

THE GREEN EFFECT
An original screenplay

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written by
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INT. APARTMENT – MORNING

LEGEND

“Downtown Philadelphia”

WE ARE STARING at a door to a hallway. A concerned man in his early thirties steps in like he’s about to say something. He has a guitar strapped around his shoulder.

A six-inch replica of Degas’ “Little Dancer” smashes into the bedroom door next to the man. Its ceramic bits shatter and fall to the ground.

ELLIOT MOORE stares down at the pieces.

ELLIOT

I don’t believe you meant that.

ALMA MOORE stands half-dressed. She looks like a librarian and has a kind face. She stares at him with exhausted eyes.

ALMA

You’re in denial. I just threw something at you.

ELLIOT

You threw something near me. I saw the video of you playing softball in high school. You were an assassin. If you wanted to hit me you would have hit me.

Alma laughs even though a tear rolls down her cheek.

ALMA

You’re driving me crazy.

She checks herself in the mirror. She is crying and fixing her makeup.

ALMA

Who wants to be treated by a therapist that looks like this? I’m like Frankenstein.

(softer)

You’re going to be late for your class.

She gathers herself. She starts out the bedroom door. She has to squeeze by Elliot in the doorway. They are close. He stops her.

ELLIOT

See, you worry about me.

ALMA

(whispering)

You know I keep trying to do this so you won't get hurt. You just won't let that happen.

(beat)

There are things you're not accepting here.

ELLIOT

Tell me one.

ALMA

How about the fact that you're never going to be a musician. You're a science teacher.

(she shakes her head)

A really good one.

ELLIOT

(hurt)

And?

ALMA

And us.

(beat)

We're just not a good fit.

ELLIOT

Anything else?

ALMA

Yes, I'm going to tell you one of those secrets you should never tell your spouse. When I walked down the aisle, and you were waiting, I got this sudden feeling I was making a mistake.

ALMA

Do you hear what I'm saying Elliot, I was walking up the aisle and I wasn't sure I was making the right decision.

(beat)

We fight all the time. You're a good guy. We're just not good together. You see that don't you?

Beat.

ELLIOT

(whispering)

I don't believe a word you just said.

Her face hardens.

She walks out into the hall and to the small foyer.

ALMA

I want you to know I'm not doing this to hurt you.

ELLIOT

Why are you acting this cynical? You're not this cynical.

She puts on her coat. Takes her purse. She pulls off her ring.

ELLIOT

Alma don't-

She puts the ring on the foyer table.

ALMA

You believe me now?

She stares at him. He's wobbly for a moment.

ELLIOT

We'll talk about this later. We're angry.

ALMA

That must be it Elliot.

She shakes her head before walking out. She closes the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE – MORNING

Alma hesitates on the top of the stairs of her brownstone. She turns back to the front door to open it. Stops. She looks at the door sadly and then starts down the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWNSTONE MORNING

Elliot is alone with the guitar on his shoulder. He stands in the empty home.

ELLIOT

Okay, breathe.

The clock in the hall reads 8:36.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK – MORNING

LEGEND

“Central Park, New York City 8:33am”

New Yorkers walk their dogs. Thousands of people conducting their morning rituals.

A GUST OF WIND PASSES THROUGH THE MASSIVE TREES OF THE PARK.

A PAIR OF WOMEN sit on a blanket at the dead center of the park. One of them is pregnant with short spiked hair. The other has her hair in a bun. They each have a book.

HAIR IN A BUN WOMAN

I forgot where I am.

She flips through her book.

SPIKED HAIR WOMAN

You're at the place where the killers meet to decide what to do with the crippled girl.

HAIR IN A BUN WOMAN

That's right. That's right.

There are the FIRST SCREAMS from the park. THEY ARE DISTANT AT THE EDGES OF THE PARK. The spiked haired woman looks up. She squints.

SPIKED HAIR WOMAN

Did you hear that?

She stares. She sees people in the distance walking backwards down the pathways and across the lawns.

SPIKED HAIR WOMAN

That's funny.

Beat. She looks around. Stops. Her face crinkles at what she sees.

SPIKED HAIR WOMAN

That's weird. Those people look like they're clawing at themselves. Is that blood?

THE SCREAMS COME FROM ALL DIRECTIONS NOW. The spiked haired woman looks frighten now. She spins around.

She sees people in the park have become still. A couple start walking backwards. She looks around. The people closer to her stumble and fall.

THE WIND BLOWS THE GRASS AROUND THEM.

SPIKED HAIR WOMAN

Clare? You seeing this?... Clare?...
Clare

The woman with her hair in a bun sits still.

HAIR BUN WOMAN

What page am I on?

The spiked hair woman looks confused at her friend. The expression of confusion washes away. An eerie passiveness is left.

HAIR BUN WOMAN

(soft)

What page?

The hair bun woman reaches up and takes a long hairpin out of her hair AND STABS HERSELF IN THE THROAT.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE – MORNING

LEGEND

“New York City three blocks from Central Park 8:59am”

Steel girders are going up in a tree-cluttered city block. THE WIND BLOWS.

A foreman and his crew are waiting for the lift elevator to take them the twelve floors up the building frame.

CREW MEMBER

...So then the little guy says 'You
have a girlfriend named Wendy too?
Well I saw your thing it said W-Y.
'The big guy says 'No man mine says
Welcome to Jamaica have a nice day.'

The men bellow with laughter.

SOMETHING FALLS in the distance behind them. It lands with A THUD. Everyone turns and goes silent.

FOREMAN

Christ, Mckenzie fell.

The foreman and the men rush over to the corner of the site where the body of the man lies crumpled in the dirt.

The foreman yells into his walkie.

FOREMAN

Medic, we have a major accident at
the south side of the building! We'll
need an ambulance!

The foreman takes off his hardhat as he stares down at the mangled body. The crewmembers standing around the foreman are ghostly white.

FOREMAN
(breaking down)
Jesus, give him some room.

THUD.

They all turn confused and see another body of a crewmember lying at the far corner of the building site.

FOREMAN
Davis?...

THE TREES AROUND THE CONSTRUCTION SITE CHATTER AS THE WIND BLOWS.

THUD... A third body falls very close to them.

The crewmembers on the ground pull away from the new body; they are frightened now.

THUD... Another body.

THUD... And another.

The men on the ground begin running. The foreman on the verge of being apoplectic finally looks up not comprehending.

At the top of the twelve-story steel framed structure the workman are casually walking along the beams and stepping off the edge... One after the other. Like dolls off a shelf.

FOREMAN
(no voice)
God in heaven...

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM – MORNING

We are in a science class. There is a slide projection glowing in the room. Pictures of cave paintings are projected.

The classroom is silent.

GIRL STUDENT
Mr. Moore?

Elliot breaks from his thoughts. He realizes the class is staring at him.

ELLIOT

Sorry.

He clicks to the next slide.

ELLIOT

All these images are from Font-De-Gaume in central France. It is the last location of color cave paintings open to the public. I was playing a music festival in a small town, actually it turned out to be just a bunch of street performers.

(waves it off)

Anyway I went to see the cave.

Elliot clicks through a few slides of faded magenta bulls and deer.

ELLIOT

When you walk into this place, it's like a church. If you look up at these paintings through the flickering light of a candle it's like they're alive. These cave people worshiped nature.

Elliot stares at the faded slide.

ELLIOT

This cave was discovered in 1901. Unfortunately, it wasn't protected at first and tourists did some damage.

Elliot clicks a slide. We see a faded cave painting with graffiti etched onto it. Dates and initials of teenagers carved onto a delicate picture of a bull.

The classroom of students laugh.

Elliot looks around at his students.

ELLIOT

I know you don't think that's funny. When they showed me this. I had tears in my eyes.

A couple of the males in the class chuckle. Elliot shakes his head.

ELLIOT

Has everyone gone over to the 'dark side'?

(beat)

Do me a favor okay? Just keep yourself open... to ideas.

The door to the classroom opens. THE LIGHTS GO ON IN THE CLASSROOM. The students shield their eyes and then look to the doorway where a man stands.

ELLIOT

Vice Principal, the rebellion has lost another class.

VICE PRINCIPAL

I'm afraid I have to interrupt you for a moment Mr. Moore.

Elliot sees the tense look under the vice principal's smile.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY – MORNING

The vice principal and Elliot are walking down a school corridor.

Elliot HEARS THE LOUD TALKING COMING FROM THE CLASSROOMS. He looks in as they walk by. Children are standing by the chalkboard. Other children are sitting by the windows and talking.

Elliot turns to the solemn vice principal.

ELLIOT

You excused all the teachers?

The vice principal nods, "Yes." Beat.

ELLIOT

You guys make us teach with a foot of snow on the ground. What's going on?

The vice principal opens the door to the teacher's lounge.

CUT TO:

INT. TEACHERS' LOUNGE - MORNING

The entire teaching staff is crammed into the teacher's lounge. All attention is on THE PRINCIPAL at the head of the room.

PRINCIPAL

There appear to be world events happening. Major cities in every country were hit just now with what seems to be a terrorist act.

THERE ARE MUMBLINGS AMONGST THE TEACHERS. Elliot turns and looks at the disheveled teacher standing with him. THIS IS JULIAN.

PRINCIPAL

They're really not releasing much right now. It's some kind of airborne chemical toxin that's been released. New York is one of the cities.

JULIAN

Are people dying?

PRINCIPAL

They're not telling us anything right now. They don't know what the chemical does. They don't know who's responsible for this. All they do know is that the attacks originated in public parks in every city.

(beat)

I spoke with the head of schools. He said we should dismiss the students.

MORE MURMURS FROM THE TEACHERS.

PRINCIPAL

Take your planners home so we can get back when this is over.

The principal looks around the room of worried teachers.

PRINCIPAL

I'm sure they'll have things under control soon.

PRINCIPAL
All right, let's do our jobs.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

The students are excitedly taking their things from their desks and stuffing their schoolbags.

ELLIOT
Read the biochemical energy chapter.
Especially the part of how our bodies
give off energy and how our energy
changes when we are around other
people.

Elliot becomes preoccupied as he packs his desk.

The kids start heading out of the classroom.

ELLIOT
Hey guys!

The gaggle of students in the doorway turn to Elliot at his desk. Elliot stares at their faces. They stare back at him. Beat.

ELLIOT
Nothing.

The kids look at each other confused and then return to excited chatter as they leave the room.

Elliot is alone for a moment. Julian appears in the doorway.

JULIAN
My mother called my cell. She's
hysterical. I told her the probability of
something happening in our city is
very low. I threw her some figures.
It's good to be a math teacher. People
are comforted by percentages. She still
wants us to get out of the city and
come out to her house. She said for
you and Alma to come.

Elliot nods.

ELLIOT
That'll be good for us.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Elliot and Julian hurry down the stairs among the throng of children moving to buses and car pools.

JULIAN
I'll bring Jess and Evette and meet you
at the station.

ELLIOT
Alma and I had another fight.

Julian stares.

ELLIOT
She says she's leaving.

JULIAN
You okay?

ELLIOT
I'm scared witless.

Julian doesn't say anything.

ELLIOT
Let's just get to your mom's house.

Julian nods. The crowd of kids pours past them.

The two friends separate.

CUT TO:

EXT. TURNPIKE - DAY

LEGEND

"New Jersey Turnpike -- six miles outside New York City 10:04am"

The traffic is practically standstill.

We are at a tollbooth on the New Jersey Turnpike. The TOLLBOOTH OPERATOR leans out of his booth and talks with a motorist.

TOLL BOOTH OPERATOR

...At breakfast she tells me she had a dream about Michael Jackson's old nose. She says in the dream she's playing scrabble with Michael Jackson, but he has his old nose. She said it was very disturbing. So then about ten minutes ago she calls me and says she knew all this stuff was going to happen today because of the dream. Can you believe that? She thinks somehow Michael Jackson having his old nose while playing scrabble, was a sign something bad was going happen?

(beat)

My point is, everybody is overreacting. They're probably going to open that tunnel and let people into New York City any minute now.

The motorist looks ahead. Both directions of traffic are crawling.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAFFIC - DAY

Motorists inch forward down the highway. Most of the cars have their windows down.

A GENTLE BREEZE moves over the cars.

The highway is nestled by trees. They tower on either side. We SEE THE REFLECTION OF THE TREES ON THE WINDSHIELD OF THE CARS as they move.

SUDDENLY WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CAR CRASHING IN THE DISTANCE. THERE IS THE SQUEAK OF TIRES AND A SOUND OF METAL CRUNCHING METAL. THEN WE HEAR ANOTHER CRASH ECHO OVER THE HIGHWAY. AND ANOTHER RIGHT AFTER IT.

WE SEE A CAR SWERVE AND SMASH INTO THE CONCRETE DIVIDE BETWEEN THE HIGHWAYS.

CUT TO:

A CAR WITH ITS WINDOWS UP. Parents and their children sit inside.

CHILD IN BACK SEAT

I spy with my little eye something red.

FATHER

-Mom's sneaker.

The mother hits the father on the arm. The mother turns to the child.

MOTHER

Honey, you can't keep picking my sneakers. It makes it too easy.

THERE IS THE DULL SOUND OF CRASHES IN THE DISTANCE. The father looks out the window.

FATHER

Hey guys quiet for a second. Do you hear that? It sounded like crashes.

The father sees a guy get out of a car right in front of them.

FATHER

Let's ask if he knows what's going on.

The father's hand goes to the window button and stops. The man is walking backwards towards them.

CHILD IN BACK SEAT

I spy with my little eye someone walking backwards.

The man outside stops and faces them. The man has a passiveness about him that is frightening. The man and the family stare at each other for a moment.

THE MAN STEPS FORWARD AND SMASHES HIS FACE THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD. SHATTERED GLASS COVERS THE SCREAMING CHILDREN IN THE BACKSEAT OF THE CAR.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT – DAY

Alma is on the sofa. She stares concerned at the news. There are two people arguing.

Alma's phone buzzes in her pocket.

She turns down the sound on the t.v.

She pulls out the phone. When she sees the word "Joey" appear on the screen, she doesn't know what to do. She puts the phone down on the coffee table like it burnt her hand. She watches it buzz on the table. She doesn't answer it. It becomes quiet.

Alma jumps at THE SOUND OF KEYS in the front door. Elliot moves in the front door hurriedly.

ELLIOT

Are you packed?

ALMA

Yes.

(beat)

We should finish talking about what we were talking about this morning.

ELLIOT

I want to too.

(beat)

But we should go first.

ALMA

We won't be alone for a while.

ELLIOT

We'll find time. I promise.

Beat.

ALMA

(soft)

Okay.

Elliot looks to the television.

ELLIOT

What are they saying?

ALMA

It's up to twenty-six now.

ELLIOT

You're kidding.

She turns ON THE SOUND. Two guys are arguing in a Crossfire type news show.

RED FACED CHUBBY ANCHOR

It's obviously one of three major
terrorist groups.

GOVERNMENT GUY WITH GLASSES

You can't say that.

RED FACED CHUBBY ANCHOR

Why not?

GOVERNMENT GUY WITH GLASSES

They just reported Moscow, Paris,
Manchester, Sarajevo, Nairobi and
Amsterdam... Who's mad at
Amsterdam? Tell me that?

(beat)

There's nothing that ties those cities
together. There's no political
connection.

Elliot watches carefully.

GOVERNMENT GUY WITH GLASSES

It's like some horror movie where the
villain has some master plan to kill
everyone in over-populated cities.

Beat.

RED FACED CHUBBY ANCHOR

(turns to camera)

So who's the villain? We'll discuss
more after the break.

Alma turns off the television.

ALMA
I'll water the plants.

Elliot nods. Alma gets up off the sofa. Elliot stares at the dark screen.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIOT'S HOME OFFICE – DAY

We are in the guest room Elliot uses as his office. Elliot pulls out a storage box from a stack of storage boxes in the closet.

ELLIOT
(to himself)
I've taught this before...

He opens the box. Rifles through it.

ELLIOT
(to himself)
I've taught this before...

He stops rifling through the files. Pulls out a stack of papers. He flips through the top test paper.

Beat. His eyes scan the words. He grabs a pen from his desktop.

He circles the words,

“Gas-toxin”.

His eyes go down a few lines. He circles,

“unable to identify attackers”

He goes down a couple more lines and circles,

“overpopulated areas”

ELLIOT
(to himself)
This is insane.

He closes the test paper. On the front of the paper are the typed words...

“Form IV
Midterm Test
Nature”

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER – DAY

Alma waits in the hall. She HEARS THE BUZZ OF THE PHONE. She reaches into her purse and pulls out the phone. “Joey” appears on the screen. Alma is flustered. She looks down the hall nervously as she tries to silence the phone. By mistake she turns the phone to ‘loud ring’ THE PHONE RINGS LOUDLY IN THE HALL. Alma panics and shuts down the phone. She puts it back. She takes a few deep breaths.

Alma stands waiting with a duffle bag. Elliot carries his guitar case and the stack of test papers as he comes out of the room.

Alma stares at him.

ALMA

I’m scared.

ELLIOT

Let’s just see what happens. Things
will become clearer.

Elliot puts the stack of tests in his bag as he opens the front door. Alma sees his guitar. Elliot sees her looking.

ELLIOT

In case I get time to write.

Alma turns off the lights and grabs her keys from the mail table. The wedding ring still sits on the table. Elliot waits for her to pick it up. He looks up and makes eye contact with Alma.

ALMA

World events don’t change anything
Elliot. I wasn’t just being hysterical.

She walks out the front door.

Elliot stares at the empty apartment and at the wedding ring seated on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL. - DAY

LEGEND

"Boston Music Institute, Boston Massachusetts 10:36am"

We are in a concert by music students. Parents sit in the back. An Asian girl plays a piano concerto at the front of the room.

There are open windows along the room.

The girl finishes the piano concerto breathtakingly perfect. Everyone claps. She bows formally. A young man with bushy hair steps up to the music stand near the window. The street and trees can be seen outside. He places his sheet music on the stand. THE WIND RUFFLES THE PAGES.

He places the violin under his chin. He begins playing.

About five bars into it, he makes a MISTAKE.

The teacher looks up. He looks flustered.

The teacher nods for him to continue.

He tries again.

He plays for a moment and then makes A CLEAR MISTAKE. This is unusual for him.

EVERYONE IN THE ROOM LOOKS UP.

The young man carefully places the bow to the violin.

He plays the first three notes of the piece. He plays them again. And again. And again... Like a record skipping.

THE AUDIENCE IS WHISPERING NOW.

The young man stops playing. The violin lowers from his chin. He stands passively.

The crowd becomes quiet. The first person falls off his chair. Then another. A handful of people fall off their chairs into the floor of the aisle.

THE WIND FROM THE STREET BLOWS THROUGH THE WINDOWS.

The young man in front of them, looks straight up like he's looking at God. Opens his mouth. He takes the bow from his violin and shoves it down his throat like a sword-swallower

CUT TO:

INT. 30TH STREET TRAIN STATION DAY

Alma waits in line at a coffee stand in the train station.

Alma absently rubs her ring finger.

WOMAN IN LINE
Weird isn't it, not having it on?

Alma looks over. The woman in line next to her waves her empty ring finger. There is a slightly less tanned area where the woman's ring used to be.

WOMAN IN LINE
You'll get over it honey. Don't forget
what a bastard he was to you.

The woman gives her the "stay strong" sign.

ALMA
He's not like-

The woman doesn't hear her as she moves forward to get her coffee.

Alma waits in line.

CUT TO:

Elliot moves through the crowded train station.

He finds Julian with his seven-year-old daughter in his arms. Julian waves as he reaches him.

Julian is standing at the entrance to a McDonald's inside the train station. A crowd of people stares up at the televisions mounted in the restaurant.

T.V. ANCHOR
Reports have come in indicating the
toxin being released is not synthetic. It
is an organic substance.

There is VOICE OVER THE P.A. SYSTEM.

P.A. SYSTEM
Track three now boarding.

Julian and the group start walking to the track.

JULIAN
I got tickets. They said forty-five cities
now. Boston just got hit.

ELLIOT
Where's Evette?
(Elliot pats the little girl's head)
Hey Jess.

JULIAN
Evette was at a shop across town.
She's stuck in traffic. She said she'd
take the next train.

ELLIOT
We'll wait.

JULIAN
She wanted us to get on this train with
Jess. She'd feel safer.
(beat)
Where's Alma?

ELLIOT
Getting coffee.

There is a crowd at the stairway to the track. A conductor is speaking into a P.A. system.

CONDUCTOR
Track three now boarding for all
ticketed passengers.

A man yells to the people in line.

MAN
(yells)
I'll give anyone here one thousand
dollars for their ticket.

Everyone just stares at him.

MAN
Two thousand dollars...

No response.

MAN
Three thousand dollars...

Five hands go up in the line. The man gives his money to one of the people with their hands raised.

Julian turns back to Elliot.

JULIAN
Can you believe this?

ALMA
I don't think you are a bastard.

Elliot turns to Alma who has walked up with her coffee. Elliot stares at her. He doesn't know what to say.

ELLIOT
Thanks?

Alma nods like something was accomplished.

ALMA
Hi Julian.

Julian gives a slight nod. He doesn't look at her.

JULIAN
I bought the tickets.

Alma stares at the back of Julian's head. She turns to Elliot.

ALMA
(whispers)
We should finish talking about this first before you ask other people's opinions.

Elliot looks at her quietly. Alma shakes her head. There is an awkwardness amongst the group.

ALMA

I'm going to get on the train. We're
not going to get to sit together
anyway.

Julian offers her the ticket. She takes it. Alma sees the little girl in Julian's arms.

ALMA

Hey baby.

She touches Jess's arm before moving forward into the crowd.

Elliot stares at Julian.

ELLIOT

Hey, don't treat my wife badly like
that.

Julian's sees Elliot's expression.

JULIAN

Sorry.

They watch as Alma gets on the train.

Jess whispers something in her dad's ear.

JULIAN

Mom will take the next train honey.
We're all going to meet at grandma's.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR

The 11:50 leaving Philadelphia! All
aboard track three!

Elliot, Julian and Jess move with the line and board the train.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK-DAY

LEGEND

"Rittenhouse Square Park, Philadelphia 11:51pm "

This is a park two blocks by one block, at the center of the city. We see everyone around the square leaving in cars. Traffic is jammed all the way around. Taxis aggressively try to maneuver the traffic.

AN OLD WOMAN walks her dog. She is trying to find the keys to her brownstone.

Police are trying to move the gridlock.

THE WIND BLOWS THROUGH THE PARK.

A POLICE OFFICER addresses a taxi driver through his open window.

POLICE OFFICER
Chilly isn't it today Sal?

TAXI DRIVER
Maybe a little.

Beat. The police officer looks like he lost his train of thought.

POLICE OFFICER
Chilly isn't it today Sal?

The taxi driver looks oddly at the officer. The officer's eyes become passive.

POLICE OFFICER
...chilly.

THE WIND SWIRLS AROUND THE CONGESTED STREETS.

The taxi driver's face becomes quiet.

THE NOISE FROM THE WHALLA OF THE STREETS LESSENS.

We see everyone around the block become still.

NOISES STOP.

A MAN IN THE PARK CLOSE TO US BEGINS WALKING BACKWARDS.

There is SILENT MOVEMENT in all directions around the park.

THERE IS A DOG BARKING IN THE SILENCE.

CUT TO:

The same small dog we saw before pulling on its leash. The old woman is off screen doing something at the end of the leash. WE HEAR NOISES. A SET OF BLOODIED KEYS DROPS TO THE PAVEMENT. The dog pulls desperately away from what it sees.

Beat. The dog breaks free from its leash. It runs off the sidewalk and past the legs of the police officer standing in the middle of the street. WE HEAR A GUN SHOT. THE POLICE OFFICER FALLS TO THE GROUND. The officer's gun falls and spins on the blacktop.

The taxi driver picks it up. WE DON'T SEE IT BUT WE HEAR THE SECOND GUN SHOT. The taxi driver falls to the ground. The gun spins to another place on the blacktop. A woman's beautiful legs walk over. A WOMAN'S HAND REACHES DOWN AND PICKS UP THE GUN...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

The train car is packed with people. Elliot is standing next to Julian who is seated with Jess on his lap.

There are distressed voices from one end of the train car. The car becomes ABUZZ WITH MUTTERINGS AND WHISPERS.

Elliot leans over the person standing next to him.

ELLIOT
Is there some news?

PASSENGER
Apparently Philadelphia was just hit.

Elliot turns to Julian who heard what the man said. Julian's face changes.

JULIAN
Evette.

Julian starts desperately punching in a text message into his phone.

CUT TO:

INT. ALMA'S TRAIN CAR - DAY

Alma is seated separately in another car. THE SOUNDS OF DISBELIEF FILL THE CAR.

Alma leans over to the passenger next to her who is reading an email off his blackberry.

ALMA
What happened?

BLACKBERRY PASSENGER
Something happened in Philadelphia.

Everyone starts making calls.

Alma pulls out her cell phone. She turns it on and scrolls to the name "Joey". Presses send. She puts the phone to her ear. Beat.

She looks out the window as she waits.

ALMA
Hey... I must have missed your calls.
(listens)
I'm on a train.
(listens)
You did? What'd you hear?

She pulls out a pen from her purse and writes down the word... "neurotoxin"

She scribbles a few more notes.

ALMA
Amazing.

She listens. She looks around to see if anyone is looking.

ALMA
(soft)
No, I can't.
(listens)
I told you before I can't. I still have
feelings for him okay.
(soft)
Joey, take care of yourself okay.

She hangs up.

People are very emotional. There is a woman crying across the aisle. Alma gets up and kneels next to her.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN CAR – DAY

Julian looks up from his text message.

JULIAN

She got on a bus going to New Jersey.

Julian gets the color back in his face and kisses the top of Jess' head.

JULIAN

She got out. She's headed to the town
of Princeton.

Elliot visibly relaxes.

THERE IS THE SOUND OF CRYING IN THE QUIETED CAR.

Elliot looks around at the devastated car.

He pulls out the test papers from his bag. He studies them. His hand reaches into his bag and finds a pen. He marks the words... "spread of attack rapid, almost bewildering."

He underlines the next phrase... "causing confusion amongst the group."

CUT TO:

INT. ALMA'S TRAIN CAR – DAY

Elliot finds Alma in her train car.

ELLIOT

You okay.

ALMA

What about Evette?

ELLIOT

She made it out on a bus.

Alma nods.

ALMA

It's a neurotoxin Elliot. I heard all the
symptoms. It effects speech first then
motor-functions and then...

ALMA

...causes you the desire to harm yourself. It's like a psychologist's nightmare.

ELLIOT

Where'd you hear this?

ALMA

I talked to a friend from work.

Elliot nods. He gets lost in his thoughts. Alma moves to a woman who's crying in the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

The train moves through the New Jersey countryside. All is quiet.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

THE SCREECHING OF METAL AGAINST METAL IS HEARD. The train stops suddenly. Everyone jostles to a stop. They look out the windows and find they are at a small station.

The train car is silent.

Elliot looks to Alma.

ELLIOT

Were we supposed to stop here?

CUT TO:

EXT. FILBERT TRAIN STATION - DAY

The entire train of bewildered passengers exits onto a narrow platform.

Elliot walks over to a group of train conductors huddled together.

They notice Elliot.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
Train service has been discontinued.
This will be the last stop for all
passengers.

The conductors turn back to their huddle.

ELLIOT
Where are we?

One of the conductors turns back.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR#2
Filbert, New Jersey.

Elliot waits.

ELLIOT
Why did we stop?

They all turn back.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
We lost contact.

ELLIOT
With who?

Beat.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
Everyone.

CUT TO:

Julian and Jess standing with Alma.

ALMA
We're only an hour outside
Philadelphia.

Jess whispers into Julian's ear.

JULIAN
(to Jess)
We'll be safe.

Julian looks to Alma.

JULIAN

Sorry. She whispers to us when she gets scared.

ALMA

It's okay honey.

Alma touches her back.

ALMA

She's shivering.

JULIAN

She's never right without her mom.

Elliot joins them in the crowd.

ELLIOT

Trains have stopped running.

Elliot looks around at all the bewildered people on the train platform. He looks at Jess clutching her dad.

ELLIOT

Is Jess okay?

Julian nods, "No."

CUT TO:

INT. DINER – DAY

We are in a diner in the small town of Filbert. One side of the diner is lined with windows. The small establishment is filled like a refugee camp. Passengers from the train overflow the tables and sit in groups on the floor.

The locals are seated at the counter and eye everyone.

Julian waits by the counter to order more food.

Alma waits in the narrow hall with a dozen others waiting for the bathroom.

Elliot is in a corner playing the guitar for Jess. He sings to her.

ELLIOT

(singing)

...Flying high without a care,
Flying through the cold blue,
I fly to you...
I land on you...

He finishes the last cord of the song.

ELLIOT

Comments? Be brutal.

Jess sits with the remnants of her grill cheese sandwich on her lap. She stares.

ELLIOT

'Land on you', I'm not sure that's
right. I picture someone squatting on
someone.

He turns to his guitar. He mumbles a couple things as he tries to figure it out. He overhears a conversation at the table next to him.

PASSENGER#1

...It's not affecting any animals, how
can this chemical not be affecting
animals?

Elliot stops playing. He stares at the woman.

He reaches into his bag and pulls out his test papers. He rifles through it searching for something. He finds it. He marks the words... "no other group harmed."

CUT TO:

Back of restaurant

We see through a glass into a small office room to the right of the cash register. A large man in a chef's apron and a woman are listening to a radio on a desk. The man stands and walks out of the office into the main area. He is pale. The room quiets at his presence.

OWNER

Small towns are being hit now.

A MURMUR OF REACTION ripples through the room.

Julian's expression changes.

OWNER

They think they know what's causing
this now.

(beat)

It isn't any terrorist group.

The room is pin drop silent.

OWNER

It happened in a bio lab in Alaska.
Two scientists. One was alone when it
happened.

(beat)

You're not going to believe this.

(beat)

They think it was the plants in the lab.

Beat. Confused expressions fall on people's faces.

OWNER

That's what they think is going on
now.

(beat)

They think the trees, the grass, the
plants... Anything green is poisoning
the air.

PEOPLE START REACTING.

OWNER

And they don't know why.

Elliot's face is astonished.

OWNER

They said it could stop at any time.

A LEVEL OF HYSTERIA FILLS THE ROOM.

Elliot takes Jess' hand.

ELLIOT

Come with me.

Elliot takes his test papers with him as he crosses the diner. He finds Alma near a group by the bathrooms.

ELLIOT

I taught this before. A year ago on an article I read.

He holds out the test papers.

ELLIOT

A population of red ants was wiped out by the plant growth in a small area along a river in Egypt. This happened because the ants were overrunning the plants. The plants released a toxin that killed the red ants in the area.

(beat)

The event took two to three days effecting only the ant population.

(beat)

I thought it was amazing that nature picked just a specific population.

Beat.

ELLIOT

When it was finished all but .00006% of the population were dead. Like a plague had wiped them out.

(beat)

Now this new airborne neurotoxin that is being released by the trees and plants is affecting higher functioning only.

Elliot looks to Alma.

ELLIOT

It's messing with our survival instincts.

(beat)

This toxin is custom made for us and us only.

ELLIOT

That's why this is happening in the places with the highest population. We're being treated like a cancer and it's eradicating the most damaging places first.

The man behind Alma in line speaks up.

MAN IN BATHROOM LINE

Aren't you a folksinger?

ALMA

He's a science teacher.

(to Elliot)

Why do you carry that guitar around?

Elliot looks to the group.

ELLIOT

We've all been talking about how we're going to kill the earth one day. I think the earth just lost patience.

Elliot stares at the papers and then looks up to Alma.

ELLIOT

I think we just got voted off the island.

The wife of the owner comes out of the office room. Everyone looks to her.

WIFE OF OWNER

(soft)

There's no signal on the radio.

One of the passengers stands up.

PASSENGER#2

I don't know if it's terrorists or what, but the towns are going to be hit next. We can't stay here. We're all going to die here.

One by one people start gathering their belongings.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER – DAY

Locals are taking some of the passengers out of the town. Vehicles are moving out in opposite directions. One car pulls up to Elliot and Alma as they stand outside the diner.

A couple is in the car.

DRIVER

I run a plant nursery up the street. I heard you in the diner. You made sense in there to me. We're picking up some things at home. Then heading out of town. We have room...

THE NURSERY OWNER, about Elliot's age, points to the empty backseat.

ELLIOT

We have two others.

The nursery owner nods.

Julian carries Jess over to Elliot and Alma.

ELLIOT

This guy's a nursery owner. Wants to give us a ride.

(beat)

He can fit all of us.

Julian looks distraught. He puts down Jess.

JULIAN

(low)

I can't go with you.

They look at each other.

JULIAN

(low)

I can't get Evette on email. She was headed to Princeton on that bus. There's a car heading back to that town to get family and friends.

He points to a car packed with anxious people. The car honks.

ELLIOT

This is a global event Julian.

JULIAN

(low)

She was looking for a birthday present for Jess. A doll house. That's why she wasn't at home.

Julian becomes emotional.

JULIAN

I'm going to go get her and bring her back and find you.

Elliot gets quiet.

JULIAN

I remember the day I met her. It was outside a coffee shop in New York.

Elliot stares at him.

JULIAN

(low)

Don't do this to me. I'm doing my best not to fall down here.

Elliot looks away.

ELLIOT

What's the mathematical probability Princeton hasn't been hit already?

JULIAN

You want me to throw some figures and percentages at you so we'll both feel better?

Julian and Elliot stare at each other. Elliot nods. Beat.

JULIAN

(soft)

Sixty-two... Sixty-two percent chance it'll be fine.

Elliot chuckles.

Julian smiles at his friend.

Julian turns to Alma. He gestures towards Jess.

JULIAN
Could you guys take her? I'll find you
guys soon. We're all going to be fine.

Alma nods. The car of anxious people honks for him. Julian is torn.

JULIAN
-I have to go.

Alma reaches for Jess. Julian whispers to Alma.

JULIAN
(low)
Don't take my daughter's hand unless
you mean it.

Alma looks at Julian with disbelief. Julian stares at her with a father's unwavering emotion in his eyes.

Alma takes Jess's hand. He leans down to his daughter.

JULIAN
Stay with Uncle Elliot and Aunt Alma
here. I'll find mommy and meet up
with you. You trust everything they
say. I trust them.

There is another honk. The car starts moving.

JULIAN
You hold our picture till we get back.

Julian pulls a picture out of his wallet.

Julian holds his daughter so tight in his arms before getting up and running.

They watch him get into the car. Julian's face is seen in the back window as the car drives away.

Elliot, Alma, and Jess stand silent in front of the diner.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSERY OWNER'S HOUSE – DAY

The nursery owner enters with his wife followed by Alma, Jess, and Elliot.

NURSERY OWNER

It'll take us two minutes to pack.

The wife disappears inside the main house. They are standing in the attached greenhouse. The nursery owner goes inside for a moment and comes back with a bag. He zips on his sweatshirt. He finds Elliot staring at the rows of plants in the greenhouse.

NURSERY OWNER

You know they've always been capable of this.

JESS' POINT OF VIEW OF PLANTS

She stares at the plants. Their flat leaves drooping over the table's edge.

NURSERY OWNER

All types of plants have shown the capability of releasing chemicals into the air. Tobacco plants, cotton plants... it would appear all plants.

They all stare out at the greenhouse of plants.

NURSERY OWNER

They work on a system of triggers usually. A certain amount of a leaf being eaten... A certain amount of plants dying. After the first trigger is set, more and more triggers will be added. It will multiply rapidly. The plants getting more and more sensitive. By the end of an event like this, a drop of a caterpillar's saliva could set it off a field of trees.

(beat)

Let's hope the final trigger in this, isn't everyone just dies.

Alma turns to Elliot.

ALMA

Do you think that could happen?

ELLIOT

No. I think they'll be survivors.
Nature is trying to bring balance.
We'll make it.

The Nursery owner looks at Alma and smiles.

NURSERY OWNER

He's quite an optimist.

ALMA

He has trouble accepting things.

Elliot turns to Alma.

Beat. They all look at the plants.

NURSERY OWNER

I better finish packing before we find
out what the next trigger is.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD SIDE HOME - DAY

LEGEND

"Holcomb, New Jersey 4:26pm"

There is a house by the road. A woman comes out her front door. She holds a drink in her hand. She yells to a man who rides his tractor mowing a lawn by the road.

THE WIND TOUSLES THE WOMAN'S HAIR.

WOMAN

(yelling)

Nobody's answering at the Schmidts.

THE MAN KEEPS DRIVING HIS TRACTOR. HE SEEMS TO BE DRIVING IN CIRCLES.

