

FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY (1965)

Tall trees cloaked with kudzu vines loom beside creating an opaque, almost haunted tunnel effect. From around a bend, two headlights emerge.

A ruby red VW Beetle races along.

INT. VW BEETLE (MOVING)

A YOUNG WOMAN with brilliant red hair wears a scarlet silk scarf around her neck. She CLICKS on the AM radio.

A specific Motown Song BLARES.

Young Woman SINGS along with the song. She passes a sign:

WELCOME TO ATLANTA

Young Woman pulls off the highway and parks at a weathered, two-story, clapboard motel - the Old Traeger's Inn.

INT. OLD TRAEGER'S INN - GUESTROOM - NIGHT

Dark. Curtains billow through an open second-story window.

O.S. the rhythmic sound of a RUNNING SHOWER.

The scarlet silk scarf tied in a bow around the doorknob of a closed bathroom door.

BATHROOM

Young Woman sits before a mirror, only she is 27 years older, and this is not a 1965 era Inn. It's--

INT. WEISS HOME - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY (APRIL 30, 1992)

GEMMA WEISS, 49, sits before a mirror. She has the same brilliant red hair of her youth.

O.S. the Motown Song PLAYS.

Behind Gemma, a hand pats her shoulder. Gemma flinches, her frightened eyes met by her husband, KIPP WEISS', concerned face.

GEMMA

Can you have her turn it off?

Kipp leaves for

SUMMER'S BEDROOM

The Motown Song BLASTS from a stereo.

SUMMER WEISS, 16, applies eye liner at her vanity mirror. She SINGS along with the song.

Kipp hurries in and switches the stereo dial. The Motown Song is replaced with RADIO NEWS.

SUMMER

Dad!

RADIO NEWS (O.S.)

-- continued rioting and looting in Los Angeles --

KIPP

You can turn it back when the song's over.

SUMMER

I like that song.

MASTER BATHROOM

Gemma listens.

RADIO NEWS (O.S.)

-- violence erupted following yesterday's verdict acquitting all four defendants in the Rodney King trial --

INT. WEISS HOME - SUMMER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Summer swings her backpack over her shoulder, rolls her eyes. Gemma stands just inside the doorway.

SUMMER

...whatever.

GEMMA

Don't "whatever" me. Just be mindful today. And come home--

SUMMER

Fine. Don't get involved, whatev--fine.

Kipp enters, stands behind Gemma, strokes her arms.

KIPP

After my run I'm home all day. Summer can call me. L.A.'s not happening here.

EXT. LANDS END - LINCOLN PARK (SAN FRANCISCO)

Kipp jogs - strong, athletic - along a meandering, dirt path.

To his left: a dense green forest of wild plants, Cypress Trees and Monterey Pines.

To his right: rugged cliffs with steep, 150 feet drops, down to the blue Pacific.

Behind: the sun shines bright above the Golden Gate Bridge.

INT. MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC - GEMMA'S OFFICE

Gemma observes NINA, a Black 4 year old, and her mom, VANESSA, as they turn a Jack-In-The-Box handle. Nina giggles as the MUSIC crescendos.

POP! The Jack leaps out. Gemma and Nina startle.

Nina cries. Vanessa wipes Nina's tears.

GEMMA

(to Nina)

Almost time for me and Mommy to talk. First we'll play pretend.

Gemma picks up a silver baton with a red star at the tip.

GEMMA

Let's pretend that I'm a fairy godmother and this is my magic wand. With this wand I can grant you one wish, any wish.

NINA

I want to always sleep in Mommy's bed.

VANESSA

(to Nina)

Okay, button-bear, time to stay with Malik.

Vanessa walks Nina to the doorway, then watches as Nina skips down the corridor toward the waiting room.

Vanessa closes the door, sits on a couch across from Gemma.

VANESSA

She's so clingy at night.

GEMMA

Since Malik's been staying over?

VANESSA

Nina loves Malik.

GEMMA

I know. But until Malik all her relationships with men involved violence. I recommend a bedtime ritual to help her soothe - feel safe before separating from you. Help her draw a picture symbolizing safety to keep under her pillow.

Vanessa nods.

GEMMA

You were excellent comforting her in session. Rubbing her back. She cuddled up to you.

VANESSA

Malik and I've been talking about moving in together. Just talking--he's starting law school.

GEMMA

Including him in here might be helpful since his role in your family is growing.

## CLINIC CORRIDOR

Gemma and Vanessa stroll to the

## WAITING ROOM

where MALIK - middle 20s, classic Black urban professional - sits with Nina on his lap. He reads a children's book aloud.

From the corridor, CARMEN - late 30s, Latina - rushes toward Gemma and Vanessa.

CARMEN

(to Gemma)

Excuse me. Kipp's on the phone. It's important.

## INT. KIPP'S CAR (MOVING)

Kipp, cellphone to his ear, speeds up and down crowded San Francisco streets.

KIPP

The city's declared a state of emergency!  
I've been called in to ER.

## INT. MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC - GEMMA'S OFFICE

Gemma, alarmed, listens to Kipp on speaker phone.

## EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET

Kipp's car barrels toward an intersection where red traffic lights flash. People exit and enter a Cable Car.

KIPP (V.O.)

(speaks quickly)

I called the school--It's chaos--  
Fighting--Police!

## INT. GEMMA'S OFFICE

GEMMA

(into speaker phone)

Slow down, I can't understand--

KIPP (V.O.)  
They don't have status on particular  
student--

Gemma hears Kipp SCREAM, brakes SCREECH.

SECONDS BEFORE

INT/EXT. KIPP'S CAR (MOVING)

Kipp looks up, sees the Cable Car and SCREAMS.

He cranks the steering wheel, SKIDS across a sidewalk and  
SLAMS head-on into a cement building.

BACK TO REAL TIME

INT. GEMMA'S OFFICE

Gemma stares at the speaker phone.

GEMMA  
Kipp? Kipp? Kipp!

WAITING ROOM

Vanessa and Malik watch as Gemma runs out the clinic  
doors.

INT. GEMMA'S CAR (MOVING)

Gemma scans placid residential streets.

CAR RADIO (V.O.)  
This is not a test.  
BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!  
This is the Emergency Broadcast  
Signal.

Up ahead: a group of teenagers stand at a street corner.

Gemma's car slows, then stops at the crosswalk.

She searches the group:

Teenagers stroll at a snail's pace across...no Summer.

CAR RADIO (V.O.)  
BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Gemma jabs the radio dial off and SCREAMS.

Teenagers stop and gawk...then finish crossing.

Gemma floors the accelerator.

EXT. WEISS HOME

A two-story, Redwood Craftsman amidst a row of Victorians.

Gemma's car speeds into the driveway and parks.

Gemma exits her car - leaving the car door open - and sprints to the front porch.

INT. WEISS HOME

Gemma scours every room downstairs.

GEMMA  
Summer! Summer!

She scrambles upstairs, stumbles at the top - nearly falls - but recovers.

GEMMA  
(out of breath)  
Summer!

INT. MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC - WAITING ROOM

Carmen stands with Vanessa and Malik. Nina sleeps curled up in a chair.

CARMEN  
I'm sure she'll be calling in the next couple days to reschedule. Be careful driving home.

EXT/INT. GEMMA'S CAR (MOVING)

Races through calm, deserted residential streets. Gemma's eyes dart, then settle - laser focused on a Latino teenager with long hair pulled into a ponytail. He gallops along the sidewalk...closer...closer - it's ALEX.

He carries a giggly Summer piggyback.

Summer notices Gemma's car skid to a stop.

Summer slides off Alex's back as Gemma bolts from her car - the engine still running.

GEMMA

Get in the car! Get in the car right now!

Summer and Alex do as they're told.

INT. GEMMA'S CAR (MOVING)

Gemma peels-out with Summer and Alex in the backseat.

GEMMA

(to Summer)

I told you to come straight home.

SUMMER

What do you think I'm doing? I can't teleport myself. Look around Mom, no danger in sight.

Gemma CLICKS on the radio.

CAR RADIO (V.O.)

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

GEMMA

This quiet can change any minute--any second.

INT. WEISS HOME

Gemma rushes through, double-checks that all doors are locked.

Summer and Alex stare, bewildered, as though the real Gemma has been replaced by a crazy woman.

GEMMA

Lock the door behind me!

Gemma runs out. Summer shuts the front door. Summer stands a moment, dumbfounded, then locks it.

Alex kisses her neck, turns her around and kisses madly - as unskilled as any horny 17 year old would be. He lifts Summer, her legs wrap around him, he presses into her.

SUMMER

My dad is supposed to be home.

ALEX

Not here now.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM

Gemma bursts through the doors and wades through mayhem: disheveled protestors, patients on stretchers in the halls, doctors, nurses, police.

She spots a familiar face:

across the hall, a MEDICAL STUDENT assists a woman with a bloodied, broken nose.

Gemma hesitates, then makes herself approach.

Medical Student sees Gemma whose face - full of dread - asks the question.

MEDICAL STUDENT

He's in surgery.  
(off her look)  
They'll know more after.

INT. WEISS HOME - SUMMER'S BEDROOM

Alex lies on top of Summer, her shirt is off. He fumbles with her bra hook.

SUMMER

(lifts her head)  
You hear that?

ALEX

I don't think your parents are coming home for a while.

Summer rises and scouts out the window.

SUMMER

You think my mom's okay? I've never seen her like that before.

Alex sits up, reaches across the bed and takes a gigolo's worth of condoms out of his backpack.

ALEX

Last time you used safe sex as an excuse.  
We should consider today a sign.

Summer turns back.

SUMMER

We should consider civil unrest due to  
police brutality against a Black man a  
sign to have sex?

ALEX

Your lack of parental supervision is a  
sign, besides you're tired of a good girl  
image. Your parents have presented you  
with a wonderful opportunity.

Aroused by rebelliousness, Summer faces Alex and unclasps  
her bra. Summer stands topless, feigned bravado masks her  
insecurity.

Alex stands, pretends to be nonchalant for a split  
second, then tackles Summer. They roll onto the bed.

INT. WEISS HOME - SUMMER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Summer and Alex - fully clothed - sit on a freshly made  
bed. Alex plays a video game with his Gameboy. Summer  
studies a textbook.

O.S. DOORBELL RINGS.

Summer rises, peeks out the window, sees:

Carmen at the front door.

SUMMER

(scans the room)

Are you sure it doesn't smell like sex in  
here?

Alex laughs.

SUMMER

Your pheromones must be stuck up my nose,  
it's all I can smell.

Summer opens the window. Fans the air.

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