

SCOTT CARSON & SUSAN ROSE

a screenplay by

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(SPLIT SCREEN)

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

On two nearly identical city sidewalks, SCOTT CARSON, a man in his late twenties, and SUSAN ROSE, a woman in her early thirties, walk along, separated by unknown distance and circumstance.

Scott Carson is anxious, wearing a suit that doesn't quite fit, carrying a satchel.

Susan Rose, in t-shirt, blue jeans, and red sweater, carries a heavy bookbag.

OPENING TITLES

As Scott reaches the door of a typical urban coffee shop...

(SPLIT SCREEN ENDS)

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

As Scott enters the shop, there is the ring of the overhead bell. The shop is mildly crowded with customers.

He buys a black coffee, looks for a seat on a nearby sofa, and sits down, balancing satchel and coffee.

In the background, is a WOMAN, out of focus, drinking coffee and reading the paper.

TITLES END

His cell phone rings. He answers.

SCOTT
(Into phone)
Hello?

VOICE
(Over phone)
Scott Carson.

SCOTT
Yes? This is Scott.

VOICE
You are sitting on a brown sofa in
the coffee shop on Clark street,
drinking a black coffee and trying
to balance your cell phone. I want
you to stand up.

SCOTT
(smiling)
Who is this?

VOICE
Stand up.

SCOTT
Really, who is this?

VOICE
If you don't stand up, I'll kill
the woman sitting behind you.

SCOTT
What?

VOICE
Stand up.

SCOTT
Is this Joey?

VOICE
This is your last warning.

SCOTT
All right, all right. I'm up.

He's still seated.

VOICE
You're lying.

In the background, the woman comes into focus just as her
head explodes and splatters blood all over the coffee shop's
wall.

Screams!

Scott stands, turns--

SCOTT
(Into phone)
Oh my God! Oh my God!

VOICE

I see that you are now standing.

The coffee shop is thrown into noise and confusion.

Scott spills his coffee and drops his satchel, nearly his phone.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Scott Carson.

SCOTT

(Softer)

What the hell did you do? What did you *do*?

VOICE

Walk out the door.

SCOTT

Her head just... Oh, Christ.

VOICE

Stay calm. The others will clean up the mess. Walk out the door.

SCOTT

Why? So you can shoot me? You a, a sniper or something? Where are you? Across the street?

VOICE

You're not listening again.

SCOTT

Please. I have a job interview. I - I have a lot to do today.

VOICE

Walk out or I'll kill that little girl coming out of the bathroom.

PAN TO:

A LITTLE GIRL, no more than five years old, coming out of the bathroom with her mother.

SCOTT

No, don't. I'm leaving.

Scott worms his way out of the coffee house, past the rush of patrons and chaos.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Scott hustles confused down the street, his eyes darting around.

SCOTT
 (Into phone)
 Okay. I'm- I'm walking down the street.

VOICE
 (Over phone)
 Walk faster.

(SPLIT SCREEN RETURNS)

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

SUSAN ROSE continues down her narrow street, tugging her heavy bookbag up her back.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Scott, still walking...

SCOTT
 (Into phone)
 Where am I going?

VOICE
 (Over phone)
 Take a right at the next corner.

SCOTT
 Okay.

Scott turns the corner, keeps going.

VOICE
 You'll run into a woman in a red sweater.

SCOTT
 I don't see anyone.

VOICE
 Now.

Susan Rose comes from a blind alley and runs straight into Scott Carson, continuous in the split screen. As they collide roughly...

(SPLIT SCREEN ENDS)

Susan drops her bookcase and Scott bobbles his phone.

SUSAN
Be careful! Stop talking on your
damn phone! Pay attention.

She collects her bag.

SCOTT
I'm sorry. It was an accident.

VOICE
Hand her your phone.

SCOTT
There's- Listen. I'm sorry. I
have someone on this phone that
wants to talk to you.

SUSAN
Get lost.

She starts to walk away.

SCOTT
(Into phone)
She won't talk to me.

VOICE
Follow her.

Scott steps after Susan.

SCOTT
I'm sorry -- this person *really*
wants to talk to you.

VOICE
God! Fuck off!

She's done. She's moving faster now, leaving Scott behind.
He slows and stops. Then he quick-steps to catch her,
holding out his phone.

SCOTT
Please!

SUSAN
Jesus, I said, 'Get lost!' First
you run straight into me and now
you're following me down the
street? Goodbye!

She's away again, leaving Scott standing dumb.

SCOTT
She's gone.

VOICE
Scott Carson. If she's not on the phone in ten seconds, I'm going to kill again.

SCOTT
She won't talk to me! Who the hell are you?

VOICE
Her name is Susan Rose.

SCOTT
(Calling)
Susan!

(SPLIT SCREEN RETURNS)

CU:
Susan stops, makes a face of frustration.

In the background, a car appears, turning off the street, aimed straight at Scott.

After a pause, Susan shakes it off and keeps walking.

(SPLIT SCREEN ENDS)

VOICE
Move to your right.

SCOTT
What?

VOICE
There's a car coming.

Just then -- he turns, sees the car this close to nailing him. A screech of tires and Scott JUMPS OFF THE CURB.

The car crashes into another parked car and Scott falls near the wheels.

When Scott comes up for air, the two cars are smashed together, steam pouring out of the hood of the first. A horn blares -- stuck.

Scott's phone sits on the pavement a few feet away. He reaches for it.

SCOTT

Oh my God! What did you do? What did you DO? Did you do this?

VOICE

Get up.

Scott stands and looks at the damage. He goes to the driver's side door and tries to open it, but it's stuck. He bends and looks inside the smashed car window--

TWO PEOPLE are inside, but hard to see in detail.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Tell me what you see.

SCOTT

Two people. A man... and, and a kid. Oh, Christ, I think they're dead.

POV (Scott):

Past the bloody faces of the car crash victims, Scott sights Susan through the car's interior. She's on the other side, trying to open the passenger side door.

SUSAN

Help me! He me get them out!

SCOTT

They're dead!

SUSAN

I said: help me!

As Scott comes around the rear of the car, the front bursts into flames.

Scott grabs Susan's arm and pulls her away. She drops her book bag.

SCOTT

We have to get away!

SUSAN

No!

SCOTT

It's going to explode!

He pulls her away, farther and far. She turns away, distraught.

Off-camera, there is a flash and explosion.

Scott puts his phone back to his ear.

VOICE
Keep moving.

SCOTT
Who are you? What do you want?

VOICE
Keep moving.

SCOTT
I am, I am! What do you want?
Tell me what you want.

He doesn't answer.

Scott pulls Susan around the corner. In the background, sirens can be heard. As they turn another corner, an ambulance screams past.

SUSAN
Let go of me!

SCOTT
No.

SUSAN
How did you know my name?

Finally, Scott stops.

SCOTT
I don't know who is on my phone, but he WANTS to talk to you! He says you have to talk to him or he'll kill someone else. He's done it, in, in the coffee shop. He blew some woman's head off. And that, that crash- Please you have to talk to him.

SUSAN
Give me the phone.

Scott hands it over.

VOICE
Hello, Susan Rose.

SUSAN
How do you know my name?

VOICE

Four blocks north, there's is a dry cleaners. Go there right away or I will make something else bad happen.

SUSAN

I'm not going anywhere! I asked how you knew my name. Answer me. Answer me or I'm hanging up.

SCOTT

Don't!

SUSAN

(Into phone)
I'm calling the police.

VOICE

Get walking.

SUSAN

This is a terrible joke.

VOICE

Susan Rose. I can see you. And if you don't start walking north in the next ten seconds, you will not like what I will do.

Susan hands the phone back.

SUSAN

Rrrrrr. Here's your damn phone. Come on. North. Let's look for the police on the way.

The two walk. Scott keeps the phone close to his ear, but covers it.

SCOTT

Who is he? Do you know him?

SUSAN

No.

SCOTT

You don't recognize his voice?

SUSAN

No. He had your number.

SCOTT
I don't know him. I told you- I
was just drinking coffee, and, and.

SUSAN
You saw him shoot someone?

SCOTT
No. I didn't see anything but the
blood. I didn't hear a shot.

Scott uncovers and listens.

VOICE
You're not moving fast enough.

SCOTT
(To Susan)
He says we have to go faster.

SUSAN
Where are the goddamn police when
you need them!

SCOTT
(Into phone)
Listen, Mister. I don't know this
Susan Rose. I don't know you.
You've got the wrong Scott Carson.
Whatever you're doing, we don't
want to be a part of it. Please
just leave us alone. We won't tell
anyone about these calls.

SUSAN
Hang up on him.

SCOTT
What?

SUSAN
Hang it up.

SCOTT
Shh! He'll hear you.

SUSAN
Don't care.

SCOTT
He said we had to--

SUSAN
He said walk. He didn't say we had
to listen to his breathing.

SCOTT
I can't.

He hesitates, then gives her his phone.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Here, okay, you feel that's the
right decision, you do it.

She takes Scott's phone and switches it off.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Wait, wait- did you just turn it
off? I thought you were just going
to hang up.

SUSAN
It's off. He can't touch us.
We're walking to that dry cleaners,
but, but maybe we'll pass someone
that can help. At the cleaners we
can, we can, uh, ring the damn fire
alarm. We will.

A few steps later, the sound of a cell phone tone is heard.
Susan stops, pads her pockets.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Shit. That's mine. Mine was on.

SCOTT
Can't be him.

She pulls her phone, still ringing, out of her pocket.

SUSAN
I'm not answering.

SCOTT
Do you think it's him?

SUSAN
I'm calling 9-1-1.

SCOTT
He seems to know how to, how to...
do these things. Maybe he's more
than a sniper. He knew I'd run
into you at the corner. He
knew the car would crash.

SUSAN
He just shot the driver.

SCOTT
No. He knew something! We just
can't not answer. What if it makes
him mad?

SUSAN
When it goes to voice-mail, I'm
calling the police.

Ringling.

SCOTT
Answer it! You don't know what
he'll do.

SUSAN
How would he know my number?

SCOTT
He's knows your fucking name! I
don't know-I. Wait. Look at the
phone. Does the display show a
number?

She looks at the display.

SUSAN
Blank. I've never seen a blank.

SCOTT
Unlisted.

SUSAN
No. Those say 'unknown number.'

Ringling.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
I'll answer it. Maybe it's someone
else.

She answers.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Hello?

VOICE
Susan Rose.

SUSAN
We're almost there.

VOICE

I know. I'm sending you a present.
I feel you deserve it for switching
off the other phone.

The sound of a jet plane zooms overhead.

Scott and Susan look up.

In the sky above the city, a low-flying passenger jet streaks
between the buildings. The plane slowly falls apart in the
air and its pieces fall off out of sight.

A stray piece of the plane falls in their direction!

They run, shaking, as the sound of crash and metal and
screams mix in the distance.

The two fall to the ground in the gutter of the street.

SUSAN

Are you okay?

SCOTT

That was a plane. He crashed a
fucking plane!

SUSAN

It went down near the square. Did
you see that?

SCOTT

How does someone crash a plane on
cue? This is surreal.

Susan lifts the phone. She breathes and then speaks slowly.

SUSAN

Are you there?

VOICE

Did you like my present?

SUSAN

How did you do that?

No answer.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

W- what do you want?

VOICE
I want you to go to the dry
cleaners.

SUSAN
Who are you?

VOICE
You had better hurry.

Susan stands. All around her, alarms and noise. She looks up.

At the street corner is the Dry Cleaners.

Like an automaton, she moves forward, Scott behind.

EXT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

It's a plain urban dry cleaners. In the window, the sign says 'OPEN.' Susan looks in the window, but the lights are out.

She tries the door. Unlocked.

The two slowly move inside.

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

Inside, it's damp and dark. Rows and rows of clothes on turnstile hangers drape through the center of the shop. There is a high counter and a cash register. No owners, no customers. The windows muffle the noise outside.

SCOTT
Tell him we're inside.

Susan lifts the phone.

SUSAN
We're in your DRY CLEANERS! You
hear me! You psycho!

No answer.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Hello?

No answer.

SCOTT
Maybe he's--

VOICE
(Over phone)
Put me on speaker.

Slowly, Susan sets the phone so both of them can hear.

VOICE (CONT'D)
I've had something cleaned for each
of you. But I've had to dismiss
the help. Look over the counter.

Susan and Scott look over the counter top...

VOICE (CONT'D)
Yes, don't mind Mr. and Mrs. Chin.
I didn't want them troubling you
for your claim ticket.

POV:

Two DEAD BODIES lay in a lump under the counter, near piles
of clothes. They've been smothered in plastic cellophane.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Step around the counter.

Scott and Susan lift the gate and move into the rear of the
dry cleaners.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Keep walking. Yes. Keep going.
What you need is at the very end of
the rack. I dropped these off
several days ago. Mr. Chin
complained about unusual stains,
but he thought he could get them
out. They will be ready for wear.

Susan fingers the clothes until she comes to two unusual
garments.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Those are what you're looking for.
Read the tags. One is marked Susan
Rose, the other Scott Carson.

CU:

The tags as Susan touches them, confirms.

SUSAN
(Soft, to Scott)
I don't understand.

SCOTT
(Realizing)
These are biohazard suits.

SUSAN
What?

SCOTT
Like the military wears in a
chemical attack.

VOICE
I want you to put them on.

Scott grabs the phone from Susan.

SCOTT
Listen- please. Whatever you want.
You're, you're a terrorist or
something. You're powerful. I
know that. You're probably well
funded and, and obviously you've
been following us and planning
this. We can't fight you. What do
you want? You want us to take a
message to the papers? You're
trying to, to destabilize the
government or something? Fine. I
don't care. I'm not political.

SUSAN
I don't vote.

SCOTT
Yeah, SUSAN doesn't even VOTE.

Pause.

VOICE
If those suits aren't on your
bodies in the next sixty seconds, I
will kill both your mothers.

Pause. Susan starts to crack.

SUSAN
Okay, okay.

The set down the phone and start to put on the biohazard suits.

SCOTT
We're putting on the suits. Here.
See? We're putting them on.

Scott notices there are gas masks affixed to the suits.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

The masks. The masks, too?

No answer. He goes to pick up the phone, but with the heavy gloves on his hands, scuttles it, knocks it loose. Susan's phone smashes on the tile floor of the dry cleaners.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

No!

SUSAN

Did you drop my phone?

He picks up the pieces, tries to reassemble them.

SCOTT

I. It's broken. Hello? Hello!
Hello!

SUSAN

You have yours!

Scott unzips the suit and finds his phone, then powers it on.

SCOTT

Maybe he'll call back. (Pause) Do
we put on the masks?

Susan starts to cry.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Do you think- Stop crying. Please.
You have to-. I can't do this
alone.

SUSAN

He said he was going to kill my
mother. He'll think we hung up on
him again, like when he crashed
that plane.

SCOTT

He can see us. He'll know it was
an accident.

SUSAN

Maybe not! Maybe he didn't see it
slip from your hands. Or he
mistakes an accident for something
on purpose.

SCOTT
He'll call! We'll explain.
(Pause) He'll call. (Pause.)
Come on. Come on. CALL!

SUSAN
Wait, wait, can you redial him?

SCOTT
Yeah. Yes!

(SPLIT SCREEN RETURNS)

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

The back of a high, leather chair, positioned perfectly in the middle of a quaint suburban home's living room.

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

Scott scrolls through numbers.

SCOTT
Here's the entry.

He dials. The number starts to ring.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

A hand appears on the chair's arm rest, drink in hand.

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

CU:
Scott, panicked.

SCOTT
Come on. Answer.

The phone is answered.

MAN
(Over phone, rushed)
Who's this?

SCOTT
(Confused)
Dad?

MAN

(Upset)

Scott, Scott. Thank God. Come over quickly. Your mother's had, had some sort of attack. She's- Scott. Come over, I don't know what to do.

SCOTT

Dad, you're not safe. Get, get out of there. Leave mom and-

The line disconnects.

Pause.

SUSAN

Was it him?

SCOTT

It was my dad. We were disconnected.

SUSAN

How could he have the same number as your parent's house.

SCOTT

My dad said mom was in trouble.

Pause.

Susan quickly puts on the gas mask.

Scott follows.

SUSAN

Is this right? Is it on right?

SCOTT

I think so.

SUSAN

Give me your phone. I want to call home.

Scott hands the phone over and she dials.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

The phone starts to ring.

Pan to reveal: a woman in the opposite corner, smiling at the man in the chair.

WOMAN

Excuse me. I'll just be a moment.

She leaves the room and goes into the kitchen, where she answers a ringing phone hung on the wall.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

CU:

Susan.

SUSAN

Mom! Oh, thank God! Thank God!
Are you okay?

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

CU:

Woman.

WOMAN

Yes. I'm perfectly fine. Susan,
you sound funny. Is this a bad
connection?

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

CU:

Susan.

SUSAN

I'm wearing something on my face.
Are you safe, mom?

WOMAN

(Over phone)

Safe? Yes, I'm safe. I'm just
having tea.

SUSAN

Mom, I want you to call the police.
Tell them you need help.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

CU:
Woman.

WOMAN
I don't need any help. And I'm
perfectly safe. There's someone
here, anyway.

SUSAN
(Over phone)
Someone there? Who?

WOMAN
This man came by. He is selling
books. You know I love books. So
we started talking about books and
now he's having tea with me. He's
quite charming. He's read all
sorts of things I've never even
heard about.

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

CU:
Susan.

SUSAN
Mom. Has he been talking on a
phone?

WOMAN
(Over phone)
I don't think so. He's been right
here in your father's old chair.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

CU:
Woman.

WOMAN
On second thought. He used my
washroom and I thought I might have
heard--

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

CU:
Susan.

SUSAN
Put him on the phone.

WOMAN
(Over phone)
You want to speak with him?

SUSAN
Put him on.

WOMAN
(Over phone)
All right, just a moment.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

The Woman sets down the phone and returns to the sitting room.

(SPLIT SCREEN ENDS)

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

Long pause.

At last, there is a sound on the line.

VOICE
(Over phone)
I see you have your masks on.

SUSAN
(Soft)
Who are you?

VOICE
Didn't your mother say? I love books.

SUSAN
Get away from her.
(Breaking)
Please. Please don't hurt her.

VOICE
Hold please.

Pause.

VOICE (CONT'D)
That's better.

SUSAN
Is she... is she okay?

VOICE
It's all taken care of.

Susan weeps.

SUSAN
(Screaming)
Who are you! Who are you!

VOICE
Go outside. You're ready now.

SUSAN
No. You've taken away EVERYTHING.

She starts to take the gas mask off her face.

VOICE
No, leave it on. You'll need it.

SUSAN
I'm not doing ANYTHING more for
you. Ever. Do you hear me?

VOICE
That's too bad, Susan Rose. Are
you sure you don't want to
reconsider.

Pause.

SUSAN
You'll have to kill me.

From inside the gas mask, Susan's face explodes. Slowly, her
body falls at the feet of Scott Carson.

Distraught, he at leans in and picks up the phone.

VOICE
Scott Carson.

SCOTT
I'm here.

VOICE
Go to the door of the dry cleaners.

He does as he is told, standing at the door. The windows are
fogged with smoke and it's grown dark outside. He can hear
sirens and screams and noises that can't be described.

VOICE (CONT'D)

I want you walk as far as you can make it. Go down every street you can. See everything you can. The experience is so much better than I could describe. Go outside. Tell me everything, even after you think I've hung up. You may need to scream.

SCOTT

Who are you? I'm nobody. I'm nothing.

VOICE

Go outside. Keep walking. Tell me what you see.

Scott opens the door. He takes a step outside into the smoke.

SCOTT

I'm outside. I. I see. I see--

The door shuts behind him, with the ring of the overhead bell.

Blackout.

End credits.