's a message from his wife: "Come home now! I think my water just broke!".

Jack is in shock. He takes a moment to realize what this means, then gets up and goes to his BOSS' office to ask to leave. His boss is a black man in his 50's.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - BOSS' OFFICE - DAY

JACK

Marty! Marty! My wife's water just broke! Can I go and bring her to the hospital?

MARTY

What?! Now? You need to finish your shift there's a whole line of applicants!

JACK

I thought we talked about this Marty, my wife is in labor and there's no one to bring her to the hospital. I have to leave!

MARTY

Fine. Fine. But get someone to cover your shift. I ain't cleaning your shit.

JACK  
 Okay, I'll call Eric or Sarah on  
 the way over. See you later Marty.  
 I'm gonna go get me a BOY!

Jack grabs his belongings from his desk and spurts out the front door.

He puts his briefcase in the passenger seat, starts his ten-year-old Nissan Altima and drives off.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ON THE ROAD - DAY

Jack is rushing home, but traffic's tight. It's a standard New York City day, busy as usual.

Jack calls ERIC, laid-back dude in his late 20's, through Android CarPlay, which automatically connected to his phone when he got in the car.

He installed Android CarPlay himself, the car didn't originally have it.

ERIC  
 (Hesitatingly)  
 Uhm, hello, what's up Jack?

JACK  
 (Impatiently)  
 Eric, hey, listen I've got a request for you.

ERIC  
 (In disbelief that Jack is calling him)  
 You never call me dude, what do you want?

JACK  
 (Anxious)  
 My wife's in labor, I had to leave work to go get her and take her to the hospital. Can you cover my shift?

ERIC  
 Oh that's right, your wife was still pregnant! Uhm, yeah I can come to work, but you owe me one.

JACK  
 (Relief)  
 Thanks.

Jack bangs his hand against the steering wheel

JACK (CONT'D)  
Thanks. Thanks man, I appreciate  
it.

ERIC  
Who's working today anyway? I'm not  
working with Linda am I?

As Eric is saying this the lane opens up in front of Jack's car but another car cuts in front of him from the right lane and he has to swerve to the left to avoid a collision

JACK  
(Startled)  
Oh fuck! My God these stupid shits!

ERIC  
(Confused)  
What? Who are you calling a stupid  
shit?

JACK  
Not you, not you, Eric, a car just  
cut in front of me and I panicked.  
I wasn't talking about you! Anyway  
Linda's not working today so you're  
safe!

ERIC  
Alright great! Anyway I better get  
ready, fuck you and have a crap day  
dude!

JACK  
Thanks. Thanks, that's great. Fuck  
you too Eric. Talk to you later!

As the conversation ends Jack is nearing home.

He has to stop for red lights a few times and gets frustrated, but eventually gets there. The last stretch is easy.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - JACK'S HOUSE - DAY

Jack gets home.

He lives in a two-bedroom apartment in Lower Manhattan.

He parks his car sloppily at the front door and rushes inside to get to ELEANOR, early 30's, of Greek descent, Jack's wife, the love of his life and the bane of his existence.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

He finds his wife on the couch in the living room, holding her stomach and puffing heavily.

JACK  
(Excited)  
Am I on time, are you OK?

ELEANOR  
Yes you're on time you stupid shit.  
Now help me get up and let's get to  
the hospital!

JACK  
(Obsequious but excited)  
Okay honey. Let's get to the  
hospital quick!

Jack helps Eleanor up and grabs a few of her things.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(Pointing at things)  
We're gonna need your purse and  
your wallet, and is your ID in any  
of those or do I need to find it?

ELEANOR  
(Panting heavily)  
No, it's all in there. Let's go.

Jack leads Eleanor out the door.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - JACK'S HOUSE - DAY

He guides her to the car then asks:

JACK  
You wanna sit in the back seat or  
the front seat honey?

ELEANOR  
Front seat you dumb shit, so you  
can help me if something's wrong.

JACK  
 (Accepting of her abusive  
 language)  
 Ok honey, here you go.

Jack puts her in the front seat, then walks around the front of the car to the driver's position.

He then takes off clumsily on the way to the hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

They arrive at the hospital. Jack parks the car in the parking lot and then walks over to the passenger seat to take Eleanor out.

They walk inside and Jack quickly grabs a wheelchair for her to sit in.

Then they move on towards the desk to the HOSPITAL RECEPTIONIST, black woman, mid-40's. Jack does the talking.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - DAY

JACK  
 (Still riled up)  
 Hi, my wife is in labor. Could you help us get a room?

HOSPITAL RECEPTIONIST  
 (Cranky and impatient)  
 Fuck you and bad day to you sir. If you would sit over there someone will come to take you to your room in a few minutes. Until then show me your health plan insurance card, ID and fill out these forms please.

She points to a waiting area nearby and gives Jack the forms. Eleanor pulls out her ID and insurance card and shows it to the receptionist.

JACK  
 (Awkwardly)  
 Fuck you too ma'am...we'll go and fill out these forms.

He pushes Eleanor to the waiting area and takes a seat.

He starts filling out the forms before a NURSE, blond woman, early 30's, walks in and tells them to follow her.

INT. HOSPITAL - ASSESSMENT ROOM - DAY

She brings them to a small hospital assessment room and settles them in.

NURSE

(Explaining things dryly)  
 Okay, welcome, this is your room.  
 You can call me by pressing this  
 button whenever you're finished  
 with those forms or have another  
 question. I'll be back in a few  
 minutes to monitor your  
 contractions and your baby's heart  
 rate to ensure everything goes  
 smoothly. There's a TV on the wall  
 in case you want to watch  
 something. And please, by all  
 means, do go fuck yourselves.

JACK

(Awkwardly again)  
 Thank you, ma'am...And fuck you  
 too!

The nurse leaves the room and Jack and Eleanor are left alone.

Eleanor makes herself comfortable and turns on the TV. The first channel to appear is the news, Eleanor leaves it on as apparently something big is going on.

ELEANOR

(Distracted while watching  
 TV)  
 Jack, don't forget to call old lady  
 HAGIENTA. She needs to be here when  
 the baby comes.

JACK

(Slightly annoyed but  
 deferential)  
 Hagienta? Do we really need a  
 fortune teller at our baby's birth?  
 The future's not so easy to see you  
 know.

ELEANOR

(Curtly)  
 Shut up and do as I say, I don't  
 need to hear your skepticism again.

Jack pauses and sighs, and his sigh shows he's used to being treated like this by her.

JACK

(Inquisitive)

Even if you could tell the future,  
why would you even wanna know?

ELEANOR

(Disrespectfully)

So I can tell whether he's gonna be  
a real man or another you! Now shut  
up and let's watch the news, it  
looks like it's another war.

Jack finishes the forms and he and Eleanor watch TV.

THE PRESIDENT is on TV, holding a press conference where he says the threat from Waziristan is greater than ever before and the US must act now.

That Waziristan is allied to the Russians and the Chinese, who seek to overthrow American hegemony and that the US will not sit back idly and let this happen to it without acting boldly as they still are the world's greatest military.

The conference is filled with over-the-top bragging and boasting from the US president about the US military and makes Eleanor laugh.

THE PRESIDENT

(On TV)

We have the mightiest military in  
the history of the world! We can  
take on anyone! We are bigger, and  
more powerful, and more beautiful  
than anyone that's ever been! Even  
the Chinese know that! They worship  
us as Gods! We still have the  
greatest military in the world and  
cannot be defeated by anyone, ever!  
We're gonna kill 'em if they make a  
wrong move, and that's what they  
seem to be doing, and that's not so  
smart, I told them to be smart. I  
warned them that they will be met  
with fire and fury if they do not  
back down and settle this matter  
diplomatically! No one can beat us!

Jack doesn't laugh, he seems to get more and more somber the more the US president clowns around about how mighty he is and how he's going to destroy his enemies.

JACK

Can we turn this off? This stuff is really depressing. How can a president talk like that?

ELEANOR

What are you kidding me? World War Three is about to start and you wanna miss the action?

JACK

I know it's important and stuff, but I just can't stand this guy and his lunacy.

Eleanor pauses for a moment to think.

ELEANOR

(Teasing)

Why not? The lunacy is the best part. That's how real men talk!

JACK

(Quietly to himself)

Pretty irresponsible, but whatever.

ELEANOR

What was that? Irresponsible? No, your weakness is irresponsible. This president is great, he's the strongest president we've ever had.

JACK

(Disgruntled)

We have a baby coming. This guy is gonna blow up the world! Nobody's gonna be strong after that!

Eleanor scoffs. The TV is still on in the background. The news has moved on towards the opinions of the panel.

ELEANOR

Blow up the world? Fine let him do it, we can start anew!

Jack winces, pulling back as if stung.

JACK

(Insulted but subdued)

Start anew? You'll be toast! There won't be anymore you to start anew with, you'll be in hell with all the rest of them! And our kid will be too!

ELEANOR  
 (Dismissively)  
 Oh shut up already. You don't know  
 what it takes to be the best.  
 You've always been a loser.

The nurse walks in the room

NURSE  
 (High-spirited this time)  
 Hi, I'm here to monitor your  
 contractions and your baby's heart  
 rate. Have you had any yet?

ELEANOR  
 No ma'am, just had the water  
 breaking and -

JACK  
 I'm gonna go smoke a cigarette I'll  
 be right back.

ELEANOR  
 Yeah you do that, inhale death and  
 then cry about it when our  
 president exhales it.

The nurse gets a little uncomfortable at this exchange but  
 then continues on. Eleanor turns the volume on the TV down.

NURSE  
 It's OK if you haven't had one yet,  
 it's still early. Let me check up  
 on the baby's heart rate for now.

Jack leaves the room and makes his way to the exit.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Jack leaves through the hospital's front door and fires up a  
 cigarette.

He's stressed out from the conversation with Eleanor and is  
 thinking about it.

He finishes his cigarette fast whilst staring into the abyss,  
 seemingly lost in thought as well as observing his  
 environment.

When he's finished with his cigarette he throws it on the  
 ground and fires up another.

Suddenly a DRUNK HOMELESS MAN, black man in his mid-40's, who is walking nearby, shouts something at him.

DRUNK HOMELESS MAN  
Hey, you're not allowed to smoke in  
the immediate vicinity of a  
hospital, asshole!

Jack is startled. He looks at the homeless man and sees the most ragged person he's seen in a while. His clothes are dark green and grey, and all torn up, and he's carrying about fifty shopping bags on his shoulder.

JACK  
(Awkwardly)  
Oh, I'm sorry, I'll move.

Jack walks away from the hospital to the car park.

DRUNK HOMELESS MAN  
(Yelling)  
Yeah you're damn right! Keep  
walking faggot!

Jack gets to his car in the parking lot while he is smoking his cigarette.

As he looks back toward the drunk homeless man, he sees him peeing at the hospital entrance and laughing while doing it.

DRUNK HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)  
Yeaah baby! This is America!

For a moment Jack keeps staring in disbelief. Then he chuckles and finishes his cigarette and walks back to the hospital.

As he gets to the drunk homeless man he awkwardly walks around him and tries not to say anything.

DRUNK HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)  
What, you never see a motherfucker  
pee in front of a hospital before?  
Ha-ha-haaa!

Jack tries desperately to ignore him and walks back in to the assessment room.

INT. HOSPITAL - ASSESSMENT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack walks in the room as Eleanor is having a contraction. She's holding her stomach and huffing and puffing heavily. Suddenly she makes a loud, anguished noise.

ELEANOR  
 (In pain)  
 Aaaaaaah! Oh God, help me Jack!

Jack rushes to help and holds Eleanor's hand. The nurse is not in the room anymore. He presses the button to get the nurse in. Eleanor screams some more.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
 Oh fuck! Aaah! Fuck! I can't take this, this is too much.

JACK  
 Hold on honey, it'll be over in a second.

ELEANOR  
 I sure hope so!

Suddenly the contraction is over and Eleanor calms down. The nurse rushes in.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
 Man, that was a big one!

NURSE  
 Are you ok? Let me help. Here sit like this.

She encourages Eleanor to sit back.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
 When you feel a contraction coming you should lay on your side and focus on your breathing. Don't panic, try to relax.

ELEANOR  
 What do you do if it hurts too much? Don't you guys have an injection for that or something?

Jack smirks uncomfortably. He finds the hypocrisy of arguing for strength and then asking for painkillers amusing but is still worried for his wife.

NURSE  
 Sorry, we can't give you a pain injection right now. Maybe if you're farther along we'll give you something, but for now you're just gonna have to be strong.

JACK  
 (Sarcastically)  
 Like that president you like so  
 much honey!

Eleanor hits Jack on the back of the head

ELEANOR  
 Don't get smart with me you piece  
 of shit. This isn't funny.

JACK  
 Ow! And the president's speech was?  
 Seems like he was arguing for pain  
 just like yours and now you're  
 arguing against it!

ELEANOR  
 Shut the fuck up, Jack. What do you  
 know about pain? The worst pain  
 you've ever felt was when you  
 stubbed your toe on the coffee  
 table!

JACK  
 Yes, and I'd like to keep it that  
 way.

The nurse gets visibly uncomfortable at this exchange but is  
 used to it so tries to take it with a grain of salt.

NURSE  
 (In a friendly voice)  
 OK, I'm gonna head out now. It  
 seems you're doing just fine. The  
 DOCTOR will be here to check your  
 cervical dilation in a few minutes.  
 Buzz me whenever you need help  
 again!

ELEANOR  
 Ok, fuck you ma'am. Fuck you very  
 much.

JACK  
 Uhh yes, fuck you ma'am.

The nurse leaves the room. Jack and Eleanor are sitting there  
 quietly, nobody says a word. Suddenly something springs to  
 Eleanor's mind.

ELEANOR

Oh right, did you call old lady  
Hagienta Jack? She needs to be here  
when the baby arrives.

JACK

No, I haven't. Why does she have to  
be here when the baby arrives?  
Can't she come after the birth when  
we're back at home?

ELEANOR

No, Jack. She needs to be here when  
he's just born, that's when the  
spiritual energies are at their  
strongest. Now go call her!

JACK

(Skeptically)  
Spiritual energies? My god. Fine,  
I'll do it.

ELEANOR

Oh and get me some ice chips!

JACK

(Resigned)  
Fine.

Jack leaves the room to make the phone call and get the ice  
chips. Eleanor is laying on the bed all by herself. She turns  
the volume on the TV back up but the news-cycle is over.

She flips the channel to a reality-show about famous people  
and laughs as she sees it.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Jack is on the phone and has dialled Hagienta's number.

JACK

Hello, lady Hagienta? This is Jack  
Eleanor's husband.

INT. HAGIENTA'S HOUSE - DAY

Hagienta's at home, doing some kind of voodoo incantation.

She takes a break to talk to Jack.

HAGIENTA

(In a subversive voice)  
Hello Jack, to what do I owe this  
phone call?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

JACK

Listen Eleanor's going to give  
birth tonight. She wants you to be  
there to tell her the baby's  
fortune as soon as he's born. Said  
something about spiritual energies  
being the strongest then. You  
should know.

HAGIENTA

Oh you don't believe it? Probably  
why you turned out so great.

JACK

(With resignation)  
Yes...yes that's great. Anyway can  
you come?

Hagienta pauses for a moment, then takes a deep breath.

HAGIENTA

Tell her I'll be there!

Jack is relieved.

JACK

OK...ehm, fuck you Hagienta.

HAGIENTA

(Lovingly)  
Fuck you too Jack.

Jack hangs up the phone. He goes to the ice chips machine,  
puts a cup under it and presses the button.

INT. HOSPITAL - ASSESSMENT ROOM - DAY

Eleanor is still watching the reality-TV show.

GENERIC FAMOUS PERSON

(On TV)  
O.m.g. I can't believe Precious  
would do that to me! Fucking my  
boyfriend is really not OK!

Eleanor laughs at this. She finds it very amusing.

Jack walks in the door.

JACK  
OK I called old lady Hagienta and  
she said she's coming.

He gives her the ice chips.

JACK (CONT'D)  
And here is your ice chips.

ELEANOR  
(Upbeat)  
Fuck you, Jack!

Eleanor turns the volume on the TV down.

JACK  
What were you watching?

He looks over to the screen.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(With disgust)  
Oh this shit? I hate these people,  
why are they famous?

Eleanor laughs.

ELEANOR  
Because after all the plastic  
surgery they're hotter than you!  
Ha! Can you believe it?

Eleanor is obviously excited by this fact.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
But don't worry about the people on  
the TV, worry about your baby. In a  
few hours you're gonna have a son!  
Are you excited?

Jack sighs.

JACK  
Excited? Like you wouldn't believe!  
Can't wait until he's here we've  
been waiting so long!

ELEANOR  
I just hope he doesn't become  
anything like you. What a disaster  
that'd be!

Jack is not even offended.

JACK

Like me? He could do a whole lot worse, he could become like that president you adore!

The reality TV-show is still playing in the background, albeit on low volume.

ELEANOR

Ha! Wouldn't that be something? A president coming out of an office clerk!

She sighs a weary sigh, and lets out a big yawn.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'm gonna take a nap or something, I'm exhausted Jack. Wake me when the doctor arrives.

JACK

(Inhaling and exhaling deeply)

Ok honey, nighty night.

Eleanor shuts her eyes and rests. Jack tries to stay up, but he's also tired and shuts his eyes too.

The two wait until it's time to go into labor.

INT. HOSPITAL - ASSESSMENT ROOM - LATER

Jack and Eleanor have been waiting for hours. It's already dark outside. Eleanor has had a few contractions. The DOCTOR has stopped by a couple of times and checked her cervical dilation, she's almost there.

Suddenly she feels something coming.

ELEANOR

(Worried and panting)

Jack go get the nurse, I think the baby's coming. Ow! Ow! Ow!

Eleanor is in pain. Jack was idling and it takes him a moment to pay attention.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Jack! Go quick. Or press the button! Where's that fucking button?

JACK  
 (Jumping to awareness and  
 then starts beaming)  
 Oh my God, is it time?!

He quickly presses the button.

Eleanor huffs and puffs and lets out a big moan. Moments later the nurse enters the room.

NURSE  
 Oh heavens! You're ready, let's get  
 you to the delivery room!

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is a blur of sterile white. The calm of the assessment room is gone, replaced by the rhythmic *beep-boop* of monitors.

The nurse and a helper slide Eleanor from the gurney onto the delivery bed. The doctor enters the room and puts on his latex gloves.

DOCTOR  
 Alright, Eleanor. You've done the  
 hard part of waiting. Now it's time  
 for delivering. I need you to be  
 calm and trust in me.

Eleanor is drenched in sweat. She grips the side rails of her bed. Jack hovers by her head, looking a mix of terrified and ecstatic.

ELEANOR  
 (Voice strained, guttural)  
 It feels...like being stabbed in  
 the gut. Jack, give me your hand!

Jack proffers his hand. Eleanor crushes it instantly. Jack's face contorts, but he doesn't pull away.

JACK  
 I'm here, honey. Just breathe.

ELEANOR  
 (Panicky)  
 Ok. Don't let go!

DOCTOR  
 (Positioned at the foot of  
 the bed)  
 Okay, Eleanor.  
 (MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Big contraction coming. On the next one, I want a long, steady push for ten seconds. Deep breath in...and go!

Eleanor lets out a primal, earth-shaking growl. Her face turns red.

NURSE

Good! Keep it coming, keep it coming! Five more seconds!

Eleanor collapses back against the pillows, gasping for air. The room goes quiet for a beat, save for the rapid *beep-boop* of the heart monitor.

JACK

(Whispering)

You're doing it, El. You're doing it.

DOCTOR

I see hair. Dark hair. One more big push and we'll have the head.

This gives Eleanor more energy. Her eyes go wide. She doesn't wait for the count. She lunges forward, pulling on the handles of the bed.

ELEANOR

*Aaaaaaaahh!*

DOCTOR

That's it! Head is out. Shoulders are coming...easy now, Eleanor. Short breaths. Just little ones.

The tension in the room reaches a breaking point. Then, with a wet, sliding sound and a final, exhausted sob from Eleanor, the pressure vanishes.

The silence that follows lasts only a second before it's interrupted by the sound of a baby crying.

NURSE

(Smiling)

There he is!

The doctor holds up a tiny, gooey, screaming human. He quickly clears the airway and places the baby directly onto Eleanor's chest.

Eleanor's entire body goes limp. The pain seems to evaporate, replaced by a stunned, shaky awe.

She touches the baby's wet back with trembling fingers.

ELEANOR  
(Breathless)  
Oh...oh my god. Hi!

Jack is openly weeping now, leaning over them both, staring at the baby with total reverence.

JACK  
Look at him, El. He's got your nose.

The monitors continue to beep, the staff moves efficiently to finish their tasks.

DOCTOR  
Who wants to cut the umbilical cord?

ELEANOR  
(Exasperated)  
Oh let me do it. I wanna do it!

JACK  
Ok honey, here goes.

The doctor gives Eleanor the scissors. She cuts the cord.

DOCTOR  
You did great. The baby's in good health! I'll be back to check on you later, the nurses will take care of you till then!

ELEANOR  
Thank you doctor!

The doctor leaves the room.

Eleanor and Jack sit there gawking at their baby.

They can't believe the moment's finally come. Both are in awe.

INT. HOSPITAL - POSTPARTUM ROOM - LATER

Jack and Eleanor are in the postpartum room, with Eleanor holding the baby.

There's an air of relief and quiet excitement in the room.

ELEANOR

Jack, when did old lady Hagienta say she'd come? I need her now!

JACK

Don't worry honey, I'm sure she'll be here any minute now.

ELEANOR

OK...Anyway, what are we gonna name the baby?

Jack's face brightens up

JACK

(Excited)

I'm not sure. I'm not good with names. We can name him anything you want honey.

ELEANOR

I'm not good with names either. But I was thinking maybe Joshua. Is that a pretty name?

JACK

I don't know honey. It seems OK. Let's keep thinking about it though.

Suddenly there's a knock on the door. Jack opens the door. It's old lady Hagienta.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh hi! You've finally made it!

ELEANOR

Oh thank God you're here. Right on time to tell the baby's future!

HAGIENTA

(Elated)

Hi, Jack. Hi, Eleanor. Has the baby finally arrived? I'm so not happy for you!

Hagienta moves over to Eleanor's bed and looks at the child.

HAGIENTA (CONT'D)

Well, isn't he just wonderful?! He looks just like you Eleanor! Do you have a name yet?

Eleanor chuckles.

ELEANOR  
No, but we were thinking Joshua.

HAGIENTA  
(Doubting)  
Oh...Joshua. Hmm, I'm not sure,  
you'll have to give it some  
thought.

Eleanor can't wait. She changes the topic of the conversation.

ELEANOR  
Could you tell me the baby's  
future? I hope it's good.

HAGIENTA  
Of course honey. Let's get right to  
it. Give me his hand.

Hagienta grabs the baby's hand and closes her eyes, mumbling some spiritual voodoo incantation to herself.

She stays like this for a second, then opens her eyes to read the lines on the baby's hand.

HAGIENTA (CONT'D)  
Now are you sure you want to do  
this? Seeing his future this early  
can cause all kinds of disturbances  
on the spiritual plane.

ELEANOR  
But you said it was for the best!

HAGIENTA  
Well, if you don't want him to  
become an ant like poor old Jack  
here, it surely is better to read  
his future as soon as possible.

ELEANOR  
Well, nobody wants to be like Jack!  
I have high hopes for little  
Joshua, he's gonna be  
a star!

Jack lets out a long, exhausted sigh.

JACK  
(Tired of being viewed as  
a loser)  
Yes great...ehm that's great you  
guys.

Old lady Hagienta assents and goes back to reading Joshua, or whatever his name is going to be.

HAGIENTA  
Hmm, I see. I see.

Suddenly she feels like a sting and pulls back.

HAGIENTA (CONT'D)  
(Gasping)  
Oh no!

ELEANOR  
(Disconcerted)  
What's wrong?

HAGIENTA  
I sense a great power in this  
child! A great disturbance!

Lady Hagienta winces.

HAGIENTA (CONT'D)  
I see...I see...OK, here's the  
truth. Your child will become a  
very important holy man! A man of  
great values and ethics. A man of  
the people!

Eleanor is dumbstruck.

ELEANOR  
A holy man? Don't tell me he's  
going to become some loser like  
Jack! He needs to be bad!

HAGIENTA  
(Disturbed but focused)  
No, not as insignificant as Jack. A  
much higher calling! Your son will  
grow up in a dark time! An evil  
time! And he will battle these evil  
forces and become a man of great  
esteem and status in the world!

ELEANOR  
Battle evil? Oh God, he's got  
Jack's good-naturedness. Well  
at least he's going to be big right?  
Very successful?

Hagienta strains herself while doing Joshua's reading.

HAGIENTA

Aaah! No, not successful.  
Definitely big. Your son will  
become a shepherd. He will try lead  
his people to salvation, but will  
not succeed. Evil forces will  
overpower him. He will endure a  
great tragedy at a young age...I'm  
not so sad to inform you Eleanor,  
that he will lose this battle and  
die young!

Jack's skepticism turns to worry.

JACK

Die?! Oh God. What makes him so  
big? Why is he shepherding the  
people? Who's supposed to kill him?

HAGIENTA

(Dramatically)

Your child has your good in  
exaggeration, Jack, and Eleanor's  
winner-mentality. He will oppose  
the government, and they will kill  
him for it.

Jack can't believe it.

A moment ago he didn't believe in fortune telling, now he's  
dead-worried it's true.

He winces at the thought.

ELEANOR

Why the fuck would he be good?  
Nobody's good! I'm not good! Damn  
it Jack you fucked up *AGAIN!*  
Because of you my child is going on  
some holy mission when he could  
just make money and become famous!

HAGIENTA

Oh your child will be very famous.  
The whole world will consider his  
fate, but they will fail to rescue  
him.

Jack gets annoyed, but is slightly intrigued by his child's  
fate.

JACK

So he's gonna tell people to be  
nicer?

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Not sure if I mind that, this world  
could use a bit of kindness. But  
why die? I can't accept that! He  
must live!

Hagienta pulls back from Joshua's hand and lets out a deep  
sigh. Her face makes a perceptive expression.

ELEANOR

Is there anything we can do to  
change his future? I don't want my  
son to be some goody two-shoes  
who's gonna get himself killed over  
it. Everyone knows you have to be  
bad!

Old lady Hagienta muses over it. Then concludes.

HAGIENTA

There is...something you could do.

JACK

(Too worried to be  
skeptical)  
What is it? I'll do anything to  
change his fate!

Old lady Hagienta thinks about it for a while.

HAGIENTA

OK, listen up. Jack, if you want to  
save the baby you need to come to  
his rescue. Before he is ever grown  
up you must bring his case to the  
public and convince them not to let  
the government liquidate the kid.  
But you must hurry. The government  
already knows about his coming, and  
they are preparing to take care of  
him. You're his only hope!

Jack is startled and perplexed.

JACK

I have to save him? How? I can't  
fight the government, I'm just a  
clerk! I *am* the government.

HAGIENTA

That's not how they see it. Look  
outside the window Jack. Do you see  
a car with a MAN IN A SUIT in it,  
parked near the hospital?

Jack is dumbfounded. He's incredulous but goes over to the window to take a look.

He scans the area and doesn't find him at first, but after looking extra carefully he sees it. A suspicious looking man behind the steering wheel of a Ford Mondeo in black.

JACK

Ah! Yes! A man behind the steering wheel of a parked car. But that can't be a government agent can it? Maybe it's just a coincidence!

Hagienta scoffs at this.

HAGIENTA

(Dismissively)

Coincidence? Honey after the next few days you won't be believing in coincidences anymore. That man is keeping a tab on you. He's going to call you later tonight. Pick up the phone and you'll be in a world of trouble, your son's spiritual energies descending upon you. Don't pick up the phone, and the child dies, sooner or later.

Eleanor is kind of amused. She doesn't seem to mind her son dying early as much as she minds him doing it for the greater good.

ELEANOR

Jack, he's your baby! Just call the president he'll help you save him. The president is also not a bad guy, even though he acts like one!

JACK

(Visibly distraught)

Yes! Maybe that's it! I've got to call the president and ask for a pardon! But first I have to make sure any of this is real!

HAGIENTA

I wouldn't call the president honey, he can't help you. Just answer the phone call you're gonna get later tonight when you arrive home and find the parked car has followed you. That's all I know.

(MORE)

HAGIENTA (CONT'D)

The fate of the world rests on your shoulders now Jack. It's your turn to be great!

JACK

(Sarcastically)

Oh great. Just what I need.

ELEANOR

(Mockingly)

The world depends on Jack now to be saved? This can't get any funnier!

HAGIENTA

Oh give him some credit Eleanor. Jack just brought a force of nature into this world. Jack's always had something great in him, it just didn't come out. I'm sure he'll do just fine. For now, I have to take my leave. It's getting late and I have other, less noteworthy clients waiting for me tomorrow morning. Hope you both die! And Jack, go make the world a better place, show it you're not just a loser who can't do anything. You're gonna do great honey!

ELEANOR

(Laughing at her confusion)

Okay fuck you old lady Hagienta! This has been a wild night! But if you think Jack's gonna save the world, I have a surprise for you! Jack can't even tie his shoelaces without tripping! Haaa!

Jack ignores her. He's less worried about Eleanor's opinion of him than he is of the baby's future.

JACK

Yes, ehm...fuck you old lady Hagienta. Fuck if I care you have so much faith in me!

HAGIENTA

(Lovingly)

Fuck you too, darlings. I'll see you another time!

Old lady Hagienta leaves the room.

Jack and Eleanor sit in silence for a moment, both not sure what to say or what to think.

It's past midnight, but Eleanor wants to go home. Jack looks out the window to the man in the car again. He's gone.

"Could it really be true?" Jack thinks.

Anyway, for now it doesn't matter, for now he has to grab Eleanor's stuff and bring her to the car, they're going home!

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Jack takes Eleanor to the car and puts her along with her stuff in the front seat. Her purse, her wallet and a few diapers they got from the hospital. The baby is in her arms.

Then he gets in the front seat and drives off.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - JACK'S HOUSE - LATER

Jack parks the car, this time patiently and neatly.

He helps Eleanor and the baby out of the car and guides them home. They live on the second floor.

When they've entered he goes back to get Eleanor's belongings.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack enters the apartment and finds Eleanor in the kitchen making a chicken fillet sandwich.

The house is a mess, there's stuff lying around everywhere. The kitchen is open and adjoined to the living room.

ELEANOR

Jack could you clean up a bit and  
take the baby to the crib in my  
room? I'm exhausted I'm gonna go  
and get some sleep.

Jack takes the baby from Eleanor and helps her to her room. They sleep in separate rooms.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - ELEANOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

There she lays down in bed and Jack puts the baby in the crib next to her bed.

Eleanor falls asleep immediately. The baby is tired from being born, and sleeps with his mother.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack goes back to the living room and starts picking stuff up from the ground.

While he's tidying the place up, Hagienta's words echo in his mind.

HAGIENTA

(V.O.)

Your son will grow up in a dark time! An evil time! And he will battle these evil forces and become a man of great esteem and status in the world!

Jack can't believe it, but the prediction sounded so detailed and realistic he almost does.

After cleaning up the house Jack sits on the couch with his phone in his hand.

Suddenly more of Hagienta's words echo in his mind.

HAGIENTA (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Look outside the window Jack. Do you see a car with a man in a suit in it, parked near the hospital?

He goes to look outside the window and sure enough, there's a man in a suit parked a little ways from the apartment.

Jack panics. He paces up and down the living room. He looks at his phone. It's 2:55.

JACK

(To himself)

Just calm down Jack. You're not gonna get that phone call! This is all just nonsense! The future can't be predicted. How is old lady Hagienta supposed to know a government agent is following you and is going to call you? This is all just ridiculous!

Jack moves on to the kitchen. He makes himself a chicken fillet sandwich aswell; that's all they have anyway.

He sits down to eat it and ponders. Moments later, his phone rings.

Jack is startled. He looks at who's calling him, it's a private number. He looks at the time, 3:00 sharp. The devil's hour.

He panics and can't believe he's actually being called. And at a time like this!

Maybe it's just some random person? He doesn't know. He remembers Hagienta's words.

HAGIENTA

(V.O.)

Pick up the phone and you'll be in a world of trouble, your son's spiritual energies descending upon you. Don't pick up the phone, and the child dies, sooner or later.

Jack hesitates. He makes a tortured face.

JACK

(To himself)

Ah fuck. I can't believe it!

The phone is still ringing. Suddenly it stops. Jack is not sure whether to be relieved or worried.

After a short pause, the phone starts ringing again. Private number again.

Jack decides this is all just too coincidental. He must do something! He answers the call.

JACK (CONT'D)

(Hesitantly)

Ehm...hello? This is Jack Fischer.

There's a silence and Jack can hear the caller's breathing.

MAN IN SUIT

(Cryptically)

...If you want peace, prepare for war.

JACK

(Nervous)

Ehm, hello? Who is this?

MAN IN SUIT

I thought you were already expecting me, Jack. What's with the questioning?

JACK

(Angrily)

OK, whoever this is, this is not fun...-

MAN IN SUIT

(Interrupting)

Grow up Jack. You're a "real man" now.

Jack is speechless.

JACK

Ehm...government? What do you want, me and my kid want no trouble!

GOVERNMENT AGENT

You think people are in trouble because they like trouble?

There's a silence. Jack is not sure what to say.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

Do you know what happened to the last of the Sikh Guru's and their followers Jack?

Jack thinks about it. Suddenly he remembers he read about that somewhere. He enters a state of shock.

JACK

(With dread)

Ehm, beheaded...boiled alive...sawn in half?

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(Quiet excitement)

Ahhh, a man of education. Just to my liking.

JACK

(Panicky)

Listen if this is about my son, please leave him alone. He wants nothing to do with the state and its affairs. And people don't do stuff like that anymore, do they?!

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Ahh. That's the linear theory of history. That it all goes from zero to hero. You know what the ancient Hindus believed about history?

The government agent pauses to give Jack time to answer his question.

Jack remembers.

JACK

Ehm, that history is cyclical?

The agent is elated, but still acting mysteriously and aloof.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Ahhh. I knew I'd like you. A well-read man indeed.

The government agent grunts a big grunt. Then sucks in air dramatically and sighs it out again.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

You see the ancient Hindus believed that history is a cycle between good periods, and bad periods. And your son was born in the *wrooong* period my friend.

JACK

(Nervous)

What does that mean? How is that possible? He's four hours old, he didn't choose for this!

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(Comfortingly and sarcastically)

Nobody chooses anything, Jack. We are just dealt cards we are supposed to deal with. If I had a choice your son would be in no trouble either, but I must fulfill my Dharma, just as he must fulfill his.

JACK

(Incredulously)

Is that what you say to yourself before you go to sleep at night? That you have no choice? You do! Just leave him alone!

The agent lets out a guttural laughter.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Nobody has a choice Jack. Tide goes in, tide goes out, and humans save, and humans kill.

Jack is getting impatient with the man and his riddles.

He thinks of hanging up the phone but his sense of responsibility towards his child takes over.

JACK

(Fuming but whispering so as not to wake Eleanor)  
Listen! Just leave us alone! You promise to drop it and I promise the kid keeps his mouth and never becomes fa...-

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(Interrupting)  
Stop running Jack. You cannot run from what God has ordained. We need you and your son to do good just as much as we need to kill him for it. It's all part of a greater plan! Go on, spread the word for us! Convince the world to be good! Let's see what the people do.

The government agent takes a small pause and sighs a weary sigh.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

And don't worry about him ending up like the Sikhs. You're gonna do great, Jack...we'll talk again later. Oh and try Hope, it's a much better name for him than Joshua...see ya! And don't forget...fuck you and have a bad day! Ha-ha-ha-ha-haa!

The agent laughs a subdued and diabolical laughter, then hangs up the phone.

Jack is startled and confused. He can't believe old lady Hagienta's prediction came true.

What's he supposed to do? Both Hagienta and the agent put their faith in him, but he doesn't feel so confident, he's worried to death.

Jack goes over to his window to look at whether the agent is still there.

He is. He sees the agent's lights turn on, then hears the engine turn on, then the agent takes off and waves goodbye sinisterly from inside the car.

It's all too much for Jack. He paces up and down the living room for a moment, then decides to give up and shut the world out for now.

He takes a sleeping pill and goes to bed. Tomorrow is another day.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - JACK'S ROOM - LATER

It's the next morning, 8 o'clock. Eleanor has woken up and the baby's crying again.

He kept waking up at night, so Eleanor ordered Jack to take care of it and let the baby sleep in his room.

Eleanor enters Jack's bedroom feeling refreshed and energized.

ELEANOR

(In a good mood)

Waky-waky! Fuck the baby!

She nudges him awake. He's still half-dead from the baby he took care of last night. And the sleeping pill he took.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Wake up, you gotta go to work! Your boss will kill you if you miss two days in a row!

Eleanor takes the baby in her arms and tries to calm it. Jack wakes up and mumbles something, but he has a hard time getting up.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

(Prodding)

What was that? I can't hear you!

JACK

(Slightly annoyed)

I said fuck my boss. I need sleep.

Eleanor scoffs at this.

ELEANOR

Sleep? You need money you broke-ass. And what happened to pleasing your... -

JACK

(Interrupting)

Okay, I'm up, I'm up! God, simmer down. Anything is better than hearing you nagging.

ELEANOR

Good! Get up.

Eleanor leaves Jack's room and goes to sit with the baby in the living room. Jack gets up and goes to the bathroom to brush his teeth.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Jack brushes his teeth.

ELEANOR

(O.S.)

What happened last night, did someone call like old lady Hagienta said they would?

JACK

(Speaking up so he can be heard, nearly unintelligible from the toothpaste in his mouth)

That's none of your business honey. Leave that problem to me.

Eleanor doesn't respond, she doesn't seem to care.

She gets distracted by the baby wanting breast milk and decides to feed him.

Jack takes a shower. He thinks about everything that happened last night and the realization that he's in big trouble seeps back in.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jack is finished taking a shower. Eleanor remembers that he didn't give an answer to her question and prods him again.

ELEANOR  
 (Seriously)  
 Seriously, Jack. Did someone call?

Jack sighs. He's not sure whether to tell Eleanor what happened.

JACK  
 (Hesitantly)  
 Ehm...yes...the uhh...the government called. They said to name the baby Hope, and that he is indeed in big trouble.

Now Eleanor looks skeptical.

ELEANOR  
 Pfft, get out of here. Someone really called? And Hope? That's actually pretty.

JACK  
 (Impatiently)  
 Yes that's very pretty honey, but I don't have time for this. I've got to go!

ELEANOR  
 Hey, wait... -

Jack leaves the house in a hurry and gets in his car.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
 (To herself)  
 Fine leave. And have a shitty day at work!

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - FRONT DESK - LATER

Jack enters his office. Steve is sitting there in his chair waiting for the shift to begin, coffee in hand. He nods towards Jack, greeting him. Jack waves back and sits in his chair.

Steve leans in towards Jack.

STEVE  
 (Curious)  
 Fuck you Jack. How was the birth? Your kid good and healthy?

Jack stops for a second to remember his mission. Gotta make people good. This "fuck you" thing is getting really old. Why can't people be polite?

JACK  
 (Nevertheless feeling good  
 that someone cares)  
 Yes, ehm...fuck you too Steve. He's  
 doing just fine. He's beautiful.

STEVE  
 Aww, good to hear man. I would say  
 congratulations, but you know the  
 drill, fuck your kid!

Jack realizes the problem is already here. His child did get born into an evil age!

The "fuck you's" have always bothered Jack and now he's supposed to do something about it but is not sure what.

And he wonders, does this new war with Waziristan and Russia and China have anything to do with his child being born? He's not superstitious, but he did get a very suspicious call late last night

Suddenly the phone rings. Private number again. "Shit!" Jack thinks. He quickly moves to the backroom to get away from Steve and picks up the phone.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - BACKROOM - DAY

JACK  
 (Cautiously)  
 Ehm...hello? Jack speaking.

There's another pause. Again the sound of breathing through the phone.

GOVERNMENT AGENT  
 Did you hear that Jack? Your best  
 friend, if you can even call him  
 that, tells you and your kid to go  
 fuck yourselves. What do you think  
 of our awesome power?

Jack worries. It's the government agent again!

JACK  
 Yes, well, besides telling me to go  
 fuck myself, he's actually quite  
 nice you know!

The government agent pauses for a moment, then lets out a single, disinterested "ha".

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Yes. That's true.

The agent clears his throat slowly and dramatically, as if to make a point.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

(Dramatically)

And the good slips in, ever so slightly, into an evil world! What are you gonna do about it, Jack?!

JACK

(Confused)

What do you mean? What am I supposed to do about it? That's just the way people are!

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Well you gotta do *something*. These people will decide whether your son lives or he dies. You don't want them to choose wrong do you?

JACK

(Even more confused)

What the hell am I supposed to do about it? Preach to them to be good? They'd never listen!

The government agent lets out a small, mocking laughter

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(Amused, alarming)

All I know is tik-tok, Jack. Tik-tok! Time is running out, you have to make your move now or I'm coming for you!

JACK

(Irreverently)

Oh yeah, what are you gonna do huh? What the fuck can you do against a one day old?

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(Standing corrected, but then oozing evil back into a good world)

That's actually a good point, Jack.

(MORE)

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

But nevertheless, anything can be done. An accident, a stray bullet from gangs shooting at each other on the streets, or maybe a kidnapping by a "lone-wolf" crazy person? Anything is possible, Jack. Tik-fucking-tok Jack, tik-fucking-tok!

JACK

(Enraged)

Who the fuck even are you huh? If you so much as lay a finger on my child! I... -

A disconnect tone. The agent hung up. Jack is in disbelief.

He's livid at the suggestion of killing his son, and crushed by the weight of the responsibility put on his shoulders.

Suddenly he feels a tap on his shoulder.

MARTY

(Disparagingly)

Fuck you, Jack! Why aren't you at your desk?! You're supposed to be working! Oh and fuck your kid, nobody wants to hear about that.

Jack feels a migraine coming, he's tired of the "fuck you's" and now knows he has to do something about it to save his kid.

He slams a cabinet in anger.

JACK

(Angrily)

Don't say that Marty. Don't. Fucking. Say that!

He goes back to his desk to start his shift, ignoring Marty. Marty is in disbelief.

MARTY

(To himself)

Say what motherfucker? Say what? What happened with him?

He scoffs.

MARTY (CONT'D)

(To himself)

Anyway...

Marty decides to let it slide and goes back into his office.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - FRONT DESK - DAY

Jack arrives at his desk. There is an APPLICANT #2, waiting for him.

He looks like a real "together" dude. Fancy black suit, walking stick, sunglasses indoors, and a stern, "cool" expression on his face.

He's of African descent. Looks to be wealthy from drug dealing or music making.

Steve is also handling a client, and even though it's early, it's already getting really busy in the office.

Jack thinks, "oh great, this fucking guy. The super-serious cool guy who takes himself too seriously. Are there more and more of these people these days or what?"

Then puts on his fake polite smile.

JACK

Hello, good morning. How may I help?

SERIOUS APPLICANT

Fuck you and bad day to you sir.  
I'm here for my passport.

Jack's leg starts to shake in agitation. He knows what this greeting means: no love for you. And Jack knows he needs love, and he needs it badly.

JACK

Ehm...yes. Name and date of birth please?

SERIOUS APPLICANT

Malik Omar. February second, 1992.

"Malik Omar?" That name rings a bell with Jack. He checks on his computer and the applicant seems to be right on time.

JACK

Alright let me check for you.

He goes to the area behind his desk and looks through the cabinet where they keep people's documents.

He rummages through the drawers and finds it. Jack stops and stares at the applicant's name. "Malik Omar." Something interesting about it.

Nevermind. He returns to his desk and hands Malik his passport.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Well, there you go Malik. That'll be 130 dollars!

Malik nods.

MALIK  
Can I pay by card?

JACK  
Of course you can.

Jack sets the PIN pad up and offers it to Malik. Malik touches his card to the reader. It beeps, the transaction is complete.

JACK (CONT'D)  
That's it, you're done! Fuck you and have a b... -

Jack stops to think. Maybe he shouldn't tell Malik to go fuck himself and have a bad day. Maybe it's time. Time to rebel!

JACK (CONT'D)  
(hesitantly and a bit embarrassed about it)  
Ehm...have a nice day Malik. Enjoy your passport.

Malik looks incredulous.

MALIK  
What? Did you just tell me to have a nice day sir?

The room goes silent. It's as though everyone heard him say it and a big taboo has been broken.

JACK  
(Awkwardly and clumsily)  
Ehmm...well...yes?

There's a quiet murmuring in the room.

Everyone has become uncomfortable and is giving Jack crooked looks.

MALIK  
That's some gay-ass shit nigga. You should have yourself checked.

Jack gets angry. His reserved nature being replaced with an energy more out-going, he yells:

JACK  
 (With emphasis)  
 Yeah, well, have a good day sir!  
 There, I said it! Have a good  
 fucking day! And don't give me that  
 cool shit either, you're not cool,  
 you're just a cosmic prank, act  
 like it! Be silly!

Malik is dumbfounded. He can't believe his ears.

The murmur of the crowd gets louder. A woman scoffs at Jack.

Steve asks Jack what the fuck he thinks he's doing.

MALIK  
 Nigga you trippin'! I'm outta here!

Malik leaves the office with a strut.

JACK  
 (Feeling vindicated)  
 Yes Malik, run along to your drug  
 empire or music business or  
 whatever it is you're doing. But  
 don't forget to be nice!

Some people leave the room, others want to file a complaint with Jack's boss, who, having heard Jack yelling out to Malik to have a good day, storms in the office.

MARTY  
 (Angrily and  
 authoritatively)  
 Jack, what the fuck are you doing?!

Jack is frightened. His balls usually shoot up his body when Marty yells at him.

His face contorts in an anguished manner.

JACK  
 (Hesitantly)  
 Ehmm...I'm just telling him to have  
 a nice day. You know, being normal.

MARTY  
 (Still angry and yelling  
 at Jack)  
 Normal?! You call that normal?!  
 That's some faggoty bullshit Jack!  
 (MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

You forgot how to talk to people or something?!

Jack hesitates. Is he going to get in this argument or just say he's sorry and won't do it again?

He looks over to the left through the window and sees the agent sitting in his car, looking at Jack, wagging his index finger and making a "no-no" gesture.

Jack panics.

JACK

(Upset)

Well, what the fuck do you want from me Marty?! You can't just tell a guy to go fuck himself and have a bad day after you've helped him get his passport! Maybe it doesn't occur to your conditioned mind, but to mine it sounds ridiculous!

There's a big wave of shock that goes through the room. People are gasping. A woman covers her daughter's ears. Marty is livid. Steve laughs.

MARTY

(Livid)

In my office, now Jack!

STEVE

(Laughing)

Ooeh, you're gonna get it now. You broke the social contract!

Jack feels uneasy. He's never been in this much trouble. But then he remembers the agent's words.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(V.O.)

Tik-fucking-tok Jack, tik-fucking-tok!

He looks out the window to the government agent again, and sees him gesturing to the time on his watch, then driving off.

That settles it, Jack has to fight the world to save his son!

He follows Marty into his office.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - BOSS' OFFICE - DAY

Marty goes to sit down. He gestures towards the chair across from him.

MARTY  
(Sternly)  
Sit...sit, Jack, sit!

Jack hesitates at first, legs shaking, but then sits down like a kid who just entered the principal's office and has a bad attitude.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
(Angrily)  
What the fuck was that Jack?! You wanna be polite?!

Jack scoffs. He knows how deeply ingrained being a piece of shit is in his society and doesn't even try to explain.

JACK  
(Aloof)  
Just felt like the right thing to do Marty.

His leg still shaking, he scans the room without care, trying to look aloof and avoid eye-contact with Marty.

Marty is getting angrier. He's not used to this attitude and disrespect from Jack. Usually Jack is docile and subservient.

MARTY  
(Losing his patience)  
The right thing to do?! You wanna know what the right thing does to this world Jack?..

Marty is left speechless for a second. He doesn't know the answer himself.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
...It kills it!

Jack starts laughing. He gets a real bad attitude going.

JACK  
(Mockingly)  
Well, that's a bit over-dramatic, isn't it? How so?

Marty is at a loss for words. He doesn't really know what happens when you do the right thing. He's just been conditioned to do the wrong things, most of the time.

He mumbles and fusses something, not being able to fully articulate what he means. Then he speaks.

MARTY

Well you've seen what happens!  
Everyone hates you and becomes  
scared of you! Plus, you're making  
the kids gay, Jack!

Jack laughs hard. He takes on an even more rebellious attitude.

JACK

(Sarcastically, acting all  
cool and defiant)  
Well, what if the kids became gay  
Marty? What's wrong with that?

Marty is not clever enough for a good response. He just fumes and boneheadedly sticks to the system.

A little bit of wisdom he gained over the years: never mess with the system.

MARTY

Now you wanna make the kids gay?!  
Hhrrghh!! Out! Out of my office!  
Out of this building! I never want  
to see your face here ever again,  
you're fired! That's what happens  
when you mess with the system!

Eleanor crosses Jack's mind. Money crosses Jack's mind.

But all of that doesn't matter now, he has to make the world a better place and in order to do so, a few risks must be taken.

JACK

(Not showing his  
vulnerability)  
Fine Marty. I'll pack up my desk  
right now! But don't forget to be  
good Marty! Don't forget to be  
good!

Jack leaves the room.

Marty doesn't know what he's hearing. He's never heard someone argue for good before. Being bad was always the uncontested social norm.

MARTY

(To Jack as he leaves the room)

Good?! I have a wife and kids, I can't afford to be good, goddamnit!

Jack walks over to his desk and makes a big deal out of it.

He imagines himself in that fancy black suit Malik was wearing, with the walking stick and the sunglasses, and he thinks he's pretty cool for defying the system.

INT. CLERK'S OFFICE - FRONT DESK - DAY

Steve is laughing, not taking it seriously. Assuming it was a fluke and Jack and Marty settled it in Marty's office.

STEVE

(Laughing)

Did he give you an ass-whooping and you said you're sorry? Ha-ha-ha!

JACK

(Feeling all cool and rebellious)

No, actually I didn't say I'm sorry. I told him to go fuck himself and be good!

Steve stops laughing and gives Jack a look of disbelief.

STEVE

(Flabbergasted)

What?! You've got to be kidding me! You told the boss to go fuck himself?! And be good, for crying out loud?!

JACK

Yes, and I'm not about to back down.

STEVE

(In disbelief)

What?! What's going on?! What the fuck did you do that for?

Jack almost doesn't want to explain, but then realizes Steve has been a good friend all these years. Well, co-worker if not friend. He thinks Steve might be able to help.

JACK

(Whispering as he's  
packing his things)

They wanna kill my son Steve! Me  
and Eleanor had a fortune teller  
tell our kid's future yesterday,  
and at first I didn't believe it,  
but then someone from the  
government called and said it was  
true!

Steve continues to look in disbelief

JACK (CONT'D)

(Still whispering)

He was just outside, making a "no-  
no" gesture with his index finger  
to me! And then again, pointing to  
his watch! You gotta help me out  
Steve, I've gotta save the world  
otherwise the government kills my  
son! Are you with me?!

Steve almost believes him, for he has never known Jack to be  
particularly crazy, but he doesn't wanna know what it means  
if it were true.

They'd be up against the system. Nobody wins from the system.

STEVE

(Excited at the adventure  
Jack's story implies, but  
too scared)

That black man was right. You are  
tripping!

JACK

(Resigned but not  
downtrodden)

Fine! Don't believe me! I wasn't  
expecting you to anyway.

Jack puts all his belongings in his suitcase and leaves  
through the front door. People get out of his way as he walks  
past them, avoiding him.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - IN FRONT OF THE OFFICE - DAY

Jack gets inside his car and puts his briefcase in the  
passenger seat. He puts the car in accessory mode to access  
Android Carplay. He calls Eleanor.

Eleanor doesn't respond. She always responds late to Jack. He knows it's some kind of power play and is offended.

He calls again. Suddenly he notices something far away in his rear view mirror.

It's the government agent again! He panics. Eleanor finally picks up.

ELEANOR  
 (Strangely upbeat)  
 Hi, what do you want, Jack? How's work?

JACK  
 (Nervous)  
 Hi, honey. Good. Listen, I took the rest of the morning off. Do we still need new diapers or anything else from the store? I'm coming home.

ELEANOR  
 (Skeptical, then upbeat again)  
 You took the rest of the morning off? When has that ever happened? Yeah, I still have some diapers but having more couldn't hurt!

JACK  
 (Hesitantly)  
 OK honey I'll pick some up on the way over. See you soon!

ELEANOR  
 Wait why are you... -

Jack hangs up the phone. The timing of the phone call couldn't be any more wrong.

Just as he noticed the government agent lurking in the back!

Jack lights up a cigarette.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ON THE ROAD - DAY

He starts up his Nissan Altima and drives off slowly.

To the nearest supermarket.

But he has to keep an eye on the government agent.

The agent takes off too. Jack is worried.

JACK  
(To himself, anxiously)  
What does he want from me?

Suddenly the phone rings. Private number. Again.

Jack reluctantly picks up the phone.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Ehm...hello?

There's a small pause again. Jack hears slow, rhythmic breathing.

GOVERNMENT AGENT  
(With confidence)  
...good work Jack. That'll get the ball rolling! Nice show!

The agent snorts.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)  
(Questioning)  
Oh and cosmic prank? More like cosmic tragedy! If you knew what I knew you wouldn't take the world so lightly, Jack.

This comment reminds Jack of something. He's not sure what.

JACK  
(Anxious and defiant)  
Yeah, well, I've always had a hard time taking this ridiculous shit seriously. Seems like a prank to me!

GOVERNMENT AGENT  
(Pleading for sympathy)  
But what if your son dies? Would that be a joke to you Jack?

The government agent lights up a cigar. Jack can hear the sound of the lighter struggling to make fire. There's a small pause.

Jack is driving slowly and keeping an eye on the government agent following him from way behind.

He seems to be holding a phone in one hand, cigar in the other. He's not using hands-free.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)  
...what if you died Jack? Would you  
still be laughing?

Jack suddenly remembers what the agent's comments reminded  
him of.

JACK  
(Excited)  
Muhammad! That's it! Didn't the  
prophet Muhammad have the same fate  
as my son? And he won! He made it  
to the end and changed the world  
for the better!

The agent laughs. Jack takes a turn to the left, he stops at  
a stoplight. The agent follows.

GOVERNMENT AGENT  
(Smugly)  
Ahh. Right! Malik Omar! Reminded  
you of something! That sheep-  
shagger prophet of Islam! Too bad  
we couldn't catch him! You're  
right, he made it out alive, you  
thinking of following his example?

JACK  
(Defensive)  
I read about him a lot over the  
years. That sheep-shagger was a  
hundred times the man any of you  
criminals blackening his name are!  
He actually cared!

The agent lets out a diabolical laughter.

GOVERNMENT AGENT  
You're right, Jack. He was a  
hundred times any of us...you wanna  
know what he had to do in order to  
survive, Jack?

The agent pauses, letting Jack find the answer. The light  
turns green. As soon as Jack drives off, the agent follows.

This makes Jack uncomfortable, he's not used to being  
stalked. It makes him feel paranoid.

JACK  
Ehm...no? That's an interesting  
question, though.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(Arrogantly)

He had to pick up the sword Jack.  
Compromise with evil! And  
eventually sacrifice his grandkids  
and cousin! Are you gonna  
compromise with evil, or is little  
Joshua gonna be more like his  
namesake Jesus than Muhammad? You  
know, dead at 33!

The agent lets out a sinister laughter.

Jack winces. He remembers the story of Hassan and Hussein,  
and Ali.

He's not comfortable picking up the sword or letting his  
grandchildren or a cousin die. He didn't like that part of  
Muhammad's story, though he could see the necessity in it.

But that leaves only the other option it seems, crucified at  
33. Jack is not sure what to think.

JACK

(Anxiously)

I thought we agreed to name him  
Hope?! I kinda liked Hope for him,  
even though it came from you...

Jack is defiant and determined to save everyone, as he's  
always been a goody two-shoes himself.

Suddenly he can see where little Hope got it from, the  
father's the same!

JACK (CONT'D)

...that makes him nothing like  
Jesus, or Muhammad! Little Hope  
will have a story of his own!

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NEAR THE SUPERMARKET - DAY

Jack nears the supermarket. He finishes his cigarette and  
throws it out the window.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

So you're not gonna follow  
Muhammad's example, Jack? Just as  
well, you know the Sikhs were  
warriors for good too. Didn't go  
too well for them. Maybe Muhammad's  
example would have done you no good  
anyway, ey?

(MORE)

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

But you can't "forgive them father,  
for they know not what they do,"  
either, that didn't go too well  
either! Tik-tok, Jack. Tik-fucking-  
tok!

The government agent throws his unfinished cigar out the window too, then makes a sharp right before Jack nears the supermarket, effectively ending his chase of Jack.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

(Mockingly)

Ooh-hoo! The stakes are set, Jack!  
The die is cast! I'll see you  
later! And next time you see me,  
you better run Jack, you better  
run! And don't forget to convince  
people to be good! You're gonna  
need 'em!

Jack sees the agent turning right and ending the chase. The agent hangs up the phone.

Jack is relieved, but perplexed. Run? Where to? The fucking man can read his mind! Anyway, no time to think, Jack is at the supermarket and parks the car and goes inside.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Jack enters the supermarket. He scans the room. Moderately busy.

He goes to the back to look for diapers. He finds them. He grabs a big pack of them, the cheapest ones he can find.

Embarrassing, but they're just diapers he thinks.

Then he goes to the cash register. A WOMAN, white, mid-40's is sitting behind it. There's a few people in line.

There's another cash register but it's not occupied. It's too early and not busy enough yet. Jack gets in line.

While standing in line Jack gets lost in thought. What's he supposed to do to save his kid? And himself apparently!

Muhammad made it out in one piece and got to die of old age, but his grandsons and family members didn't do so well.

Plus, Muhammad had to go to war for it. What's he supposed to do, declare war on the state? Who would support him and his no allies-ass?

The line gets smaller, one person is done checking out.

Being as one-dimensionally good as Jesus and eschewing all violence doesn't seem to make sense either, he was crucified for his message of love!

But they wouldn't kill Jesus again in the land of Christianity would they?

Jack's not so sure, Christianity is a lot like the Judaism that led the Jews to kill Jesus. Started good, turned evil.

This lunatic president speaks for the Christians, for Christ's sake! El. is a Christian!

We live in a dark time! There must be another way! Christianity can't save him!

It's Jack's turn to check out.

CASHIER  
(Disinterestedly)  
Fuck you and have a terrible day  
sir.

Jack cringes. He gives her the diapers. She scans them.

CASHIER (CONT'D)  
(Without emotion)  
Is that all?

JACK  
(Nervously)  
Yes...yes that's all.

CASHIER  
(Like a tired robot,  
sighing)  
That'll be 34.99 sir.

Jack grabs his debit card.

JACK  
Can I pay by card?

CASHIER  
(Still disinterested and  
robotic)  
Of course, sir.

Jack pays. Another CUSTOMER, white male, in his 40's, has gotten behind him in line.

It's a little busy, but Jack's really desperate and wants to remind the cashier to be nice when he leaves.

He knows what people's reactions are going to be, though. Nevermind that he thinks, just gonna do it!

CASHIER (CONT'D)  
(Without emotion)  
Okay, fuck y... -

JACK  
(Interrupting)  
Don't. Don't say that. Just tell me to have a nice day and I'll tell you to have a good one too!

A shockwave goes through the supermarket. People gasp, it gets silent. The person in line behind Jack says:

CUSTOMER  
(In shock)  
What?!

The cashier barely registers it. Jack gets angry.

JACK  
(Pissed off)  
Oh relax! I just told her to tell me to have a nice day. What's wrong with you people?

CASHIER  
(Barely alive but amused)  
...you want me to tell you to have a nice day, sir? Well that's unusual.

The customer behind Jack has something to say.

CUSTOMER  
(Livid)  
That's really inappropriate sir!  
You take those words back!

Jack loses his temper a little more, but tries to remain calm. He knows how much is at stake.

JACK  
(Speaking erratically)  
You wanna know what's inappropriate?! Telling people to have a fucked up day! So no, I won't take back my words!

The customer is insulted and makes a makes a big deal out of it, huffing and puffing and looking around himself to find like-minded people.

The cashier isn't as disturbed, although she understands he's breaking the social contract, in a big way. She chuckles.

JACK (CONT'D)

Anyway, I don't have time to deal with your reactions! Just know I want you to have a good day! And don't forget to be a a good person! I need it!

Jack leaves the store. The people inside are amazed, not sure what to make of it.

CUSTOMER

(To himself, confused)

Good person? The fuck is wrong with him?!

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - IN FRONT OF THE SUPERMARKET - DAY

Jack walks over to his car. Before entering, he looks around to see if the government agent is there.

He scans behind the car and in front of it. No sign of the government agent. Jack lets out a sigh of relief.

He gets in the car, puts the diapers in the passenger seat where his suitcase is and starts the car.

As he drives off he looks for the government agent again in his rear view mirror. Not there. Whoo!

He decides to go home and tell Eleanor what happened, maybe she can help.

He figures she's going to find out about him having lost his job anyway, so he might as well come clean. He's always been bad at lying anyway.

He expects a big scolding, and thinks of money. Big problems.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ON THE ROAD - DAY

After driving a while and preparing for the conversation with El. in his head, Jack looks in the rear view mirror and suddenly notices a car coming in from a street on the right, way behind him.

It's moving aggressively.

He squints his eyes. It's the government agent again! Jack scoffs. "Oh great, here we go again," he thinks.

Jack remembers something the agent said a while before.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

(V.O.)

And next time you see me, you  
better run Jack, you better run!

Jack speeds up and takes a sharp turn right. Not in the direction of home.

For a short while there's no sign of the agent, but suddenly Jack observes the agent turning into the same corner aggressively.

The aggressive driving style of the agent concerning Jack. What the hell is he planning? Why does he have to run this time?!

But Jack doesn't stop to think. He listens to the advice the agent gave him and floors it. The agent follows. Suddenly he's in a car chase!

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - THE BRONX - DAY

Jack drives all the way to the Bronx, where he doesn't live, although he sees the futility of running. The agent knows where he lives, it's pointless to try and escape him.

But Jack enjoys the thrill of the chase and sticks his tongue out and makes mocking faces towards the agent in his rearview mirror. The agent sees this and gets visibly upset.

Jack manically floors it. The agent follows.

Jack drives hard and rude, he cuts people off and overtakes others. The agent does the same.

Suddenly Jack's car makes a lot of strange noises and hampers. He smells burning oil. Jack can't believe it, a breakdown at a time like this!

He sees a park on his left side. No time to waste! He parks his car on the right, grabs his diapers and suitcase and crosses the street to the park.

The street is busy and there's a red light for pedestrians. Jack doesn't have time to wait however, and crosses the street illegally, diapers and suitcase in hand.

He dodges cars, makes funny faces towards the drivers and once he's crossed the street, runs into the park.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SMALL PARK - DAY

As he's running, he looks behind him. The agent has stopped his car in front of the park, but isn't getting out of it.

Doesn't feel like running? Too good to use his legs? It doesn't matter, it's a victory for Jack!

As he turns his head back forward, he sees a WOMAN, what looks to be her HUSBAND, and a dog he's about to crash in.

They also have two CHILDREN, two boys.

The couple is white, seemingly wealthy, but have apparently adopted two black kids to feel good about themselves.

He crashes into the woman and they fall on the ground. The woman is fuming.

WOMAN

(Very serious)

Ouch! What's going on?! Watch where you're going, you imbecile!

The husband helps her up.

HUSBAND

(Same serious note, switching from talking to Jack to talking to his wife)

Wow! What the fuck are you doing running in the park?! Are you OK honey, come...Can't you people just act normal?!

The dog, an orange-tan labrador, barks at Jack.

The kids are unharmed as they were standing a ways off.

They look at Jack in disbelief. They've never seen a grown man run like that in public with diapers and a suitcase in hand.

Jack gets up but forgets to pick his stuff up.

JACK

(Apologetically)

Oh! I'm sorry ma'am!

Suddenly his ears register how smug and serious the husband and wife are. And how "correct" they are.

He looks at their kids, also trained to look dead-serious about life, and pities them.

WOMAN

(Despondently)

I could've been really hurt you  
know, you stupid man!

Jack gets angry about what people think is "normal" and decides to rebel.

JACK

(Sarcastically)

I'm sorry ma'am, but you're gonna  
have to pull that stick out of your  
ass!

The kids' eyes widen. They stare at Jack incredulously.

This kind of aggressive, direct rebuke is a big no-go in their understanding of the world. They could never get away with it!

They are amused. Jack sees this.

HUSBAND

(Angry)

Hey, watch your filthy mouth you  
piece of shit! That's my wife  
you're talking about!

Jack notices how calling someone who made a mistake a piece of shit and an imbecile is apparently "normal," but calling the man's wife out for having a stick up her ass is not "normal" to these people.

He's dumbfounded at this logic.

The kids stare at Jack as though he's their hero. Jack notices this and decides to put on a little show for the kids.

He sticks his tongue out, pulls his own hair, chokes himself and generally just makes a mockery of himself to make the kids laugh. They do. They get the message: don't take yourself so seriously, have fun!

The husband and his wife shield their kids from Jack's lunacy, but the kids push their parents out of the way to get a closer look at Jack and laugh their asses off, copying his behaviours.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)

(To wife)

What in God's name is this moron doing?!

Jack picks his stuff up. The dog tries to climb on him and barks. He seems to like Jack.

JACK

You too mister! Stick out of ass!  
Sometime soon please! The world  
needs you now!

THE KIDS

(Excited)

You're funny mister!

JACK

(Elated *someone* is still  
making sense)

Thank you, kids. Anyway, I've got  
to run!

Jack remembers he's being chased by the government agent and takes off, running through the park to the other side.

The kids watch him go like they just saw Batman beat up a few baddies.

The couple mumbles and fusses about things and are clearly not happy and confused about Jack's behaviour. Jack doesn't mind, he feels like he did the "right" thing.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - THE BRONX - DAY

As soon as Jack exits the park in the Bronx, he looks around to see if the agent is anywhere to be found.

He takes a minute to look closely, but can't seem to find the agent. He slows down.

He suddenly realizes he's untied his tie, tattered his shirt and made a mess of his pants.

What's El. gonna say when she sees this? For now, it doesn't matter, he's never felt freer!

He realizes he has to go home now, as there is nowhere he can really hide anyway and it's the only place he's ever really felt comfortable.

Plus, he misses El. A lot has happened, he wants her perspective. In some ways, he respects it.

He sticks his hand out to get a cab as he's walking down the street.

A cab stops for him.

He gets in.

The DRIVER is Pakistani, or Indian, Jack's not sure.

CAB DRIVER  
(Politely)  
Fuck y...-

JACK  
(Annoyed)  
Stop! Stop. Don't tell me to go  
fuck myself. Just take me to Lower  
Manhattan please.

CAB DRIVER  
(In a friendly,  
deferential mood, or just  
inherently friendly)  
OK! Strange request, but I won't  
argue with you sir!

The cab takes off.

Jack looks around to see if the agent is following him, or saw him. He can't find him anywhere.

He's relieved but still paranoid, knowing the agent can find him whenever he wants, and knows where he lives.

But for now, a well-deserved break, as Jack is all flushed.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - JACK'S HOUSE - LATER

The cab arrives at Jack's house. It's almost noon.

Jack pays the cab driver and thanks him for his service.

He doesn't tell him to go fuck himself, which makes the cab driver uncomfortable.

For a moment the driver wants to tell Jack to have a bad day, but Jack barks "Don't!" and he offers a friendly nod instead.

Jack takes a moment to stand in front of the apartment complex he lives in, and lets out a deep sigh of exhaustion from the adventure he just had, from not being able to sleep undisturbed yesterday night, and from the headache he's expecting Eleanor will give him in a moment.

Then he collects himself again and walks inside, diapers and suitcase in hand.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack enters the house and finds Eleanor in the living room, watching TV while breastfeeding their baby.

The news is on again. President Ronald Heman has something to say about the conflict with Waziristan.

JACK  
(Flushed)  
Hi El! How are you? I've brought you the diapers you wanted!

Eleanor looks over her shoulder. She gasps.

ELEANOR  
(Shocked)  
My God! What happened? Why are your clothes like that? And why did you take so long?! You're supposed to be back at work in like 15 minutes!

Jack sighs, mentally preparing himself for telling her he's been fired.

JACK  
(Nervously)  
I ehm...I don't have to go back to work, El. I got fired.

Jack walks over to the dinner table near the kitchen.

He puts the diapers and his suitcase on it.

Eleanor's eyes widen as she gasps again, this time even more shook than the last time.

She takes the baby's mouth off her breast and tucks her breast back in her maternity dress.

ELEANOR  
(Indignant and confounded)  
What?! You got fired?! What the hell did you do?! What happened?!

JACK  
Yeah...oh and the car broke down. I had to leave it on the other side of the city and get a cab home.

ELEANOR

(Pissed off)

What?! And the car broke down?!  
 What the hell is going on?! How are  
 you gonna pay for a repair or new  
 one without a job?! And what were  
 you doing on the other side of the  
 city?!

Jack lets out another sigh.

This is nothing yet, he knows she can be worse than this, but  
 the way he's explaining himself is not leaving her more room  
 for craziness.

JACK

(Trying to explain)

I was uhh...running from the  
 government agent. Anyway I've got  
 to take a leak! Be right back,  
 honey!

Jack walks towards the bathroom. He takes a leak. Meanwhile  
 Eleanor continues talking.

ELEANOR

(Still despondent)

Don't you honey me, mister! You and  
 your dead-ass good have gotten the  
 government into our lives who want  
 to kill our baby, lost your job and  
 broke down the car all in one day!  
 I told you not to be nice to  
 people! I knew it'd get us in  
 trouble! And look what you have  
 done now!

Jack finishes.

He walks back in the living room.

This is the part he was dreading, the preaching about having  
 to be "bad" and not being good, him being a loser and her  
 needing money.

Providing for her, providing more. He doesn't completely  
 disagree.

JACK

(Apologetically)

I'm sorry El. but I can't change  
 who I am, and I didn't tell our son  
 to be good, for some fucking reason  
 he just took to that part of me.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I would've told him to be "bad" like his mother, but that's apparently not how this works!

ELEANOR

(Disrespectfully)

See, even you know people are supposed to be bad! What did that government agent say anyway? How your loser nature is going to get you and your son fucked?

Jack remembers that both Hagienta and the agent, despite the doom they predicted, still had a lot of faith in him.

He sits on the couch next to Eleanor and the baby and plays with the baby a bit, ignoring her question.

JACK

(Playing with the baby)

Who's a good boy?! Who's daddy's little saviour?! You are! Yes you are!

Eleanor pulls the baby away.

ELEANOR

(Still mad)

Answer the fucking questions Jack. Don't play with little Hope like that!

JACK

(Beaming)

Oh you like Hope too? I thought it fits perfectly!

He pinches the baby's cheeks. The baby looks around the room in wonderment.

JACK (CONT'D)

(Serious)

Anyway, to answer your question, the agent told me only I can stop the government from killing little Hope. That I'm supposed to make people care, that I should go out preaching good or something.

The TV is still running in the background. President Ronald Heman is giving a press conference in which he details the media about his administration's attack on Waziristan in coordination with Israel.

He proudly presents the killing of Waziristan's Supreme Leader.

Apparently China and Russia are cautiously supporting Waziristan, but have not fully dedicated themselves yet, making this a proxy-conflict for now, not a full-blown World War Three, although the prospect of WWII is in the back of everyone's head.

ELEANOR

(Flabbergasted)

Preach good to the people?! What are you Jesus?! Can't you just preach bad to little Hope?!

JACK

(Sighing, getting really tired)

That's not his dharma. He must fulfill his dharma. The agent *wants* us to do good. I don't think being bad is in your dharma either El.

ELEANOR

(Irritated)

Fuck that! You think I give a shit about being nice?! Or your stupid dharma?! Whatever that is! No, he just has to become bad like his mother, that's how we save him!

The TV is still running. The president is taking questions.

"What if Waziristan retaliates by bombing US military bases in the region?" "Then we'll bomb 'em back into the stone age!"

Jack notices this and laughs a little. Cosmic prank, cosmic tragedy? Maybe a little bit of both. How can a president talk like that, he wonders?

Eleanor puts the baby down on the couch.

JACK

(Getting impatient)

You can't just change people El! They are what they are! And you've never been that bad either! You've just been chickenshit! So afraid of losing status in a world that cares only about how much money you make and how beautifully fake your nose is!

Eleanor tries to retort, but swallows her words before they come out.

She feels exposed. She knows Jack can see through her façade and it makes her uncomfortable.

Eventually she gives in, and sighs.

ELEANOR  
(Cautiously)  
Okay...say you were right. Which  
you're not! You want my help in  
figuring this out? Let me see...

Jack is relieved she's stopped her act and is actively trying to help now.

It makes him feel so good. As useful as it can be, he hates it when she acts all "bad" and shit just to fit in. This is the side of Eleanor he fell in love with.

After a few minutes of thinking, and listening to the TV in the silence, Eleanor gets an idea.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
(Excited)  
Oh! The president! Remember I said  
call the president! He's not really  
bad either, he's just faking it!

Jack likes this idea.

JACK  
(Inquisitive)  
He's really not that bad? Seems  
like the worst guy in the world to  
me, but yeah something too over-  
the-top for him to actually be that  
way. Yes that could work, who else  
but the commander-in-chief to ask  
for help?

ELEANOR  
(Shrinking)  
Yes, he's really not that bad! He's  
like me, a pussy! You could read  
me, but not him? Come on, Jack.

Jack laughs at Eleanor's honesty, but after getting his brain cells working and out of desperation-mode, he deflates again

JACK

(Deflated)

But does he even take calls from random citizens? I assume not, actually. He has a lot on his mind, and millions of citizens to worry about, he's not gonna take our phone call!

ELEANOR

(Feeling stupid)

Oeh, didn't think of that. How do you call the president anyway? True...

JACK

(Tired and at a loss)

Damn. Anyway, let's make something to eat. We'll figure out what to do later. I haven't had a full meal in two days, I'm starving.

Eleanor concurs. She picks the baby up and puts him in the crib in the living room. Then moves to the kitchen.

Jack remembers the agent. He gets paranoid.

He looks outside the window to see if he's there. He's not.

Jack is relieved.

He goes to the kitchen to help Eleanor out. They agree to make beans with rice, Jack's favorite.

LATER

An hour and a half later the food is ready. Jack and Eleanor sit down at the dining table and eat. They say nothing, both deep in thought.

As they're thinking, they are interrupted by an interesting piece of information that is presented on TV.

Apparently the president is going to be in New York City tomorrow to have a rally for the Waziristan war.

Eleanor makes nothing of it, but Jack sees an opportunity.

JACK (CONT'D)

(Inflated again)

Did you hear that honey?! The president's going to be in New York City tomorrow to have a rally! This is my chance!

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I could rush on-stage and tell the world the government is trying to kill my son and that they need to make a fuss about it to save him! I can ask for the president's help too while I'm there!

Eleanor scoffs and laughs.

ELEANOR

(Mocking)

What are you kidding me? They're gonna fuck you in the ass if you do that! Plus, how are you even going to get on that stage?! You know how much security they have there?

JACK

(Erratically)

I just have to get to the rally early to get a front-row seat! And then when the time comes, make my move! I don't care what they do with me afterwards, as long as the world gets to see a concerned father trying to save his son's life, that'll be enough! It was in the prophecy anyway, wasn't it? He's going to become very big and famous, the people will hear his plight!

ELEANOR

(Skeptical, but getting convinced)

Yes but didn't the prediction say the people would fail him in the end? Anyway it doesn't matter to me, do what u think is best, old lady Hagienta put her faith in you, and so am I because I'm just getting a headache from this! Ughh!

JACK

(Excited)

That's right! The people would fail him...unless I did something! And I was gonna do great, they both said so! Old lady Hagienta and that government agent, whatever his name is! This is the perfect plan! I was getting nowhere telling individual people not to wish me a bad day.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

But this way we can present our case to the public and get their attention on a mass-scale, as well as try our luck with the president! Maybe he knows something he can help us with? He should, anyway! He's the boss of the state and the state wants to kill Hope!

Eleanor is elated. She's happy for Jack, but still not fully on his side.

Maybe if the kid wants to do good he's a problem? And needs to be dealt with?

She can't say anything to Jack though, as admitting she would consider letting Hope die would be too evil. Jack would lose his mind.

Jack gets up and starts to dance and make funny faces at little Hope, partly because he really thinks this is the way, partly because he's become manic trying to fight for his son.

JACK (CONT'D)

(Hyped-up)

Yes! This is the way! Tomorrow it's gonna go down! I'm gonna fight for little Hope! But I have to be well-rested and get to the rally early! I'll check on my phone when it starts. Until then I've got to get some sleep! I didn't get any real sleep yesterday! I don't want to be sleepy when the world demands action from me!

Eleanor looks at Jack with warm eyes.

She thinks it's cute that he cares this much.

She almost believes it'll work.

She wants to, but is not sure. All she's ever known is evil, evil always wins.

Jack gives Eleanor and the baby a kiss, finishes his dinner, and prepares for bed early.

It's only 3 o'clock in the afternoon, but he's already exhausted.

He's used to irregular sleeping times, he often can't sleep because his mind is racing.

Before turning in however, he takes one more look out the window to see if the agent is there. Nothing to see. Great! Freedom!

He also checks the time and location for the big rally. 4 O'clock in the afternoon, in Madison Square Garden!

He googles it and it turns out he has to be there 12 hours early to get a front-row seat. So he has to be there by 4 AM.

Perfectly doable, he'll sleep till 12-1, then wake up to take the night shift from Eleanor and prepare for his shot at reaching the public!

For now, he goes to plunk down on the bed, shoes still on.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - JACK'S ROOM - LATER

Jack wakes up at 12.30 AM. He goes into Eleanor's room and sees she and the baby are asleep.

Good. He'll pick the baby up whenever he hears it crying. He goes back to his own room.

For now, there's about 2 hours to kill before he has to get ready for his big day.

He decides to look up information from prophets, philosophers and other thinkers about the nature of good and evil on his old, shitty computer.

Jack is intelligent but poorly educated, not the most "in the loop" person.

At a loss for notable men of the past to look up, he simply types in Plato, quotes. Socrates quotes. Seneca, quotes. Marcus Aurelius, Machiavelli, the prophet Muhammad, Jesus, Confucius, Lao Tsu, Buddha.

He's always had a keen interest in religion, not for the idea of there being a God or angels, which he doesn't ascribe to, but for the idea that one must be good.

"That explains Hope's religious character," he thinks. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

Jack feels stupid for not knowing any lesser known, more sophisticated thinkers. Or any modern thinkers.

Jack has always hated modernity. Philosophy became too intellectual and complex then, he was too uneducated to "get" it.

But he gets what he wants out of a few of his searches.

He's never done much research into Machiavelli because of Machiavelli's reputation for evil and Jack's disdain for evil men, but finds some wisdom in a quote from him.

"Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good.

Hence a prince who wants to keep his authority must learn how not to be good, and use that knowledge, or refrain from using it, as necessity requires."

Jack has often had this thought, if they are so evil, why not be evil back? Little Hope really is in a world of trouble.

But then he stumbles onto a Muhammad quote. "Kindness is a mark of faith, whoever hath not kindness, hath not faith."

That's the faith he's always liked, the one spurring you on to be good. It reminds him of the agent quoting Jesus: "forgive them father, for they know not what they do."

It leaves him with a dilemma, blame the world for its evil and bite back like Machiavelli suggests, or stay kind anyway because how people behave is not in their hands.

It reminds him to look up an old Taoist quote he knows from way back when he was a young man: "The Tao that can be named, is not the eternal Tao." Hmpf, "You can say that again," he thinks.

He decides to give up for now. But he sees his and his child's problem clearer now, the world has always been struggling between a need to be good and a need to be evil.

Survival and love.

Maybe that's what the agent meant when he said "we need him to do good, just as much as we need to kill him for it."

Jack doesn't take a shower, for he finds it exhausting, but does brush his teeth and change his clothes to something cleaner-looking and less raggedy.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

It's 2:45 AM, Jack has moved to the couch in the living room and been watching TV and going over the attempt to run on-stage a hundred times in his mind.

The baby hasn't made a sound, luckily.

"What if there's too much security?" Try anyway. Get attention!

What if the podium and the barricades are too high to climb? He googles it: 4-5 feet at the most. Doable.

What if he gets on stage but before he can say anything the Secret Service already gangs up on him? He needs to be quick! Get to the point.

Also, what is he going to do waiting for 12 hours? Jack needs a fully recharged phone so he can look things up on it while he's there, and some snacks to keep him from getting hungry.

He decides to make a few more of those chicken fillet sandwiches and bring them along.

Drinks? No, no drinking, he doesn't want to have to pee in a crowd like that and have to get all the way out of the venue for it. He has to pee and do a number 2 before he leaves.

Jack looks at the clock, it's 3 AM, pretty much time to leave.

As he's preparing to leave however, his phone rings and it startles him.

Before he's even looked he knows who it is, the man he's pretty much forgotten to check up on since waking! The agent!

And at 3 o'clock again! Guy has a penchant for drama!

Jack checks and sure enough, private number!

Jack hesitates but picks up the phone anyway, he's curious.

JACK  
(Nervously)  
...hello? Agent dude?

Another long pause and the sound of heavy breathing. "He really does like drama," Jack thinks.

GOVERNMENT AGENT  
(Mysteriously)  
...I know what you're thinking  
Jack. I know about the plan.

Jack is flabbergasted.

JACK  
But how? How are you doing this?!  
How do you know about my plans and predicaments?

The agent lets out a single ha.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

We have...ways. Technology. Stuff that isn't available to the common man. We can even read your mind, Jack!

Jack is in disbelief. What kind of technology is that?

Did they bug him? When? He feels up his clothes in a frantic manner, but doesn't find anything.

When would they have even had the opportunity to bug him? And how do you read someone's mind?!

He thinks about it and realizes it's true! The agent knew what he thought when he saw the name Malik Omar.

That wasn't spoken out loud for some bug to pick up on!

After a long silence the government agent talks again.

GOVERNMENT AGENT (CONT'D)

You never asked me about my name, Jack. Do you want to know it?

Jack hesitates, but then answers.

JACK

Actually I was curious about that. What is your name?

The agent grunts and snarls.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

How nice of you to think about it! It's Killerbe. Walter Killerbe.

JACK

Killer-bee? As in a worker bee who's dharma it is to kill? Befitting.

WALTER KILLERBE

Wouldn't you say?! And actually it's Killer-be, with one e at the end. As in I be a killer. A man not a bee. But your way works aswell.

Jack laughs nervously. He somehow finds that name as terrifying as he finds it humorous for some reason.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
 (Amused, but sinister)  
 You wanna know what's going to  
 happen today at the rally, Jack?!

Jack is not so sure. He moves to the window and pulls back the curtain to find Walter.

He finds him there, parked near the apartment.

JACK  
 (Hesitantly)  
 Uhm...no? What? What's going to  
 happen?

Jack hears Walter spitting a big spit out the window of his car and sees him doing it through the window of his apartment.

Then he shuts the drapes and walks back to the couch, pacing up and down the living room a bit. After a small pause, Walter speaks.

WALTER KILLERBE  
 Here's what's going to happen.  
 You're going to go over there and  
 try to get a front-row seat. I'm  
 going to call the president and his  
 team and tell them not to bring too  
 much security. When the moment  
 arrives, you rush on stage and say  
 what you have to say...after a few  
 seconds the Secret Service will be  
 on top of you and arrest you. Is  
 that clear?

Jack is perplexed.

JACK  
 You're helping me? Why are you  
 helping me?

Walter makes an annoyed sound.

WALTER KILLERBE  
 Uuugh. Because I'm a killer, but  
 I'm not just any killer. I move  
 with direction, with clear-cut  
 intent, with a philosophy, a  
 science. I'm not some mad man! I  
 like to put on a show. I need the  
 show! World War Three is coming,  
 and we need the people to stand up  
 for themselves.

(MORE)

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)

Right now they're just doing  
everything they're told,  
worshipping and fearing  
power...that's not good.

Jack gets uneasy from the tone of the conversation and feels a little bit of dread bubbling up inside of him, but is also slightly relieved that even the powers-that-be realize the world has gotten too evil and something needs to be done.

JACK

(Uncomfortably)

Good...that's good, right? That  
means you're on my side!

Walter takes a small pause. Jack can hear his heavy breathing through the phone.

WALTER KILLERBE

(Unsure)

Hmmm...yes I suppose that's good.  
But what will be the result of it?  
I sure hope you and I can figure  
this out and steer it in the right  
direction, Jack. World War Three or  
no World War Three? Total nuclear  
annihilation, or total...weakness.  
Little Hope for president...or  
little Hope to the grave?!

Jack panics. He is also unsure.

He's not sure he can trust Walter, maybe he's just playing some sick game?

JACK

(Worried)

What does my son have to do with it  
anyway? He's just been born!

Walter scoffs.

WALTER KILLERBE

What does your son have to do with  
it? What do you have to do with it?  
What do I? He lives in this world  
doesn't he? Let him carry it.

Jack sees Walter's logic. It's meant to be.

JACK

(Feeling emboldened and  
defiant, then backing  
down a little)

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Fine. Fuck it. We'll take our chances. What's meant to be is meant to be...I just hope nobody needs to die because of this!

Walter scoffs again.

WALTER KILLERBE

Eegh...I hope so too Jack. I hope so too. Well, it was nice talking to you, Jack, but I've gotta go and you have a big day ahead of you. See you next time!

Jack is a little sad the conversation has to end. He was enjoying it in a strange, uneasy way.

JACK

OK. Bye Walter. See you on the other side of this.

Walter hangs up. There is a disconnect tone.

Jack walks back to the window and looks out of it again. He sees Walter starting up his Mondeo and leaving.

Walter waves goodbye again, but in a friendlier way than last time. Less sinisterly. Jack checks the time: 3.25 AM. Shit! He has to go!

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - ELEANOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

He goes to Eleanor's room to take a look at her and little Hope one last time. He might not see them for a while after this.

Eleanor is in deep sleep, she must have been tired from taking care of little Hope all day.

Jack looks at them and smiles nervously.

He gives them both a small kiss on the forehead, carefully in order not to wake them, then leaves through the front door.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - LATER

It was only a 20 minute walk from the apartment to the venue. Jack arrives at 3.52 AM.

There's a few people already there, with camping equipment, but Jack seems to be early enough to get a front row seat.

That thought makes him happy.

Jack waits, and makes some small-talk about the president and his war, and some exchanges of personal information, with some of the other early-goers.

Heman supporters. Total wackjobs.

Jack keeps it pleasant and moves it along, he acts like he's a supporter aswell.

He looks around to see if he can find Walter lurking anywhere.

Walter's not there.

He gives up and focuses on waiting.

He's at ease, knowing the way has been cleared by Walter.

He doubts if its true a little, but then decides that either way, he's got no choice but to believe him.

Suddenly a MAN FROM SECURITY pops up.

He's distributing wristbands. With them you can save your spot and leave and come back.

Jack is elated, now he can leave and come back instead of stand there for 12 hours and wait.

He decides to go for a walk in the city and get a coffee.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - LATER

The doors open 1 hour before the event kicks off. 3 O'clock.

Jack is there on time. He gets inside and gets a first-row seat.

Jack scans the security situation.

No one in front of him, the path is clear!

Only a few SECRET SERVICE personnel on the sides of the podium.

Great! Before they've caught him he's already said what he has to say!

Suddenly Jack's phone makes a sound. A message from Eleanor: "Good luck!" Jack smiles.

Now the waiting begins for the president to show up and give his speech.

A little while later the president walks on stage with his entourage to a loud roar from the crowd.

His VICE-PRESIDENT, SECRETARY OF WAR and a few SYCOPHANT CELEBRITIES are with him.

"Ugh," Jack thinks. "These bastards." The vice-president speaks first.

VICE-PRESIDENT  
(Emphatically)  
Hellooo America!

The crowd cheers.

VICE-PRESIDENT (CONT'D)  
(Full of vigor)  
We have a lot to talk about today!  
Waziristan has truly been unruly  
and dangerous!

The crowd loves it. They can't wait to hear the rest.

Jack is not so thrilled. "I have to sit through this to get to my moment? Oh god."

The vice-president gives his 20-minute opening speech, praising the president and his decisive actions, and criticising the regime in Waziristan for having started this war.

Then it's the secretary of war's turn.

SECRETARY OF WAR  
(Smarmy)  
Good afternoon, America!

The crowd erupts again. There's a lot of flashlights coming from the audience.

Most people are wearing a red hat.

SECRETARY OF WAR (CONT'D)  
(Boisterous)  
Boy are the Waziristanis in a  
pickle now!

The crowd chants USA, USA, USA!

He then goes on to talk about how this is a holy war against all Christians, and how the Waziristanis are anti-Jesus and anti-America because of their fundamentalist interpretation of Islam.

How they are antisemitic and want to see Israel wiped off the map simply because they can't stand that God chose the Jews over them.

He talks for a good 20 minutes, then introduces the president and steps down.

Jack has blood coming out of his ears, that's how much he can't stand these people.

"Atleast the president is funny and cool in a way, these ass-kissers are just tumors on an already failing body," he thinks.

Then, before the president comes on, a celebrity takes center stage and goes on to explain the president is a little late because he's just getting a briefing from his team about the Waziristan War.

He fills the time by talking about how we should be supporting our president at a time like this, and how the Democrats are betrayers and backstabbers and don't believe in America.

"Oh no, this guy," Jack thinks.

Walter shows up. He is sitting in the crowd, all the way in the back.

He has an earpiece and shades on, and he's dressed in a black suit, like the Secret Service.

He can see Jack, but Jack can't see him.

He presses on his earpiece and mouths something. The other Secret Service members respond, they are notified.

Moments later the president takes the mic.

There's a huge roar and people cheer for minutes. The president accepts the gesture and lets them clamor for a while before finally getting them to calm down.

RONALD HEMAN  
(Like a showman)  
Hello great people of America!

The sea of red hats and phone camera flashlights go wild again.

Everyone's either filming the president of America or taking pictures of him, witnessing the event through the screen of their phones instead of looking at it live.

RONALD HEMAN (CONT'D)  
 (Energetically, riling the crowd up)  
 Big doings in Waziristan! I take it that's what you've come to hear about this afternoon, ladies and gentleman?!

The crowd gives him the cheer he was looking for. He continues.

RONALD HEMAN (CONT'D)  
 (Erratically)  
 Well I'll tell you what's happening with Waziristan! I just got the information. I have the best information. My team says Waziristan is not just threatening to bomb our bases in the Middle-East, but Tel Aviv too! This is a big mistake. A loser move! The Waziristani leadership has no clue what they're doing. No clue who they're dealing with. You wanna know who they're dealing with?! Come, I'll tell ya!

The president pauses, expecting another cheer.

He gets it.

The people start chanting USA! USA! USA! Again.

RONALD HEMAN (CONT'D)  
 You see what the Waziristanis don't realize is, that we have the biggest, strongest, most beautiful military and greatest people of any nation in the history of the world. That's you! You great people make this, might I say humble...yes most humble nation in the history of the world, also the greatest nation in the history of the world!

He pauses again.

This time he doesn't get as much of a reaction from the crowd, they seemed to miss the cue, but there's still a small hesitant roar.

Jack is slightly bored with the president repeating himself so often, but ignores it as he's got bigger issues on his mind.

When to strike? When to jump on stage? He realizes this could go on for hours, so he waits a few more minutes.

But definitely not long, any more of this and he'll go crazy.

The president says he's talked to the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Waziristan and that they are very afraid of him and showed him much respect.

He goes on to say he'd be surprised if Waziristan actually attacks US bases, as that would escalate tensions and lead the US to bring "total destruction" to Waziristan.

Jack feels the tension, the vibe of the speech.

He's more entertained by this last bit, because it's got new information, but decides there's no time to sit there chuckling, trying to see the joke in the tragedy.

It's now or never!

Walter notices Jack is getting impatient and wants to go up early.

He mutters something in his earpiece and the Secret Service responds.

They move a bit away from the center of the stage and look the other way, as if there's something going on there.

As the president is speaking, Jack goes for it.

He climbs over the barricades, then onto the podium and runs towards the mic. He gets behind it.

Suddenly he finds himself the center of attention at a rally that will be broadcasted worldwide.

The president panics and walks away from the mic. Jack grabs the mic.

JACK

(Anxiously and  
erratically)

Mister president you've got to help  
me! People you've got to help me!  
The government wants to kill my  
newborn child because my child is  
good and wants to spread goodness  
in the world!

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

He's against World War Three! They won't let him live long unless the people...-

Before he can finish his plea, the Secret Service gangs up on him, and throws their bodies on the president in case this is an assassination attempt.

Jack finds himself buried under four agents and panics, not sure what to expect now.

The crowd gasps and clamors loudly.

Eleanor is sitting at home, watching the rally and being amazed and shook Jack actually did it.

Walter smiles a small smile and mutters something in his earpiece again.

On stage, the Secret Service keeps a tight hold of Jack as they look for a weapon.

When they can't find one, they bring him up and escort him off stage.

One of the officers shouts in Jack's ear, "what the fuck do you think you're doing, huh?!"

People start yelling things at Jack and booing, as the Secret Service brings him to the back.

Jack is confounded.

Then he thinks of what he has just pulled off, realizes it's going to be world news and feels the glamor and glory of the moment.

For the first time in Jack's life, he feels "big" and important, like he actually matters.

He feels famous, for he knows he's going to be! Great success! Probably.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Two members of the Secret Service bring Jack to one of the dressing rooms in the back.

There they handcuff him and sit him on a chair.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #1  
What was the point of that, huh?!  
Your son is in trouble? What are  
you a schizo?

Jack doesn't respond.

His mind is still with his victory. He's proud of himself.  
Plus, his body is still full of adrenaline.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #2  
We ought to fuck you up, son!

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #1  
That little stunt of yours is going  
to cost you years of your life!

Suddenly another member of the Secret Service enters and  
calls for the other two out.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #1 (CONT'D)  
(To Jack)  
We'll be right back. Don't do  
anything stupid.

Jack looks up, wondering what's going on. Then smiles and  
nods.

The Secret Service walk out of the dressing room.

Jack is sat there all alone.

Suddenly he hears his phone notification. They haven't  
confiscated his phone yet.

He's handcuffed, but manages to get his phone out of his  
pocket. Two messages.

Steve: "What the fuck was that man?! Do you need help?" With  
a laugh out loud and surprised smiley face.

Eleanor: "You did it! Call me when you get the chance!"

Jack smiles.

He feels like he's reached an important milestone.

Now the world knows him, and fame is power.

Maybe he can leverage that power in his and little Hope's  
favor?

He can still hear the crowd making a ruckus.

A thought enters his mind.

Doubt creeps in.

Will the people even care?

They're pretty conditioned to be indifferent to the plea of vulnerable people, and worship power more than they care about justice.

The thought makes Jack's stomach churn, he realizes this might have been a pointless exercise, the people are worse than their rulers.

Or are they? Jack doesn't know.

The Secret Service enters the dressing room again.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #1 (CONT'D)

You're in luck, buddy. The president has cancelled his rally and wants to speak with you.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #2

Plus you're all over TV and the internet. People seem to believe you. They're worried about you.

Jack's face brightens up at this news.

People believe him? They don't think he's mentally ill? And the president wants to talk? Victory for Jack!

JACK

The president wants to talk to me? Great!

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #1

Yeah. Whoop-dee-fucking-doo. You're a star now, son.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #2

Just wait here for five minutes. The president will be with you momentarily.

The Secret Service members leave the dressing room again. Jack gets so excited he wants to share the news.

He messages Eleanor: "The president's coming to talk to me!"

A few moments later Eleanor uncharacteristically responds fast: "Omg! Win! Call me!" With a smiley face with a broad smile.

Jack writes "Later!", and laughs.

He looks at Steve's message again, but decides not to respond yet.

He puts his phone back in his pocket and waits for the president.

A few minutes later, the president walks in with the Secret Service.

Jack gets up to show respect.

He doesn't necessarily like this president, but he is still the president.

The Secret Service members try to walk in with Heman for protection, but Heman stops them and says it's not necessary as Jack is not dangerous and handcuffed anyway.

They concur and close the door behind the president and Jack.

Heman walks up to Jack.

RONALD HEMAN

Hello, Jack. I've heard a lot about you and your son!

Heman extends his hand for a handshake. Jack accepts it.

JACK

(Anxiously, but elated)  
Hello mister president, I've been trying to get a hold of you!

The president grabs a chair and tells Jack to sit.

RONALD HEMAN

It was a brave thing you did back there. They could have shot you!

Jack sits. He realizes he didn't even think of that scenario.

JACK

...Oh I guess I counted on luck, mister president.

Heman lets out a proud laughter.

RONALD HEMAN

Well you are certainly a lucky guy!

Jack hesitates.

JACK  
 (Tentatively)  
 A question before we go on, if I  
 may. How do you know my name?

Jack's paranoia leads him to ask this question.

RONALD HEMAN  
 (Nervously)  
 ...ehm, Walter told me. You know  
 Walter, right? He's a good man!

The president seems a little uneasy at the mention of  
 Walter's name.

Jack is in disbelief but it makes sense. Walter did say he  
 would reach out to the president and his team.

JACK  
 (Unsure of it, then  
 sarcastically)  
 Ehm...oh I see. Yeah I'm familiar  
 with Walter. He and I had some  
 great chats.

Jack scoffs.

RONALD HEMAN  
 The real question is, how does  
 Walter know you!?

Jack lets out a small uncomfortable laughter, because he  
 doesn't know how else to respond.

JACK  
 Right. How does Walter know me? And  
 why is the government on my ass,  
 and planning to kill my kid?

RONALD HEMAN  
 Who says it's just your kid they're  
 after? You've taken quite the  
 revolutionary position yourself!

Jack scoffs again.

JACK  
 (In disbelief)  
 Me? They're after me now? But I'm  
 not against the government, as long  
 as it doesn't harm my child!

The president makes an understanding gesture.

RONALD HEMAN

That's true, fair enough. You've mostly complied with their directives in your life. But your kid is really stubborn. He's against all this! And you're not actually that different, you know. I mean, you *don't* want to stop WWII? And make funny faces at people?

The president lets out a small, guttural "ha." Jack scoffs another time.

JACK

My kid? Stubborn? How do you even know? He's just been born! And yeah, I guess I'm not a fan of nuclear war.

The president makes a dismissive gesture.

RONALD HEMAN

I'm not gonna explain to you how they know these things. Just know that they do! It's your son's life mission to stop them! And he can't be bought!

Jack doesn't know what to say. He takes a small pause.

How do they know these things? How did Hagienta? Nevermind.

JACK

What's my kid against anyway? I mean, besides WWII?

The president licks his lips and seems to be amused with this question.

RONALD HEMAN

(Entertained)

Well, the coldness. The cruelty. The self-importance. The seriousness. The "fuck you and have a bad day's?" Oh and the worship of stupidity!

Jack scoffs again.

JACK

Huh! I see. So everything I hate, but unlike me he's in a position to do something about it.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

But can we go back to WWII for a moment? Isn't he too early to stop it? WWII is around the corner, Hope has just been born!

RONALD HEMAN

Well, I'm not sure if we're gonna have a WWII any time soon. Besides which, the kid has already sent his father on his mission to save people from WWII, he's already playing the game!

Jack is bemused.

JACK

Sent me? How so?

RONALD HEMAN

Well by picking up Walter's call you inadvertently picked up your son's holy mission. His karma is on your shoulders now, Jack!

Jack is gassed and he scoffs again.

JACK

Great. Fine. Regardless. Who is Walter anyway? What does he want me to do?

The president grabs a pack of cigarettes and a lighter out of his pocket and lights one up. He offers one to Jack.

RONALD HEMAN

You want one, Jack? I know you smoke.

Jack looks surprised. He thought the president doesn't smoke.

RONALD HEMAN (CONT'D)

Don't look so surprised, yes I smoke in private. Every now and then, when no one is around. Being the president is a stressful job!

JACK

I see. Yeah I'll have one. Thank you.

Jack and the president sit and smoke for a moment.

The president drops his ashes on the floor. Jack hesitates and looks for an ash tray, but the president says "oh fuck it, someone will clean that up!"

Jack concurs and does the same.

Then the president speaks.

RONALD HEMAN

Walter is my boss. He orders me around!

Jack is in disbelief.

JACK

He's your boss? But you're the president!

The president takes a big puff, sucks in some air dramatically, then blows it out.

He flicks the ashes on the ground again.

RONALD HEMAN

Let me tell you something about the presidency. The president is not in control of the country! The banks are! The president is just a mascot, and every four years the banks pick a new mascot to represent them for a while. Democracy is a lie. Democracy is the mask. The real face is oligarchy! Democracy is the propaganda! The system is rigged, and it always has been rigged by the banks!

Jack knew something like that. He's not stupid.

JACK

So Walter is a banker?

RONALD HEMAN

Not exactly. He works for the banks. By their authority, he gets his. And if I do something the banks don't like, they send him to kill me!

Jack is taken aback by this comment.

JACK  
 (Incredulously)  
 He kills you if you don't comply?

RONALD HEMAN  
 Well, he hires a "lone-wolf" to shoot me and the media never reports on who paid this lone wolf's family off for the job! What do you think happened to Kennedy? Or Lincoln? Both opposed the banks and got what was coming for them. Your kid is an entirely different ballpark, he's a prophet for Christ's sake! The banks don't like prophets. Prophets are usually socialists! You've seen how they demonize socialism, Jack! That's why I can cut social spending and hand out tax-breaks to my billionaire friends and nobody says a word! 'Cause the banks own the media and control every bit of information the people hear! All the while pretending to be free! They tell you what to think! Opinion-makers, they call them. We're worse than North-Korea, and the people have no idea, they believe it's a free and open system! The banks love it!

JACK  
 I see. Yeah I've seen this happen. Fucking rich people...Is there anything I can do against them?

The president laughs. He finishes his cigarette and drops it on the ground, then extinguishes it with his shoe.

Jack is finished too, but hesitates to throw it on the ground, to which the president replies "oh fuck it, the floor is already dirty, they have guys to clean that up."

Jack concurs again and drops his cigarette on the ground as well.

He also extinguishes it with his shoe.

RONALD HEMAN

Well, you see, there comes a time in the development of a major civilization where the system gets so rotten, so corrupt that the good guys can actually triumph over it. You see I was elected on the slogan "Back to greatness," but that's just Orwellian talk. What I was really elected for was to drive the country over the edge, and into ruin. I'm a wrecking ball! Not a saviour. There's your opportunity! You gotta convince the banks to let little Hope be the antidote to my poison, and how can I help? By making the poison so ridiculous even the banks get tired of themselves and call it quits!

JACK

(Confused)

Interesting. And what is the alternative, what if I can't convince the banks to go bust and lose all their power? What's the plan then?

RONALD HEMAN

Then...well then they have WWIII and they still go down. But they go down in style. Making progress. Like real mafioso. There's a certain advantage to that! Going down fighting is better for future generations, think of how much the world advanced thanks to WWI and WWII, WWIII would send us to the stars! The disadvantage would be that hundreds of millions of people would die horrible deaths! So maybe it's better to listen to little Hope, not be so power hungry and skip a major WWIII. Maybe just have a small one, without nuclear weapons, where America loses to Russia and China and the people who have in the past centuries done nothing but lose can win, and the people who have done nothing but win can lose. *That's* what your son wants. "The meek shall inherit the earth!" Gotta love Jesus!

Jack is flabbergasted. His kid really is an important man.  
He's playing the great game!

JACK  
(Hesitantly)  
...And whose side are you on?

The president smiles a big warm smile.

RONALD HEMAN  
(Giddy)  
I'm supposed to press those buttons! But I really don't want to! I'm squeamish, I don't actually like killing as much as I advocate for it. I just say what they wanna hear, and hope the people will find it so ridiculous they'll do something about it! I may be the president, but I'm the least powerful man in the country! Other people vote, I just do what I'm told. But don't be mistaken! I will press those goddamn buttons if they make me! I don't wanna end up like Lincoln or Kennedy!

Jack can't believe it.

He's getting a first-row seat behind the scenes.

JACK  
So El. was right, you are just a pussy!

Jack pulls back, not wanting to offend the president.

JACK (CONT'D)  
It's ok, I guess everyone is.  
Atleast you're more rational in person than you seem on TV.

The president smiles another big smile.

RONALD HEMAN  
Well, ahh, I've told you all I know. You're gonna have to discuss the rest with Walter. He's going to want to see you! Next time he calls, run, because even though he helped you, he's really pissed at what's happened and wants to hurt you!

(MORE)

RONALD HEMAN (CONT'D)

I'll tell the Secret Service to let you go, but I can't tell Walter not to go after you! The fate of the world now hangs on your shoulders, Jack. Beat Walter at his intellectual games and you save both your kid and the world! You want my advice? Run to Canada! Walter can't hurt you as much there! He doesn't have the jurisdiction!

The president gets up and gives Jack another handshake.

Jack gets up as well, this time not just because he's expected to.

After everything he just heard, he doesn't think the president is such a bad guy anymore.

The guy has been helping him, and seems to be on the side of good.

JACK

(Uneasy, but elated at getting information)

Thanks, mister president. Thanks for everything!

RONALD HEMAN

You're welcome! And best of luck!

The president exits the room.

Jack sits back down again, his head spinning from all the information he just received.

Then he thinks of Walter.

Walter's mad? Jack gets back in fight mode. "Good," he thinks. Fuck him!

The Secret Service enters the room again.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #1

Well, you heard it. You're free.

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #2

Lucky bastard, got to meet the president and get away scot-free all in the same day!

Jack stays silent. They uncuff him and lead him out of the stadium.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

It's a quarter to 6, already dark outside. Jack is let off.

As soon as they exit the building, a bunch of REPORTERS with cameras and mics rush towards him.

REPORTER #1

What's your name, and why does your son want to do good, sir?!

Jack gestures her away.

REPORTER #2

Is it true that you had a conversation with the president?!

The Secret Service helps Jack out by pushing reporters away.

Jack responds.

JACK

(Annoyed)

No comment. I just want you to know that the people must protect my son against the government!

The reporters don't honor his wish to be left alone.

They frantically encircle him.

REPORTER #3

Can you tell us what was going through your mind when you rushed the stage?

SECRET SERVICE MEMBER #1

Just get a cab home. They'll never leave you alone.

Jack agrees.

He pushes past the reporters and sticks out his hand for a cab.

REPORTER #1

Do you or your son have a history of mental illness, sir?

Jack feels the need to respond.

JACK  
 (Dismayed)  
 No! We're not mentally ill, you  
 are!

A cab stops for him. Jack gets in. A black man is the driver.

CAB DRIVER  
 Fuck you and have a sh...-

Jack gets annoyed

JACK  
 Don't! Don't say that! Just take me  
 to Lower Manhattan, please!

The cab driver is taken aback, but he relaxes and does what  
 he's told.

CAB DRIVER  
 Ehm...OK sir!

The reporters still try to get Jack to talk while the cab is  
 standing there, pushing each other up against the window of  
 the cab, but have to give up as soon as the cab leaves.

Jack checks his phone.

A message from an unknown number: "Don't go home! Run! I'm  
 coming for you!"

Jack panics.

That must be Walter! But if not home, then where can he go?  
 Canada?

His car broke down, he can't go to Canada!

Suddenly he remembers Steve offered to help.

He messages Steve. "Can you pick me up? And take me to  
 Canada?"

Steve doesn't take long to reply: "Where you at?"

"Great," Jack thinks, he's got a ride for the final showdown  
 with Walter!

Jack thinks some more, then replies "Nevermind picking me up,  
 I'll come to you, I'm in the cab!"

Steve replies "OK, see you soon!"

JACK  
(To cab driver)  
Nevermind Lower Manhattan. Take me  
to Brooklyn!

CAB DRIVER  
As you wish, sir!

Jack calls Eleanor. He's gotta tell her he's not coming home.  
Eleanor picks up immediately.

ELEANOR  
(Excited)  
Hello? Jack?!

JACK  
Hi, honey! How are you?

ELEANOR  
This is great Jack! Half the media  
says you're a terrorist, the other  
half sees a concerned father taking  
care of his son!

Jack lets out a little laughter.

JACK  
Good. That's good. Terrorist?!  
That's a bit of a stretch. Let's  
hope for the best!

Eleanor is exhilarated.

ELEANOR  
You're famous now, Jack! You know  
how much money we can make off  
this?!

Jack laughs nervously.

JACK  
That's not the point. We have to  
save Hope! Listen, I'm not coming  
home today. Walter, that government  
agent, is coming for me and  
apparently he wants to hurt me. I'm  
going to Canada with Steve on the  
president's advice! Walter doesn't  
have jurisdiction there. You two  
stay safe, I'll deal with this and  
be back in no time!

Eleanor is still jubilant.

ELEANOR

That's fine, Jack. You go out there  
and do what real men do! I'll see  
you soon!

Jack is conflicted about this comment. His face contorts,  
then he lets out a small laughter.

JACK

OK, bye honey! See you soon, I  
hope!

Jack hangs up the phone.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's twenty past 6, evening. Jack arrives at Steve's house.

He pays the cab driver and tells him not to wish him a bad  
day.

The cab driver wonders who he is, having overheard the  
conversation with Eleanor, but agrees reluctantly.

Jack exits the cab and calls Steve.

STEVE

What up Jack?! You arrived?

JACK

Yeah, I'm outside your house, can  
you come out?

STEVE

One minute!

Steve hangs up.

Moments later he comes outside with a big smile on his face  
and hugs Jack.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(Elated)

My man! I knew you weren't crazy!  
This is some fucked up shit you got  
yourself into! How are you?

Jack accepts the hug.

JACK

I'm fine, thank you. We gotta save  
my kid, Steve!

STEVE

Whatever you say man! I'm with you.

JACK

Good, thank you. Listen, the government is after me, the president came in to talk to me at Madison, he told me to go to Canada as soon as possible. Apparently they can't get me there!

STEVE

Damn. Who would've thought the government would ever be after you?! Alright, let's go then.

Steve unlocks his car. It's a few-years-old Ford Mustang GT.

They get in.

Before entering Jack catches a glimpse of something in the corner of his eye.

He looks over and sees Walter in his car, a little ways from him.

JACK

Shit! That's him! That's Walter, the government agent who's been chasing me these last couple of days!

They get in the car.

STEVE

Who? A government agent? You sure about that? You not trippin' are you?!

Jack gets slightly offended at this.

JACK

No, I'm telling you he chased me yesterday and keeps calling to either help me or tell me I'm in trouble. Floor it, Steve!

Steve can't believe it.

Some guy from the government is chasing him?

This conspiracy is getting more and more ridiculous.

He doesn't argue, however.

STEVE

Alright! I believe you. Let's get the fuck out of here then.

Steve takes off aggressively. Towards Canada.

Walter gives chase, but stays a little behind them.

EXT. NEW YORK STATE - OUTSIDE NEWBURGH - NIGHT

Jack and Steve have been on the road for 45 minutes, driving as fast as the speed limit allows.

Walter is still behind them, giving chase. Steve has something to say.

STEVE

The government wants to kill your kid, 'cause he good?! Why's your kid tryin' to do good? Makes no sense to me.

JACK

I don't know. Some fortune teller predicted he would, and I believe her because she also predicted Walter would be outside the hospital that day and call me later at night, which he did.

STEVE

A fortune teller? Oh man, you shouldn't fuck with those, they bring all kinds of trouble with their voodoo and shit. Did you know you're famous now?

JACK

Yeah, that's great Steve. I don't care about that, I need to save my son and me.

Suddenly Jack gets a text from an unknown number again.

"Run, now!" He shows it to Steve.

They look in the rear view mirror and see that Walter is speeding up and overtaking cars aggressively to get to them.

STEVE

Oh motherff... We gotta go!

Steve speeds up.

He floors it.

Nevermind the speed limit, they're in a real chase now.

Walter doesn't give them an inch. He tailgates them aggressively and crashes the front of his car against their back.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(Amazed)

Woow! Hoo-aah! This motherfucker  
crazy, Jack! Who the fuck, is he?

Steve speeds up some more and looks for an interchange where he can lose Walter. He gets on the left lane to overtake a few cars in front of him.

JACK

(Exhilarated)

I don't know! I think he works for  
the banks! That's what the  
president said!

Walter speeds up too.

Walter's car is a modified Mondeo, with much more horsepower. Enough to catch up to Steve.

As the road clears, Steve moves over to the right line.

Walter comes in to their left and bangs the side of his car against Steve's.

They're almost driven off the road.

Jack and Steve are in full panic mode.

STEVE

Hey! That's my new car! You gon'  
pay for that, motherfucker!

Steve bangs his car into Walter's as well, trying to get *him* off the road.

It fails. Now they're both stuck in a tussle. They near a car ahead of them on the right line.

Steve puts his foot on the brake and slows down.

Walter keeps going on the left.

Steve overtakes the car in front of him, and is now behind Walter.

Steve trails Walter.

Steve and Jack calm down now that they're behind Walter.

They slow down.

Walter slows down as well.

Walter swerves left and right, seemingly mocking them.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You sure this clown from the government? I only seen this kind of shit in the movies!

JACK

I'm telling you man, he works for the banks. The sooner we get to Canada, the better.

Steve sees an interchange.

He waits until it's too late for Walter to change course, then takes a sharp right into the other road.

Walter keeps driving, unable to respond.

There's a celebration in the car, Jack and Steve are exhilarated!

STEVE

Yeah motherfucker! That's how it's done! You stupid piece of shit!

Jack high-fives him.

JACK

Nice work Steve! We won't be seeing him anymore for miles!

STEVE

Heeell yes!

EXT. CANADA - OUTSIDE MONTREAL - NIGHT

The guys have driven for four hours. They're outside Montreal, the nearest city in Canada they could go to.

Walter still hasn't shown up. They assume they've lost him.

STEVE

(Exhausted)

Finally! Montreal.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

I can't believe we made it. That  
guy was giving us a *baaad* old time!

Jack is exuberant.

JACK

You made it Steve. You're the best!

Steve laughs, kind of proud of himself.

STEVE

Uh-oh. We need gas though, I'm  
nearly out.

JACK

We'll get gas in Montreal. Just  
keep going.

Both get an ominous feeling talking about Montreal.

What's gonna happen there? Walter doesn't have jurisdiction  
there, does he?

They make nothing of it.

EXT. MONTREAL - BROSSARD GAS STATION - NIGHT

The guys have entered Montreal.

Jack is still jubilant, he thinks it's another victory.

They stop to get gas.

While Steve is putting gas in the car, Jack goes to the  
convenience store to get some snacks and drinks.

As he nears the store however, two or three cop cars come  
rushing in with their sirens on and stop in front of Jack.

The COPS get out and shout at Jack to keep his hands above  
his head.

Steve sees this, but can't believe it.

STEVE

(To himself))

That motherfucker put the cops on  
us?!

Jack is bewildered too. He didn't see this coming.

He follows their commands, gets on his knees, and lets  
himself be arrested.

One of the cops walks up to Steve.

COP #1  
You can go, you're not under  
arrest.

Steve is dumbstruck. The police take Jack to the police station.

INT. MONTREAL - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

There they strap him to a chair in an interrogation room.

There's a coffee table with an ash-tray on it, another chair and another, bigger table in the room, with a stereo and a toolbox on it.

COP #1  
(Dirty)  
You just wait here until Walter  
arrives. He's going to have some  
fun with you!

JACK  
How's this possible?! Walter  
doesn't even have jurisdiction  
here!

The cops laugh.

COP #1  
Walter has jurisdiction in  
Pakistan! Let alone here.

Jack can't believe it. Did the president lie?

JACK  
How's that possible? He's an  
American, they can't enforce the  
law in another country!

COP #2  
(Mockingly)  
Everywhere is America baby! Half  
the world is America! China is  
America!

The cops have a nasty "bad cop" attitude to them.

COP #1  
Yeah you just wait little princess,  
Walter will be here any minute now!

The cops laugh maniacally as they close the door and leave the room.

Jack is just sitting there, looking at the floor, trying to come up with a plan.

What's the solution to all this? How does he convince Walter to leave him and his son alone? And prevent WWII? There must be a way!

He remembers something. Machiavelli said you must err on the side of evil to acquire power, but the most influential man in history was Muhammad, who was good.

In fact, come to think of it, most men in the top ten most influential people were good. Machiavelli was wrong! Kindness is where it's at!

Moments later Walter enters the room.

He's wearing a sweater vest, a sweater and cargo pants, and carrying two jumpstart cables and two cd's.

WALTER KILLERBE

(Taunting)

Well, well, well. Who do we have here?! If it isn't Jack Fischer, man on a mission from God!

Jack gives him a disinterested look.

JACK

I don't believe in God, only in kindness.

Walter shrugs.

He puts the cd's and the jumpstart cable on the bigger table, next to the stereo and toolbox.

WALTER KILLERBE

(Playfully and ominously)

...God, no God. Makes no difference. The real question is to kill or not to kill, isn't it Jack?

Jack shrugs back.

JACK

(Indifferent and defiant)

If you say so. I know your logic by now Walter. It's kill or be killed in your world.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

You have to start this war and kill my son because you're afraid otherwise you die or get hurt. You're evil because you fear evil! Push the problem to the other guy, don't take any responsibility for life being shit! You're just another pussy. People won't fight for that!

Walter laughs.

WALTER KILLERBE

Forget about the war! Focus on you and little "Hope." Anyway, that's a good analysis. But you were wrong at the end there. Fear is all people have ever fought for! You wanna hear a little story?

JACK

(Agitated)

Fuck your story! How did you get the Canadian police to arrest me?

Walter lets out a small sinister laughter.

WALTER KILLERBE

The banks own Canada just as much as they own America. In fact, they own almost the entire world!

Jack is taken aback.

JACK

Then why did the president tell me to come to Canada? Did he play me like a fool?

Walter sits down on the chair in front of Jack.

He pulls out a cigar and a lighter from his sweater vest and lights one up.

WALTER KILLERBE

You've got your cigarettes with you, Jack? I can fish them out and give them to you.

Jack thinks, but he feels like he wants to rebel in every which way.

JACK

No thank you, it's a filthy habit.

Walter lets out a big "aahh" and says "OK." He takes a small pause

WALTER KILLERBE

He sent you to Canada, because in Canada I can't hurt you as much. He didn't fool you.

Jack gulps.

JACK

(Hesitantly)  
Oh, how so?

WALTER KILLERBE

Canada is stricter with the degree to which they allow torture. Not that the law applies to us. Anyway, you wanna be good Jack? Prove it. Let's start with a little story.

Jack gets worried, but then gathers some courage.

JACK

(Annoyed)  
What's the fucking story?!

Walter lets out a puff of smoke and makes rings. He smiles maniacally.

WALTER KILLERBE

Here's the story. Now you have to pay attention, it's a short story! In the 18th century a group of Austronesians on an island, the Moriori, decided they didn't like war so much anymore. They called it quits and made peace with eachother. For a hundred years this went really well. There was peace, there was life, there was love. But in the 19th century another group of Austronesians, two Taranaki Māori tribes, running from war on their own islands, had to migrate to the island of this first group. Now the Māori knew nothing but war. You know what they did to the peaceful ones? What do you think? Witness their peacefulness and just leave them alone? Join them?! No! They slaughtered them, enslaved them, ATE them. Now you and your son are saying

(MORE)

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
 (Singing mockingly)  
 "Imagine all the people, living  
 life in peace, oeh-oeh-oeh-oeh-  
 oeh!" Hehe. Is that really what you  
 want to do? Or do you want to fight  
 until there's no one left to  
 conquer, and you can finally rest  
 in peace?

With his last remark, Walter blows a puff of smoke in Jack's face.

Jack is taken aback again, but determined to beat Walter.

JACK  
 What about the prophet Muhammad? He  
 preached kindness and compassion,  
 and conquered his enemies. Can't  
 you do the same? Leave my kid alone  
 and don't use nukes, just lose a  
 war to China and Russia and implode  
 already. The world is tired of your  
 shit. Pass the baton of being the  
 best!

Walter pulls back. He makes a serious face, as if offended.

WALTER KILLERBE  
 I just drop my best card on your  
 table and you come up with this  
 Muhammad shit? Yes, he was  
 succesful, but a lot of his allies  
 had to die to get him there. Will  
 you sacrifice others? Or sacrifice  
 yourself? Let's give you your first  
 test.

Walter is still smoking.

He gets up and walks over to Jack, standing between him and the coffee table.

JACK  
 And then there's the story of Cyrus  
 the Great, who built an empire on  
 tolerance, and Liu Bang, who freed  
 the slaves and did away with  
 capital punishment and started the  
 Han dynasty! Kind people have had  
 more success than you give them  
 credit for!

Walter nods but then proceeds to ignore him.

WALTER KILLERBE

I'm gonna do to you what your wife  
said was the worst pain you've ever  
felt!

Jack chuckles.

JACK

What are you gonna do, huh? This is  
ridiculous!

Walter takes off Jack's shoe and brings the coffee table  
near. He lifts Jack's foot and hits it against the coffee  
table.

Jack is in pain, but decides to mock him, feeling the  
advantage of being in Canada.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ouch! Fuck! Haha! That really hurt!  
Is that the worst you can do,  
Walter?!

Walter takes off Jack's other shoe and hits his other foot  
against the coffee table.

JACK (CONT'D)

(Acting goofy)  
Aauw! And Michael Jordan makes a  
three-pointer!

Walter hits his first foot against the table again.

JACK (CONT'D)

(Still mocking Walter,  
getting disoriented)  
And Babe Ruth hits a grand slam!

Walter sees it's not working, and decides to give up for now.

He grunts and goes back to sit on his chair.

Jack is still sore, and he doesn't mind Walter knowing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Aaah! Ouch! Fuck you, man! That's  
nasty!

Walter looks at Jack in disbelief.

WALTER KILLERBE

(Disgruntled)  
Have your fun for now. We'll see if  
you last.

(MORE)

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)

Now, what else do you know, you history-student? Do you know what I'm going to do next?

Jack pants, breathing heavily helps him with the pain.

JACK

Oh I know everything I need to know to beat you! You're just a great, big pussy!

Walter gets impatient.

WALTER KILLERBE

It's not about being a pussy! What do you think happens if you decide to become a peaceful man? People will respect your character and not mess with you anymore?! No! They fuck you in the ass! What do you do when they want to hurt your family, huh Jack?!

Jack winces as Walter yells at him. Then he finds the answer.

JACK

(Anxiously and erratically)

So fight! But fight morally! For the right reasons! With the right purpose! Don't go after peaceful men yourself! Take on the villains! Fuck them! What do you think happens when you become the villain, and kill my kid? You hurt too many people, for unjustified reasons! They gang up on you, and fuck you in the ass! That's what happened to Shi Huang Di! That's what happened to Tamerlane! That's what happened to Hitler!

Walter chuckles and cracks his knuckles.

WALTER KILLERBE

I see, you really do know some history. And you make a few good points. Can't be too evil either. Except what do you do when everyone in the world, for the first time in a long while, is evenly matched and has nukes at eachother's throats? Give in? Go soft? No! You go hard! No time for weakness!

Jack remembers something the president said.

RONALD HEMAN

(V.O.)

Well, you see, there comes a time  
in the development of a major  
civilization where the system gets  
so rotten, so corrupt that the good  
guys can actually triumph over it.

He realizes every civilization starts good and ends bad, even  
the ones he mentioned as shining examples of good working  
out.

The Hindu cycles!

Jack scoffs.

JACK

Oh fuck you! This isn't about that!  
This is about you losing power and  
flailing your arms around in a  
panic! You were born into power,  
Walter. You didn't earn it, so you  
use evil as a crutch because you're  
too terrified to try being great.  
Killing Hope isn't showing  
strength! It's the ultimate  
admission of weakness!

Walter's eyes widen and he stops smoking mid-puff.

He looks shook by Jack's argument.

For the first time, his smirk is gone.

One of the cops enters the room. There's a silence.

COP #1

Uhh...Walter?

He walks over to where Walter is sitting and whispers  
something in his ear. Walter turns his head around to listen,  
then nods.

He extinguishes his cigar in the ashtray on the coffee table  
and turns back to Jack.

WALTER KILLERBE

(Deflated a bit, but still  
determined to best Jack)

Good points. All true. But...not  
enough. I'll leave you alone for  
now.

(MORE)

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
 I'll be back in a little while.  
 Just got to do something. While you  
 wait, I'm gonna let you enjoy this  
 cd I brought!

His smirk is back. He puts the cd in the stereo.

It's Justin Bieber's hit song "Baby." He turns the volume all  
 the way up.

Jack lets out a tortured "aahh." Walter chuckles.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
 (As he's leaving)  
 You know you can end this whenever  
 you want! You just have to promise  
 not to get between us and your son  
 anymore! Let us take care of the  
 job, and there will be no more  
 pain.

Jack is frustrated but determined to save Hope.

JACK  
 Never! Kiss my ass!

Walter leaves the room.

Jack has to listen to "Baby" on repeat.

His arms are tied so he can't even cover his ears.

He grits his teeth and tries to just endure.

Suddenly he hears a voice in his head.

HAGIENTA  
 (V.O.)  
 Jack! Jack can you hear me?!

Jack is dumbfounded. Where is that voice coming from?

JACK  
 (V.O.)  
 Old lady Hagienta? Where is this  
 coming from?

HAGIENTA  
 (V.O.)  
 Nevermind that Jack! I need you to  
 know something! Remember the stoics  
 Jack! It's not the thing in itself  
 that's hurting you, but your  
 opinion of it!

(MORE)

HAGIENTA (CONT'D)

The obsession with fame, money,  
status, war. It's not bad unless  
you make it bad, Jack. Change your  
perspective and become one with the  
lunacy! Enjoy the song!

Jack is in disbelief. He's supposed to enjoy the lunacy?

JACK

(V.O.)

But it's wrong! This culture is  
sick! How are you doing this?!

HAGIENTA

(V.O)

It's sick for a reason, Jack! It's  
to keep people safe! Just go with  
it, don't be too smart! Be wise,  
Jack! Like the Buddha!

"Like the Buddha?" Jack is unsure what to think of it, but  
doesn't feel like arguing.

He assumes it's good advice.

JACK

(V.O.)

Ehm...OK Hagienta. I'll see what I  
can do.

HAGIENTA

(V.O.)

You're gonna do great Jack, believe  
it!

Jack winces.

He feels the weight of the world crash on his shoulders.

JACK

(V.O)

OK, Hagienta. Let's hope so!

Old lady Hagienta leaves Jack's mind.

Jack tries her advice out.

He tries to view "Baby" positively but doesn't fully get it.

Eventually, he switches his intelligence off and just tries  
to enjoy the music.

Suddenly he finds a reason to enjoy it. Nice and stupid! Why  
not?

An hour later Walter comes back into the room. He looks tired, like he's just been through some hell.

He brought another cigar, a half-finished whiskey bottle, some coke and two glasses with him. He turns the music off and sits back down, putting everything on the coffee table.

JACK (CONT'D)

What happened? You look like a mess!

WALTER KILLERBE

Don't worry about me. Your friend Steve contacted the media. He told them we arrested you. They're outside as we speak.

Jack is elated.

JACK

Win! Must feel bad, losing to a government clerk, Walter!

Walter sighs.

WALTER KILLERBE

Well, I haven't lost yet. Technically we own the media, but because of your stunt back at the rally we can't control them right now. I'm still not finished with you however, Jack. You have to tell me why it makes sense to let you and your kid live.

There's a silence. Walter pours himself and Jack a glass of whiskey.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)

(Taunting as a joke)

Here, take this. You want some coke with that? I assume you're not man enough to drink it neat!

Jack scoffs. He doesn't want to play along with masculinity games.

JACK

Drinking it neat is a sign of masculinity? I don't care either way, atleast I'm not so chicken I would kill a good man for being good.

Walter pours the coke in Jack's glass of whiskey.

WALTER KILLERBE

You don't have to play along with these games. Just drink it with coke, I know you don't like the strong taste of whiskey.

Jack doesn't care. Walter's not wrong anyway. But he does want some alcohol, it's been a while since he drank and he could really use a shot right now.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)

Now I'm going to untie you, because I know you won't do anything crazy. One wrong move and I break your legs, fear will keep you in check.

Jack chuckles. Walter frees him.

Jack takes a sip, then gets his cigarettes and lighter out of his pocket. Walter takes a sip aswell, and lights up his cigar.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)

I thought you weren't going to smoke, as some sort of statement?

JACK

Yeah, well, I really need one right now. More than the world needs my statement.

Walter laughs, then lets out a deep sigh.

WALTER KILLERBE

(Diabolically)

You wanna know another story Jack?

Jack scoffs but reluctantly goes along with it.

JACK

Fine. Shoot.

Walter clears his throat, takes another sip, then takes on his cigar. Jack smokes his cigarette.

WALTER KILLERBE

OK here goes. Now pay attention, this one's even shorter...In the 19th century, settlers in the Falkland Islands came across a curious breed of wolves that had no natural predators and thus no fear.

(MORE)

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)

They didn't run from the settlers, even approaching them with curiosity and friendliness. You wanna know what happened to those wolves?

Jack gulps, knowing how this story is going to go.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)

Became the settler's best friends and lived happily ever after? Got fed watermelons? No! They got easily hunted for their fur and went extinct by the end of the century...You want us to be hunted and go extinct, Jack?

"Touché," Jack thinks. Being good can really be foolish. He still doesn't entirely agree with Walter's logic though.

JACK

That doesn't mean you have to take out my kid and blow up the world, though. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna also spurs Arjuna on to kill. But not some kid who wants to do some good, he tells him to kill the bad guys. You are the bad guys, you should be killed. The answer is not to be too good, neither to be too evil either. You must choose the middle way! The philosophy of the Buddha!

Walter is taken aback. He laughs nervously.

They both take a sip of their drinks and puff on their tobacco.

Then Walter goes back to chuckling.

He changes the topic of the conversation and asks Jack something.

WALTER KILLERBE

You wanna hear a good joke, Jack? I brought another cd. I was gonna torture you with it but now there isn't time. I want you to hear it though!

Walter gets up and walks over to the other table with the stereo and cd's on it, and switches the first cd for the second one. It's Beyoncé's "Run the World (Girls)."

The song plays.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
Listen to this Jack! Listen to the  
chorus!

Beyoncé's track enters its refrain. Walter starts laughing loudly. He lets out a big guttural laughter.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
You hear that, Jack?! She thinks  
girls run the world!

Walter laughs some more. Jack is confused at this type of humor, but chuckles anyway.

JACK  
What's your point, Walter?

Walter calms down and turns the cd off.

WALTER KILLERBE  
Nothing, nothing...just wanted to  
have some fun!

Walter finishes his drink and puffs on his cigar some more. Jack's not finished with his drink, but extinguishes his cigarette in the ashtray.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
You know what, Jack? I have one  
final test, and if you pass it,  
I'll let you win. I just wanna know  
how much you really care about  
good.

Walter gets up and grabs the jumpstart cables. Jack becomes uneasy, not knowing what Walter is planning.

Walter opens the toolbox. It turns out to be a battery. He hooks up the jumpstart cables to the battery and the walks over to Jack.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
I need you to be tied up again for  
this part. Do you mind?

Jack is unsettled, but has no choice. He reluctantly agrees and gets tied up again.

Walter takes off his pants.

JACK  
Hey, what the fuck are you doing?

Don't worry this'll only sting for a little bit.

He takes off Jack's underwear and hooks the jumpstart cables to his balls.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 (Panicky)  
 You've got to be kidding me! What are you gay?!

Walter chuckles.

WALTER KILLERBE  
 Yeah, you didn't have a problem with that though, did you?

Walter gets back up and walks over to the battery. Jack pants in worry.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
 If you really care about the world and your child so much, show it! Bear with the pain!

Walter cranks the voltage on the battery up and Jack gets shocked.

JACK  
 Aaaaaaaahhh! Hooooly fuck!

Walter starts laughing out loud again. He cranks the voltage back down.

Jack thinks of his kid and the world and decides that that wasn't so bad. He's determined to save the world. He gets defiant.

WALTER KILLERBE  
 Here comes another!

Walter cranks it back up. Jack let's out a big "aaaaaahh," then makes a vibrating, puttering sound with his lips, as if motorboating, and mocks Walter.

Walter stops laughing. His smirk is gone again. He cranks the voltage down and then back up, this time higher than before.

JACK  
 Aaaaaahh! It's Messi, it's Messi, and ooohh what a goal!

Walter is disgruntled. He tries one more time, voltage down, voltage up. Jack doesn't give him an inch. He mocks him again.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Ooohh! And LeBron does it again!

Walter gives up. He lets out an exasperated grunt. He can't hurt Jack any more, and doesn't want to either.

WALTER KILLERBE  
Argh! Fine, Jack. You win!

Walter sits down.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
I give up. I can't do this anymore!  
You guys are too good to hurt, may  
God bless your souls!

Jack is still huffing and puffing loudly, dealing with the shock.

Walter gets up and takes the jumpstart cables off Jack's balls and puts them on the table.

JACK  
(Panting)  
That's it? I won?

WALTER KILLERBE  
(Disappointed)  
Yeah, victory for Jack! You're a  
hero now!

Jack lets out a sigh of relief.

JACK  
That means my son will live a long  
and happy life? And there will be  
no nuclear holocaust?

Walter sighs, slightly contented with the situation.

WALTER KILLERBE  
That's right, Jack. You did it! You  
saved the world!

He unties Jack again and gives him a handshake. Jack accepts.

WALTER KILLERBE (CONT'D)  
Now go to your wife and kid, and  
try to not talk to the media.  
Believe me, you don't want the  
attention.

Jack is jubilant.

JACK

Thank you, Walter! Thanks a ton!

WALTER KILLERBE

Don't thank me, thank Eleanor for getting on your side a little, and your buddy Steve for believing in you and alerting the media. You guys did a wonderful job! I'm gonna go tell the president he's not up for re-election. Let's have a voice of reason as our next president! You go enjoy the fame, Jack! Use it to make life better for you, El. and Hope. Your son's going to be a great president one day!

Jack takes one more sip of his unfinished drink, then leaves the room with Walter. The officers look at him incredulously.

EXT. MONTREAL - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Outside the media are waiting but Jack ignores them. He sees Steve in the crowd and walks up to him.

JACK

Hey Steve! I did it! I fucking did it! Can you give me a ride back? I really wanna be with El. and Hope right now.

STEVE

Hell yeah Jack, you got it. What happened back there, anyway?

JACK

That's a story for another time, Steve! For now, let's go back home!