

"CHRISTMAS IN JULY"

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1 EXT. THE AURORA ARMS PUB

WE BEGIN ON A SHOT OF THE PUB SIGN - TWO HOLDING HANDS IN FRONT OF A SUNRISE

A woman is stood in front of the pub, hesitant to enter. The faint sound of music can be heard from outside. She enters.

CUT TO

2 INT. THE AURORA ARMS PUB

The woman etches forward through the desolate pub, scanning the area with a sense of familiarity and nostalgia. She's been here before.

The music grows stronger as she comes forward towards the bar area - it's Christmas music. A man raises from behind the bar with his back initially turned before noticing the woman - turning, he asks--

MAN

Drink?

WOMAN

Sorry?

MAN

Do you wanna a drink? Seems to be the only place left that hasn't been ransacked over these last few days.

WOMAN

You work here?

MAN

Nah. More of a regular. Hence why I'm quite familiar with the place.

The man points to a stool and the woman sits.

WOMAN

Martini. Please.

MAN

Elegant choice.

He pours the woman a martini and continues to refill his glass with a Jack Daniels.

WOMAN

So what are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN

Final drink (beat) There was something
in the bible about that wasn't there?

WOMAN

And the music?

She points to the stereo system at the edge of the bar
blasting out the music, early two thousands, battery
operated. Pink - like it belonged to a young girl. Almost a
relic by this point.

The Man gets philosophical for a moment.

MAN

You must have spent your whole life
being told no - not being able to do
the shit that you've always wanted to
do. Because of laws - because of
judgement - because it's not "socially
acceptable". Me. I fucking love
Christmas. Makes me happy. My best
memories are of Christmas. And I would
celebrate it all year long if I could.

There's a pause as the Woman considers the Man's philosophy
and outlook on life - what little of it there is left. She
formally lifts her glass and they silently toast.

WOMAN

What was your name by the way?

The man finishes his glass in one take - shaking his hand
whilst doing so. His drink is more important.

MAN

Our names are in the past - no meaning
to one another now. Just call me Jack
(pointing to his drink) and I'll call
you Martini.

The Woman, now MARTINI, accepts begrudgingly and shakes the
Man's, now Jack's, hand. Jack puts his empty glass down on
the counter.

JACK

Come on

Jack exits the bar area and makes his way towards the door.

MARTINI

What? Where?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

I've spent way too much of the last couple of years in here - not this night.

Martini gets up and follows Jack towards the exit of the pub. Before leaving, she takes one last look back and exits.

CUT TO

3 EXT. STREET

BOTH BEGIN TO WALK DOWN THE STREET, THERE ARE MOTIONLESS CARS EVERYWHERE - NOT LEFT IN PANIC, BUT LIKE A PORTRAIT OF A LIFE ONCE WAS.

MARTINI

And where are we going (mockingly)
Jack?

She's not used to their new names yet. Jack stops abruptly. He had no destination in mind and decides to bounce the question back to Martini.

JACK

Ladies choice.

Martini pauses for a moment and spots her prize - a flashy expensive looking car. She proceeds towards it.

JACK (CONT'D)

(panicked)
Oh no.

MARTINI

Oh come on - I've always regretted
never learning to drive.

Jack realises the danger he would be putting himself in.

JACK

(Panicked)
Definitely NO!

MARTINI

Just get it.

Martini shoots him a glare before getting in the vehicle. A few seconds pass before Jack reluctantly follows and gets in the passenger side. The car starts and speeds off down the street.

CUT TO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

4 INT. CAR

Jack is sat in the passenger seat, strapped in, holding on, becoming more distressed and uncomfortable as the journey continues.

Martini is oblivious to Jack's discomfort and continues to drive recklessly.

CUT TO

5 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CITY

The car passes by cars - left abandoned similar to the outskirts of the city - and narrowly avoids them.

Before long Martini has found herself driving into the city.

CUT TO

6 INT. CAR

Jack is still strapped in and holding on - he is now EXTREMELY discomforted from the journey.

JACK

Not to say 70 is TOO fast or anything -
but any chance you could just cut it
down like (beat) HALF?!

Martini is reluctant at first. But she looks over at him and realises his discomfort. She decides to slow down.

Before long they have reached the city.

CUT TO

7 EXT. STREET

Now outside the crudely parked car, there's a moment of silence whilst the next decision is made.

MARTINI

(mockingly)
Ladies choice.

She gestures to Jack to set the next destination. There's another moment of silence as Jack goes deep in thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Ever wanted to run naked down the street?

Martini is taken aback - unsure how to react to this question. It's certainly not what she was expecting to be asked.

MARTINI

I won't lie to you Jack, I don't think it's ever quite been at the top of my to-do list.

JACK

So it has been on there.

Jack proceeds to take his clothes off and before long, Martini allows herself to do the same. Both naked, they come round from either side of the car and look at each other - it's surprisingly comfortable with no hint of attraction between the two.

Jack turns his head and looks down the long street ahead - he turns back to Martini to see her doing the same. He smiles and begins to count.

JACK (CONT'D)

3... 2...

MARTINI

(cutting off)

GO!

Martini shoots off - running down the race track that is the street ahead of them they were both just looking at.

Jack is stunned by the betrayal, but begins to run shortly after.

CUT TO

8 EXT. HIGH STREET

THE STREETS ARE EMPTY - NO CARS OR PEOPLE OR SOUND - A CONCRETE PLAYGROUND OF POSSIBILITY.

Jack and Martini are the only signs of life - though they're now gasping for air from running. The two give each other a look of defeat and decide to walk from this point. There's silence between the two as they both admire the desolate city.

JACK

"Physically repulsive"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a pause. Martini is confused by Jack's out of the blue comment.

JACK (CONT'D)

That's what they used to say about me -
all of them.

MARTINI

High school?

Jack nods.

JACK

I found who I thought at the time, was
the love of my life. I gave her
everything.

Jack doesn't want to say the words, but Martini understands he's talking about his virginity.

JACK (CONT'D)

Over the next few days things began to
feel strange at school. I could FEEL
the people talking about me behind my
back (pause) I found out what it was,
but more importantly I found out who
started it (pause) Her.

Martini is taken aback by this confession - she wishes to share from her past too but decides it's not the right time. There's a moment of silence.

MARTINI

Shall we get dressed?

Jack nods. But with their old clothes left behind by the car - they decide they will need to help themselves to new ones.

CUT TO

9 EXT. OUTSIDE ABANDONED DEPARTMENT STORE

THEY BOTH STAND OUTSIDE WHAT WAS A DEPARTMENT STORE - WINDOWS ARE BOARDED UP WITH LITTLE SIGNS OF STRUGGLE.

Jack, almost effortlessly manages to break into the store through the lower section of a repaired glass door.

CUT TO

10 INT. ABANDONED DEPARTMENT STORE LOBBY

THE INSIDE IS DUSTY, AND ABANDONED, BUT VERY LITTLE HAS BEEN TOUCHED OF THE STORE ITSELF.

THERE ARE BURNT OUT CANDLES, MATCHES AND SLEEPING BAGS - IT WAS A FORMER REFUGEE SPOT.

Now inside the store, Jack manages to get a couple of candles lit and finds a guide of the store which shows their respective departments and destinations.

JACK

Right, so I'm over that way - and you're up that way.

MARTINI

Back in ten?

Jack nods and the two head off in their respected directions.

CUT TO

11 INT. MEN'S DEPARTMENT / INT. WOMAN'S DEPARTMENT

MONTAGE OF SHOTS BETWEEN THE TWO DEPARTMENTS AND THE PAIR PICKING THEIR NEW CLOTHES.

Both ignore the casual wear departments - that was their old lives. Now it's the time for them - before it's too late.

They eye up the formal wear instead - browsing several pairs of suits and dress. Jack is drawn towards a navy-blue suit and Martini picks out a simple, but elegant yellow dress. These are their definitive choices.

CUT TO

12 INT. ABANDONED DEPARTMENT STORE LOBBY

Jack is the first to return to the rendezvous point. A short time goes by and he looks increasingly worried that he would be by himself again - until Martini shows up descending down the broken and motionless escalator.

JACK

Funny sort of ten minutes.

MARTINI

Sorry, have you got a previous engagement to get to?

Jack changes the topic of conversation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

You look (beat) good.

MARTINI

(mockingly)

Wow? "Good". You know, Jack, "good" is what all woman strive for - I'm so glad you realised.

They both smile and head towards the exit.

CUT TO

13 EXT. STREET

The two once again walk down the street in silence, a destination has already been decided, and the two look around attempting to appreciate what once surrounded them from a ground perspective. Before long they turn a corner and are surprised by what they see.

BODIES HAVE BEEN LAIN OUT IN TWO ROWS SET EITHER SIDE OF THE STREET. THEY LAY PERFECTLY STILL - SET UP, AS IF THEY WERE IN INVISIBLE COFFINS. FLOWERS SURROUND THEM ALSO.

Jack and Martini pause for a moment before walking down the centre respectfully. This isn't the first time they've seen a memorial like this before.

Jack's gaze is drawn towards a body which stands out in particular - a little girl. Could only be about seven or eight.

Martini's gaze is drawn towards a woman, mid twenties, with blonde hair with her hand held by the man's next to her.

They both reach the end of the street and simultaneously pause, and look back and where they had just come from and where they have been before continuing on with their journey.

CUT TO

14 EXT. OUTSIDE TV STUDIO SKYSCRAPER

JACK AND MARTINI ARE STOOD AT THE FOOT OF A TALL STRUCTURE - WHICH WAS FORMERLY A TV STUDIO.

To Jack, the skyscraper is a fascinating piece of architecture that he admires. But more importantly, to Martini, this is her former place of work - though this is never mentioned to Jack. They enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUT TO

15 INT. TV STUDIO STAIRWELL

Jack and Martini ascend the stairwell of the building in silence. It's a long way up. Martini is leading the way, as she, unbeknownst to Jack, is more familiar with the building.

CUT TO

16 EXT. TV STUDIO ROOF

Upon reaching the top of the building, the pair look out over the city in which they have spent the night just passed.

BEFORE ENTERING THE BUILDING IT WAS DARK, AND NOW THEY HAVE REACHED THE TOP THE CITY IS SLOWLY BEING LIT BY THE IMPENDING SUNRISE AND THE EVENTUAL END.

The reality of their situation is becoming more and more apparent to Jack and Martini.

MARTINI
(jokingly)
We could jump?

JACK
(serious)
Too easy. I've never (pause) I
wouldn't give the world the
satisfaction.

Martini looks at Jack. She knows he has more to share. A moment goes by before-

JACK (CONT'D)
What were you doing at the pub
tonight?

Martini is taken aback - she wasn't prepared to be asked this question. Jack had shown little sign of being interested in her backstory - she believed out of politeness. Another moment goes by. She has reached a point of comfort - to be able to tell Jack about her past.

MARTINI
Everyday after work, I'd get the bus
out of the city.

FADE TO

17 INT. THE AURORA ARMS PUB - FLASHBACK

Martini enters the pub still in her work clothes including her ID badge for the TV studio - it shows her real name was Athena after the Goddess of Wisdom, War, and the Useful Arts.

MARTINI

With only one destination in mind -
for her.

We barely catch glimpses of the other bar patrons - Martini only has one person on her mind - the girl behind the bar. Beautiful, mid twenties with blonde hair. They catch each others gaze and smile.

FADE TO

18 INT. BUS / EXT. BUS STOP - FLASHBACK

Montage of shots showing Martini attempting to catch the bus out of the city. Sometimes she's successful at catching the bus on time and other times she misses by mere seconds.

MARTINI (CONT)

I mean it. Everyday. Some days I got lucky and managed to catch the first bus from work and I could see her longer. Most days, I spent waiting an extra 60 minutes for the next one.

FADE TO

19 INT. THE AURORA ARMS PUB - FLASHBACK

Continuing the flashback, Martini enters the pub and manages to catch the girl behind the bar's eye before she pulls the last drink of the night for her. It's the end of her shift.

MARTINI (CONT)

Even if I only got to see her for the briefest of minutes - I still went.

The girl behind the bar exits the area and proceeds towards the door - but before leaving takes a look back and the catch each others gaze for the final time.

CUT TO

20 EXT. TV STUDIO ROOF - PRESENT

Martini looks away from Jack.

MARTINI (CONT)

I was there last night because I hoped
to see her again.

She looks back at him - reflecting on the events of the night, what she had managed to accomplish. She had always been so infatuated by one love that she had become a social outcast.

JACK

Funny - it's always about a girl

MARTINI

Like the girl from high school?

JACK

(beat) Not quite

FADE TO

21 INT. HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK

WE'RE IN A HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM, THERE ARE DECORATIONS ON
IN THE BACKGROUND - IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY.

Jack is in the appropriate wear for the hospital with a name badge revealing his real name - Apollo after the God of Poetry and The Sun. He is handed a baby girl - HIS baby girl. He cries tears of joy and mouths "Hello".

FADE TO

22 INT. APOLLO'S HOME - FLASHBACK

YEARS PASS BY SHOWING EACH CHRISTMAS, AND THE CONNECTION
BETWEEN A LOVING FATHER AND A DAUGHTER. ONE CHRISTMAS SHOWS
HER UNWRAPPING A PINK STEREO - THE SAME ONE FROM THE PUB.

JACK (V.O)

She was mercy, she was a miracle, she
was everything. The love of my life.

FADE TO

23 INT. CAR - FLASHBACK

FLASHBACK TO TWO YEARS PRIOR, JACK IS SAT IN THE PASSENGER SEAT OF A CAR BEING DRIVEN BY HIS GIRLFRIEND, AND FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER IN THE BACKSEAT. THE TWO PARENTS ARGUE AS HIS DAUGHTER BECOMES UPSET.

JACK (V.O)
And she was only five.

In the memory, Jack turns to look at his daughter before the car crashes.

CUT TO

24 EXT. TV STUDIO ROOF - PRESENT

There's another moment of silence. Martini is unsure how to react to Jack's past trauma. He begins to cry, but there are also moments of laughter. Martini never looks away - she is present with him.

JACK
"Waiting is painful. Forgetting is
painful. But not knowing which to do
is the worse kind of suffering"

He looks at Martini.

JACK (CONT'D)
Paulo Coelho. (pause) Maybe jumping
wouldn't be the worst idea after all.

Both smile, not taking his last words seriously, before looking back across the city. They hold hands silently, in peace. Having both loved and lost - they're still strong. As the sun rises the film fades to white and silence.

END.