

**DO
WE
HAVE
YOUR**

ATTENTION

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Pink Edit(ion)

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I am truly sorry
it has come to this

CAPTION over BLACK reads:

2021
(location undisclosed)

INT. ROOM ONE - NIGHT

A smallish room, black blankets covering the walls. A concrete floor.

It's dark, except for a makeshift spotlight hovering just above MR. JENNS.

Mr. Jenns, 57, white, impeccably dressed, is tied tight to a metal chair, a black bag over his head.

Mr. Jenns breathes.

A HELPER of some sort, shot from the neck down, comes in and removes the black bag from his head.

Temporarily blinded by the change of light, Mr. Jenns looks back but can't make out what the Helper looks like as they exit the room.

Mr. Jenns looks around, observes his restraints, then settles his focus on the open laptop sitting upon a small table four feet in front of him.

Mr. Jenns waits quietly.

The visual of an AUDIO SIGNAL appears. As we will learn later, this is the voice of MR. MAXWELL, masked by a digital, monotone effect.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

I'm going to say a few words, and then you and I
are going to have a conversation.
Do we have your attention?

MR. JENNS

I think that's evident.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Good. Then I will proceed.

There was a period after September 11th, 2001,
in which advocates for the strategic use of
torture and violence offered the American public
a thought experiment. This scenario was referred
to as the Ticking Time Bomb.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

Proponents of this thought experiment asked, "If you knew there was a bomb that was going to go off, perhaps in a market full of shoppers or a school full of children, and you had access to the person who could prevent this from happening, would you use any means at your disposal, including violence, to persuade that person to help you stop the bomb from going off?"

This hypothetical was supposed to represent the logic and indeed the morality of a temporary resort to violence, if the circumstances demanded it. It was put forth by politicians and thought leaders throughout the country. And, sure enough, a considerable segment of the population agreed that violence, even extreme violence, was acceptable if it meant saving the lives of the innocent.

We believe that this particular thought experiment was flawed and useful only as political propaganda. Not because of the philosophical challenge it posed, but because the scenario assumed things that cannot be assumed.

We accept that our experiment here today may also be flawed. Yet we are willing to gamble on certain assumptions, because we know. The scenario we are facing is not hypothetical.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has always been quite conservative in its estimates, has now stated we have less than a decade to initiate a plan to avoid total calamity.

Some damage may already be irreversible. But if we are to avoid the worst, to steer away from the starvation, the wars, the macro displacement, the mass extinction of plant, fish, and wildlife species, this plan must be embraced by both government and industry. It must be implemented immediately, and it must be strictly enforced.

You are here because you possess the level of power and influence to help make that happen.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

We know this because, so far, you have used your power and influence to either explicitly derail these efforts or to water down the efficacy of said plans.

Like us, you too know the bomb is real, the bomb is going to go off, and that Climate Change has already caused suffering and death. To look at the suffering and death ahead and do nothing, to in fact hasten it merely for the sake of convenience, is to contribute directly to it. It is to commit violence. Mass violence.

It's tempting to ask. What should be done to you? Should we hurt you? Should we kill you? Should we sentence you to live the rest of your life – in this room? What is it that you deserve for the harm you have *already* caused?

As much as we may wish to arrive at an answer to these questions, we do not have that luxury. Because even if we erased you from existence, the time bomb you helped create would still exist. And we only have so much time before the ticking stops.

We do not wish to be like you. We want to do what is right *for everyone*. But we have to defuse this bomb. And we have come to a place where we must equate the two. Whatever it takes to defuse this bomb will ultimately be what is right for everyone.

And yet, as storms increase in their frequency and severity, as droughts increase in their frequency and severity, as the violence you've nurtured continues and the warming moves more and more of the planet toward being uninhabitable, you and your friends in government and industry have implored us to be nonviolent.

So tell us. What do we have to do? Nothing we have done thus far has moved you.

Outside of violence, what do we have to do to change your minds? What is the nonviolence you demand?

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

If you cannot answer this, you are telling us that only violence will work. And the violence that follows will not be under our sanction. It will be under yours.

You must believe us when we say we do not want that. But you *have* to tell us.
This is your chance to tell us.

A lot rests on what you have to say right now. I urge you to be candid and forthcoming.

Do you understand what I'm telling you?

MR. JENNS

I understand how misguided you are.
All this self-righteous babble, after abducting a man.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

We acquired an audience with you. Under normal measures, that wouldn't have been possible.

MR. JENNS

You don't acquire an audience with someone against their will.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

What would you have suggested?

MR. JENNS

Isn't that why you have freedom of speech? Isn't that what your protests are for?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You ask that as if you would pay attention to a protest, from us. What good is speech if a million of our voices are not as loud as the whispers of your friends?

MR. JENNS

If I'm missing, it means there's a skilled team of people trying to find me. And they will find me.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

No.

No one is going to find you. No one is going to bust down the door and save you. You're alone here. I can assure you that.

MR. JENNS

Then what is it that you want? If it's money, you can just say so.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Your money is not the solution. It's the problem. It's the reason why you and your friends are the ones standing in the way. You have that power. I'm recognizing that power for the duration of this conversation. Everything that happens after this conversation will be a matter of your own conscience.

MR. JENNS

It sounds like I'm on trial.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

In a way.
But here you get to be defendant and judge.
Potentially prosecutor.

MR. JENNS

I'm not following you.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

It's up to you, right now, whether the means to our end will be violent or nonviolent.

MR. JENNS

You know what happens if you try violence.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Then tell us what we have to do. What nonviolence would be acceptable to you and your peers?
There are obviously options we haven't exhausted.

MR. JENNS

Like what?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Trucks. Equipment.
Machinery. Pipelines.

MR. JENNS

I thought we were discussing peaceful protest.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You think property is worth more than people's
lives?

MR. JENNS

Depends on whose property it is.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

I can't tell whether you're serious or joking.
With this many lives at stake, you can't possibly--

MR. JENNS

It's still violence.
The misfortune of one doesn't negate the rights
of another.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

What about the right to self-defense? Do you
not recognize that right? If we ensured no
physical harm would come to any individual and
targeting would only be in the context of how
something is used and what it contributes to?
I can't imagine you would think it violent to
shoot a missile out of the air.

MR. JENNS

And I can't imagine you believe winning a
philosophical debate with me will stop you from
being seen as terrorists.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

We have no interest in explosions or grand
spectacles. We just need to be able to throw a
certain number of pebbles into the machine.
With a proper rifle, you can disable almost
anything from a safe distance.

MR. JENNS

There's no such thing as a safe distance.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Still, let's suppose there were to emerge a committed and sustained campaign of random sabotage and mechanical impairment. At some point, the cost of doing business would simply be too high.

MR. JENNS

That's if you could find people who were willing to go to prison for longer and longer sentences.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You take for granted a necessity defense won't work. When juries hear just how dire the warnings are, do you really think they'll find fault with such understandably desperate actors?

MR. JENNS

Maybe, maybe not. But they'll definitely find fault with you in the court of public opinion. A little artificial inflation here, a whole lot of media scolding there.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

That's assuming you *have* to tip the scales.

MR. JENNS

What else would you expect? I'm not going to apologize for believing in law and order. What you're describing is vigilantism.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Then let's keep within the law. Pretty soon countries are going to see more than just civil suits as an option. There's even talk of charging the worst offenders with crimes against humanity.

MR. JENNS

Didn't you say you only have a few years? Lawsuits can be dragged out for decades. And even if you were to pull off a miracle in some judicial body, it's completely unenforceable. The United States isn't going to recognize that. And there isn't a corporation worth its stock price that would comply.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

We could always take your cue and bring it to the court of public opinion.

Make it a show trial. Lay it all bare for the public to see how you used your power to actually hinder our salvation. An exercise in shaming, one the world has never seen.

After it's over, we could construct a permanent memorial. Something for posterity. So when the children of each generation ask their parents how it ever got this bad, they will point to this historical beacon. Your names, forever associated with this lasting crime.

Or maybe the crime will be so absolute that the memorial will ultimately be for those who come along after us. Those who may one day happen upon our cities, our technology, what we called civilization. Except they won't have to wonder how it was all lost. They'll know who did it. And they'll pass down that legacy as a lesson to their own. What not to do. What not to be.

MR. JENNS

How many people do you think already look at someone like me and believe that?

Thousands? Hundreds of thousands? Millions? Would it matter if a few more thought it?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Would it?

MR. JENNS

No more than it would 10 billion.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

And why is that?

MR. JENNS

Because it's not true.

I don't make the laws.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You *do* make the laws. You make them with your campaign contributions.

MR. JENNS

People can vote for whomever they wish.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Hence your choice to fund media and social media and influencers. Not to mention the think tanks and the donations to universities and the manufacturing of activist operations.

MR. JENNS

Every bit of which is legal.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Legal is a matter of design.

MR. JENNS

Then find your own designers.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You control more wealth than some countries.

MR. JENNS

You say that as if I'm supposed to feel guilt. If you know enough about me to have taken me hostage, you also know I didn't start out with money. I had to build it. I took what I had, and I made the most with it. You should take a lesson from that, and quit blaming your losses on the winners.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Is this what you think winning is? Our glaciers disappearing? Our oceans acidifying? Storms we can't defend against?

MR. JENNS

Why do you think I invested millions into renewables? I'm just as concerned about those things as you are.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You're hedging your bets.

MR. JENNS

I'm doing what I'm able to do in a market setting.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Then you won't fault us for using the market as well.

MR. JENNS

Certainly not. In fact, I'd love to hear what you have in mind.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

With the right coordination, there's a good chance we could take down your stocks. One after the other. Cut your wealth in half. Make an example of you.
It would wreak havoc on Wall Street.

MR. JENNS

It's conceivable. But to what end?
Threatening a handful of wealthy individuals isn't going to get you change.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Then we'll add a boycott.

MR. JENNS

What product?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

All of them.

MR. JENNS

(smiling)

That's your plan? To get Americans to quit shopping?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Of course not. It's to get the rest of the world to quit purchasing American products.
There are already dozens of buy-America apps. If the information from those apps were to strategically find their way into the hands of international consumers *slightly more* concerned about the dangers of Climate Change, how long do you think it would take for American exporters to cry Uncle?

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

And that's just consumers acting. If longshoremen were to refuse goods shipped from the United States, it's not hard to see the politicians of those countries conveniently throwing up their hands.

MR. JENNS

We'd go to war before we'd let that happen.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

With who? Who will you go to war with? The first country you attack, you'll add twenty more to the pile.

MR. JENNS

Then we'll convince those countries to *do it for us*.

When it comes to money, there is no neutrality. No matter how much they may delight in our temporary discomfort, their leaders know. We don't forget.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Is it really worth that much? To not do the right thing?

MR. JENNS

That's not democracy. That's coercion. The moment we let outsiders dictate our rules--

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

What if it weren't outsiders?
What if the pressure came from within?
How many days could the politicians withstand a general strike?

MR. JENNS

How many days before we find the most unflattering images of protestors clashing with police? How many days before we discredit the organizers?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

And if none of that happens, how many days could the politicians withstand a general strike?

MR. JENNS

As many days as we tell them. There's a hundred ways for you to lose the narrative. We only have to wait you out.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Are you sure about that?

MR. JENNS

It doesn't matter how sure *I* am.
The burden of proof is on you.

Mr. Jennis uncovers more than a hint of a smile.

INT. WATCHING ROOM - NIGHT

SHOT from behind, over the shoulder, of SOMEONE in a dark room watching on a laptop SCREEN as Mr. Jennis smiles.

SHOT from behind, over the shoulder, of SOMEONE ELSE in another dark room watching on a laptop SCREEN as Mr. Jennis smiles.

And another. And another. And another.

INT. ROOM ONE - CONTINUED

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You're so confident, in your rebuttals.
How is it that you're not afraid?
If not for yourself, then what about your children? Your grandchildren?
You're not stupid. You know what's coming.
What plans could you possibly be devising that will make it ok for you to have allowed this? You really want to isolate yourself, isolate the ones you love?
And where will you go? Underground? An island? A floating city in the middle of the ocean? Throw your lot in on space travel?
The gates can only go so high.

MR. JENNS

Who are you?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

I'm the one tasked with finding a tactic worthy of your mercy.

MR. JENNS

You seem quite confident yourself.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

I'm not confident.

Quite the contrary. I'm frantic.

Because it's become clear to me.

Every couple years, the world's foremost experts in climate science confirm that there is a bomb set to go off. And every time they make this announcement, the detonation of that bomb is closer to us than previously predicted.

You may not have the code, but I believe wholeheartedly you have a piece of it.

To deny us what we ask is to embrace the measures we must resort to.

It is to demand vengeance be visited upon you, decades, maybe even centuries, before your crimes can be fully realized.

If you will not save us, will you at least--

MR. JENNS

Please.

You're embarrassing yourself.

This is fantasy.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Are you saying you don't believe the bomb is real?

MR. JENNS

The bomb is real. I never said it wasn't.

It's the code that isn't.

There is no code.

There is only doing the best with what you have.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

I know you don't believe that. I know that you know the system.

You have enough money to buy the Congress twenty times over. You've got an army of lawyers *and* a reserve of judges.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

You have phone numbers to individuals that most people don't know exist. And if you don't have all those things, you have friends who can help you get them.

MR. JENNS

And you know what keeps those friends?

It's not wealth.

It's shared interest.

And the moment you don't share their interests, they no longer see you as worthy of your wealth.

You might as well be some bumpkin with a winning lottery ticket.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

There *has* to be something you respect.

Something you'll yield to, short of violence.

MR. JENNS

If it were up to me, I'd wave the magic wand and make everything all right.

But it's not just me. It's all of us. It's everything.

It's too much to put back in place.

Mr. Jenns waits for a comeback, then delights in the lack of.

MR. JENNS (cont'd)

You know I'm right.

The pause grows, slightly morbid.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

In a situation like this, the Army Field Manual says to build rapport. Find commonalities.

Potentially befriend the person you're interrogating.

Unfortunately, we don't have the time for building. And I suspect you have no interest in comradeship.

But more than that, I can't in good conscience pretend to be your friend.

MR. JENNS

Because of my money?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

No. It's not your money.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

It's because I know what comes next, if you don't comply.
If you truly can't offer me an answer, then we *both* have to come to terms with the suffering up ahead. The immeasurable suffering.
We don't want to have to break you down into another person. Where you'll say anything, do anything.
We want you to *want* to help us.

MR. JENNS

And what if I think you're bluffing?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Like you said. We've already abducted you. We'll be seen as terrorists.
The consequences have already been set in motion.
What's a little more suffering?

MR. JENNS

Mine or yours?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

If yours is productive, it will be worth ours.

MR. JENNS

So that's all there is?
Strategy?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Humanity is facing the plausibility of our planet no longer being livable.
If avoiding that fate means us using measured instances of physical harm--

MR. JENNS

You mean violence.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

If avoiding that fate means using violence, it's difficult to conceive of a moral case to be made against it.

MR. JENNS

How do you calculate the amount of permissible violence?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

It's a good question. One to be wrestled with.
I can say we'd prefer not to follow your lead.

MR. JENNS

What's that supposed to mean?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

What would you call the destruction caused by
once in a century weather events, if not violence?

MR. JENNS

I'm God now? I control the weather?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

No one said you were God. But it is ironic, isn't
it? As we brace for yet another Climate Change-
related tragedy, you want *us* to be clear about
what actions are synonymous with violence.

MR. JENNS

What's ironic is that I'm willing to bet I've done
more for your cause than all of you put together.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Are you referring to the chump change you pat
yourself on the back for? Diversifying your
portfolio with a few shares of wind, a few shares
of solar? While we have less than ten years before
certain factors are entirely out of our hands?
You called *our* efforts a fantasy. As you
simultaneously pump money into green
washing and window dressing.
You'd spend millions to placate us, but you
won't make a phone call to save our lives.

This is no fantasy for us.

We take no pleasure in these actions.

We abhor them. We feel shame that our
civilization has arrived at this place.

And we know. Participating in this kind of
violence will forever change us.

But we are committed to it. If that's what it
takes.

I tell you this, not to absolve myself.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

I tell you because I do not want you to have to experience what we are prepared to carry out. As much as I do not believe you deserve reprieve, I am trying, with every word I speak, to save you.

MR. JENNS

Whatever you have in mind is not going to work.

Righteous or not, you have to know that those actions will be counterproductive. Even the slightest act of violence will be used to tar your message. Before you know it, even your goals will be seen as extreme.

If anything, this kind of violence is welcomed. It's seen as a gift. It saves the time of having to conduct smear campaigns.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Incredible.

After all this, you're still playing games.

We have no illusions as to how our actions will be mangled to fit your narrative.

Just like you have no illusions that the same would be done with the most peaceful of protests. You said it yourself. You make nonviolence look like violence all the time.

You don't need violence as a pretext to try and discredit us.

Whatever we do, no matter *what* we do, you'll find a way to use it against us.

MR. JENNS

But this you can't come back from.

Using peaceful means, you at least have a chance.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Then tell us. Tell us what will work.

There's been peaceful climate actions for thirty years.

And yet here we stand, with less than a decade left. Nowhere near where we need to be.

You're the ones who have convinced us that nonviolence won't work. That violence is the only thing you do understand.

If I'm wrong, you have to show me. Right now.

Show us that we're wrong.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

Show us that there is a path, any path, where we can save our future without resorting to savagery.

This, right here, in this room, in this moment, you, watching the screen in front of you, this, is your last chance.

What do we have to do?

Mr. Jenns takes a while to contemplate.

MR. JENNS

You've already done it.

I was skeptical at first. But I can see from our conversation that you didn't bumble your way into this.

You asked me to be candid with you.

I ask that you hear me out.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Please.

MR. JENNS

The truth is I want to help. I want to save our planet.

But you're right. In my position, there are certain expectations.

I want to make a deal with you.

I'm being truthful when I say that I don't know if any one of your ideas is better than any other. I only know it doesn't matter which one I favor if you can't make it happen.

So *you* decide.

Anyone of the ideas you proposed.

If you can actually make that happen, if you can corral the masses into one disciplined force putting that kind of sustained pressure on the system, I'll use whatever standing and power I have to advocate behind the scenes to acquiesce to your demands.

But you have to give me something in return.

(MORE)

MR. JENNS (cont'd)

If you can hold up your end and I hold up mine, and we actually pull this off, I need at least one of you, after it's all over, to give yourself up. To come forward and admit to the authorities what happened here today.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

That would seem to put whatever progress we would have made at risk.

MR. JENNS

Not necessarily. If this effort were to win, the public could be sympathetic to what you did in their interests. And the results would be too great to suggest reversing.

Granted, you may have to serve time. Or, like you suggested, you could end up with enough peers on the jury to walk away.

You said you were committed to the consequences of your actions. This would prove it.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

And if that person, say me perhaps, were lucky enough to walk away from punishment, what would you get out of it?

MR. JENNS

I need an out. I need to be able to show my peers once this is all over that what I did I did under duress.

Otherwise, I'll be a financial pariah.

A few seconds of silence, as Mr. Jenns waits for an answer.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

And you're being sincere? All you need is our word?

MR. JENNS

I believe you've demonstrated what you're willing to do for *your* cause.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Ok then. I give you my word.

Once we're in the clear, I'll come forward. Tell the world what I did.

MR. JENNS

Then we have a deal.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Almost.

Before we go forward, we're going to need a bit more than your word.

MR. JENNS

I'm willing to take your word. You're not willing to take mine?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

I think it's fair to say that you too have demonstrated what you're willing to do for your own personal interests.

MR. JENNS

Fair enough.

What is it that you want?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

If we were going to let you go, we would need to know you have skin in the game.

MR. JENNS

What exactly does that mean?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

It means this.

We want you to transfer all current assets to two separate trust accounts. One holding 10 percent. The other holding 90 percent. The smaller account will sit idle. The larger account we will have the capacity to draw from, up to five percent, for our organizing efforts. Also from the larger account, we will appoint a fiduciary to make sure all your bills are paid and to issue you an allowance so that you may operate on our behalf, as you said behind the scenes, without raising any red flags amongst your friends or family.

If and when there is government enactment of adequate and enforceable policy, you will receive the principle remaining from the larger account.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

The 10 percent in the other account will go to fund mitigation and adaptation in the worst affected of the Global South.

If a period of three years has gone by and we have not achieved our goals, the reverse will happen. The remaining principal from the 90 percent will go to the Global South, and you'll receive the 10 percent.

In short, you have three years to persuade the *other* powers that be to embrace our endeavor and comply with our demands. After which, regardless of outcome, our ties will be cut.

If you go to the authorities, if you try to recover this money outside of our arrangement, I can guarantee you. It will not bear fruit. On the contrary, breaching the deal will result in a total forfeit of assets and will be understood as your abandonment of faith in nonviolence and an explicit instruction for us to engage in - last resort tactics.

Mr. Jenns takes his time, before asking.

MR. JENNS

And how do I know that this isn't just some elaborate scam?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You don't.

Just like we don't know that you won't walk out of here and call the FBI - the first chance you get.

What you do know is that, in the time you have been with us, we have not struck you nor caused you any physical trauma. If all we were interested in was your money, you would be missing most of your fingers by now.

MR. JENNS

Still. Even if you're everything you say, *especially* if you're everything you say, why only the five percent to operate on?

(MORE)

MR. JENNS (cont'd)

Wouldn't it be far more effective to put the entire amount towards your efforts and to hell with me?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

If we can't win with that five percent, the rest won't make a difference. The difference is you. You're the key. The money is only an insurance policy. It's the only way we can know you're serious.

Are you - serious?

A pause, as Mr. Jenns ponders the offer.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

We are prepared to make the arrangements.

A longer, serrated pause, as the silence begins to suggest serious reluctance.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

Do you have an answer?

More silence, even than before.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

All we're looking for is evidence of your com--

MR. JENNS

All you're looking for is everything I've built. Everything I worked to put together. You think I can just sign that over to you? I don't even know who you are.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Knowing is not the issue. It's what you don't know. And what you don't know is what will happen - if you do nothing. We're asking you to take a chance. Asking you to utilize--

MR. JENNS

You're asking me something you don't understand. Because you have no understanding of the world I live in. What it took to get me where I am.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You're right here. In this room.
With me.

MR. JENNS

No. I'm not.
I'm not here. I'm still out there.
Still acting. Still making moves. Still dominating.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

I take it you're referring to the money.

You couldn't withdraw it all if you wanted,
could you? Couldn't physically touch it.
It might as well not exist. All in your head.
Stacks and stacks of imaginary bills. Like a
cartoon.
Do you even know it exists?

MR. JENNS

It exists.
It may just be numbers on a screen. But those
numbers are more real than anything else in the
world. They may be all that is real.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Do you believe we exist? Are we real to you?

MR. JENNS

In here you are.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

But not out there?

MR. JENNS

I said I would help you.
I'll give you money to fund your efforts.
But what you're asking is impossible.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

So you're admitting. The money that you can't
hold, can't see. The money you'll never be able
to spend, that your great great grandchildren
will never be able to spend.
That's more important. Than us.

MR. JENNS

It can't just be me. There are other people that have what I have. There are people with more. Why not kidnap them? Do to them what you've done to me. Put them here. Get *them* to agree. It's got to be more than just me.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

It isn't the money, is it?

MR. JENNS

Of course it's the money.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Then why did you say earlier, "if it's money" that we want?

MR. JENNS

I thought you would be reasonable. What you're asking? It's too much.

His words hang in the air.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You don't believe it'll work. You're not willing to let go of the money because you don't think we have a chance.

After another deep pause, Mr. Jenns relents.

MR. JENNS

What do you want me to say? I can't give you what isn't there.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You won't even try. You would rather gamble on your money being enough. Against anything.

MR. JENNS

I can't change the world.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

You're telling us that it's ok. That we have no other choice. Violence is all we have left.

MR. JENNS
You'd eventually find out anyway.

For the next half minute, the AUDIO SIGNAL on the SCREEN barely flutters.

Then erupts.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)
No!
Noooooo!
You have to try. You have to work with us.
You have to show us something.

Please.
You don't understand what's going to happen.

MR. JENNS
Then tell me. Tell me what it is you're threatening me with.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)
I can't. I can't tell you. I can only promise you that you will not be able to recover.

MR. JENNS
Then tell me what it is. What is it that's so bad?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)
I can't tell you that. I can only tell you that if you don't give us something, it will happen.
And I'm sorry for that.

MR. JENNS
Why should I believe you? If I can't know the consequence of my refusal, why should I do what you're asking?

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)
It doesn't count if you know what's going to happen.

Mr. Jenns looks down at the floor for a few long seconds, then gently shakes his head.

MR. JENNS
I'm sorry.
(MORE)

MR. JENNS (cont'd)

Even if I could help you.

Mr. Maxwell returns, a few long seconds.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.)

Please. For all there is to save, I'm willing to beg you.

Please. I'm begging.

I don't know what else to say to make you believe.

You have to trust me. You have to listen. You have to listen.

We only have this moment.

Mr. Jenns refuses to look at the SCREEN.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

Say something.

Say something!

You have to answer.

Mr. Jenns stoically looks back up, yet offers nothing.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O.) (cont'd)

You don't know what they're capable of.

You don't.

They're going to hurt you.

They're going to do the worst thing.

You're allowing them to do it.

You're telling them to do it.

Please. You have to cooperate.

Pleeeeeeeeeease! I'm beg--

The visual of the AUDIO SIGNAL disappears, as the laptop SCREEN goes blank.

Mr. Jenns sits in silence.

Not knowing.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM TWO – TWO MINUTES AGO

Same setup as ROOM ONE.

As we revisit the previous two minutes, this time from the vantage point of Mr. Maxwell, we alternate between a CLOSE-UP on the face of the 51-year-old white male, his forehead wet with sweat,

and

a TIGHT SHOT of the laptop SCREEN in front of him.

An AUDIO SIGNAL is also displayed, relaying the sound from ROOM ONE. However, this SCREEN hosts a small TIMER in the corner, ominously counting - down.

MR. JENNS (V.O.)

I'm sorry.
Even if I could help you.

As he processes what he's just heard, contemplating how to respond, the CLOSE-UP on Mr. Maxwell begins to ZOOM OUT.

We see Mr. Maxwell is also tied to a metal chair, but he is not impeccably dressed. Instead, he wears a prison-style jumpsuit.

The ZOOM-OUT stops with the camera slightly above but directly behind the laptop, still pointed at, directly in front of, Mr. Maxwell.

MR. MAXWELL

Please. For all there is to save, I'm willing to beg
you.
Please. I'm begging.
I don't know what else to say to make you
believe.
You have to trust me. You have to listen. You
have to listen.
We only have this moment.

The pause returns us to the taunting laptop SCREEN, TIMER ticking down.

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)

Say something.
Say something!
You have to answer.

Nothing. Only the TIMER, taking us closer and closer to zero.

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)

You don't know what they're capable of.
You don't.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)

They're going to hurt you.
They're going to do the worst thing.
You're allowing them to do it.
You're telling them to do it.
Please. You have to cooperate.
Pleeeeeeeeeeease! I'm begging you.

The TIMER hits zero, and the AUDIO SIGNAL visual disappears.

Mr. Maxwell begins to cry.

He then screams in anguish.

A few seconds later, the CLOSE-UP face of YOUTH A, a fifteen-year-old girl, appears on the SCREEN.

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)

(intermittently stuttering)

Please, please. Put him back on. Just put him
back on. Give me a few more minutes. I know
there's a way. I'll find a way.
I promise you. I swear. Just give me two more
minutes. Two more minutes, please.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

You know that's not what we agreed to.

MR. MAXWELL

Then give me someone else. Give me another
chance with someone else. I'll do better this
time. I'll study more and I'll come up with better
arguments. I know I can do this. I just need you
to give me this, just one more chance.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

Twenty-three days. You told us you were
prepared.
We gave you access to all the resources you
needed. We let you watch the other sessions, so
you might build on the attempts of others.
There's no reason to believe giving you any more
time will make a difference.

MR. MAXWELL

It will. I know it will.
(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)

Look, I know what we agreed to, but I need to tell you something. You need to understand something.

I didn't make those arguments just to get out of this.

In the time you've given me, I was able to reflect on who I am, what I've done.

And you're right. I was wrong. My whole life I've been wrong. I've helped put us where we're at. I've ignored the suffering. I've caused suffering. I have committed violence.

I can see that now. And I know that I can't undo the damage that's already been done.

But I can do something now, to change what is coming. I know I can do that. Not to save myself from serving sentence, but because I want to do it. I need to do it.

Every word I just said, I said because I believed it. You helped me see all of that. You helped me. I understand why you had to do this. I don't fault you for bringing me here. It's what was needed. It was the only thing that was going to make me see you, to see myself.

But I see myself, now. And I see you. And all I want to do - is to be of service.

Just let me do the right thing, right now.

Let me make up for what I've done.

I can do this. I *will* do this.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

Mr. Maxwell.

While this is encouraging to hear, your words are unnecessary now.

MR. MAXWELL

No.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

You'll have the rest of your life to prove your change of heart.

After we're sure you've come to terms with what you've done.

MR. MAXWELL

I'm telling you. I *have* come to terms with it. I've come to terms with all of it.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

I hope that's true. But there's only one way we can know.

MR. MAXWELL

No, but, see I'm telling you right now. You don't have to do anything. I'm ready.

I'll sign my money over. I'll go work behind the scenes. I'll do it right now.

I'll do whatever you ask me to. Whatever it takes I will do without hesitation. Just please. Don't do this.

I swear to you, I'm telling the truth.

You have to believe me.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

We want to believe you.

But we won't know, until it's real - for you.

MR. MAXWELL

No no no. I know you don't want to do this. I know you don't.

You wrote it in the scripted part. The process, this whole experiment. It's unfair.

How can I be punished for participating, if the process itself is imperfect?

Pause.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

Of course it's imperfect. But that's how you see. When it was you, when *you* refused. It was also a peer. Imploring you, pleading with you.

But you didn't know that. You thought it was one of us.

That was your answer. When you thought it was us.

It doesn't matter what the words are, how logical the argument. How moral.

If it doesn't come from someone like them, they won't listen.

MR. MAXWELL

And I'm telling you, I will do it. I will make the case. I'll do whatever you ask.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

You had your turn.
This is what comes next.

MR. MAXWELL

No. This can't be it. There's got to be more than this.
There's got to be something. Something I can do to convince you.
Whatever it is, just tell me.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

Mr. Maxwell. It's you that has to be convinced.

MR. MAXWELL

I am! I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. I am. Please!
Let me show you. Let me prove to you that I'm not that person. I'm someone else. I have a different heart.

YOUTH A (V.O.)

I'm sorry, Mr. Maxwell. We regret it's gotten to this point. We would have preferred a different route.
To be sure, this next part is going to be difficult. But it's the only way.

MR. MAXWELL

(throwing his head back)

Dear God.
Help me. Help me show them.
Let me make up for my sins. Let me redeem myself.

Mr. Maxwell closes his eyes and finishes his prayer in a broken whisper.

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)

Let me serve you, Lord. I will give everything. I will give you everything.
I am a changed man.
Tell them, Lord.
Tell them not to do this.
Forgive me. For all I have done.
I submit to you. I submit my whole existence.
Wash me clean.
Save me, Lord.
Please.

(MORE)

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)

Save me.

The Helper comes in and puts a pair of headphones on Mr. Maxwell.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM ONE – TIME ELAPSED

Mr. Jenns sits in silence, awaiting what's next.

Finally, an image appears on the SCREEN in front of him: A corner-view WIDE-ANGLE of ROOM TWO.

Mr. Jenns sees a man with headphones on, in a prison-style jumpsuit, tied to a chair, saying something at a laptop, the SCREEN of which Mr. Jenns cannot see.

At first, the sound is off.

Mr. Jenns focuses in on the man's face.

After about five lines of silent dialogue and a long pause, the sound of Mr. Maxwell's voice becomes audible. Yet, this time, clear, without effect.

A look comes across Mr. Jenns' face, as if he might recognize the man.

The AUDIO increases. Mr. Jenns can tell it's a recording of the previous conversation.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O)

Say something.
Say something!
You have to answer.

Mr. Jenns watches as his previous silence rips at Mr. Maxwell.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O) (cont'd)

You don't know what they're capable of.
You don't.
They're going to hurt you.
They're going to do the worst thing.
You're allowing them to do it.
You're telling them to do it.
Please. You have to cooperate.
Pleeeeeeeeeease! I'm begging you.

Mr. Jenns watches as Mr. Maxwell begins to cry, and scream.

The image vanishes. The SCREEN is blank for five seconds.

Then the CLOSE-UP face of YOUTH B appears on the SCREEN. A thirteen-year-old girl.

YOUTH B (V.O.)

Hello, Mr. Jenns.

MR. JENNS

Who are you?

YOUTH B (V.O.)

I think you might regard me as the bad cop.

MR. JENNS

Was that Ian Maxwell?

YOUTH B (V.O.)

You know Mr. Maxwell?

Mr. Jenns takes a moment before answering. It's starting to sink in.

MR. JENNS

What did you do to him?

YOUTH B (V.O.)

The same thing we did to you.

MR. JENNS

I know Ian. He would never participate in something like this.

YOUTH B (V.O.)

The conversation you had with Mr. Maxwell was of his own will and conception.

MR. JENNS

So what, you beat him? Tortured him? Is that what you're going to do to me now?

YOUTH B (V.O.)

We didn't touch Mr. Maxwell. We only showed him that we weren't, as you said, bluffing.

MR. JENNS

How?
What does that mean?

This time, Youth B takes a moment.

YOUTH B (V.O.)

If I were Mr. Maxwell, I would have asked you if it's wrong to convince someone of your capacity for violence. If it's the same as violence itself. Unfortunately, the time for questions has passed.

Mr. Maxwell was instructed to be vague regarding the form of danger you're in. Even then, if he had been forthcoming about the consequences of not complying, you couldn't be sure we would go through with our threat. That we could even be capable of such.

To make up for this inconsistency, we're going to give you another chance.
But this time, there will be no doubt. You'll know. You'll know because you'll remember. You *did* this.

MR. JENNS

Did what? What are you talking about?

YOUTH B (V.O.)

What you're about to witness is not of our instruction. It's yours.
Mr. Maxwell warned you. He told you it was going to happen. And you let it.
You chose. Our violence.

The laptop SCREEN goes blank for five seconds, before

Another image appears: The WIDE-SHOT of Mr. Maxwell in ROOM TWO comes back on the SCREEN. He is watching the laptop in front of him, screaming. Because he has headphones on, we cannot hear what is on *his* laptop SCREEN.

We can only hear his anguish.

Mr. Jenns can only imagine.

MR. MAXWELL (V.O)

No, no. Not this. Please you can't do this. This isn't part of it.

You can't do this. You can't do this. You can't do this. This isn't part of it.

No. You know this isn't right. You know it. You know this isn't right. Please. I'll give you anything, I'll do anything.

You want to hurt me, I'll hurt myself. I'll kill myself in front of you. I'll torture myself. I'll do whatever it takes. Whatever you want to do. Do it to me. Hurt me. I'll hurt myself. I don't care. Please. It's me you want. I'm guilty. I'm the one that deserves it. You can do it all to me.

Just don't - do th- aaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

You bastards, you fucking bastards. I'll fucking kill you. I'll kill all of you.

Noooooooooooo! Nooooooooooooooooooooo!

Mr. Maxwell shrieks in horror.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM TWO - CONTINUOUS

MR. MAXWELL

Please kill me. Kill me. Kill me. Kill me.

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!

Mr. Maxwell closes his eyes and shakes his head, so hard that the headphones fall off.

Within seconds, the Helper arrives to put them back on.

Mr. Maxwell holds shut and tries to shake the headphones again, but the Helper holds them in place. If he will not look, he must hear.

In a fit, Mr. Maxwell rocks from side to side, trying to escape the grip of the Helper. His movement is forceful enough that the chair tips sideways onto the floor.

Mr. Maxwell lays sideways in the chair, with his headphones being held on, as he sobs and screams.

MR. MAXWELL (cont'd)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

Five seconds of silence over BLACK, before

INT. ROOM ONE - DAY

The setup is the same as before, only Mr. Jenns is wearing the same prison-style jumpsuit that Mr. Maxwell had on.

YOUTH C's face appears on the SCREEN, CLOSE-UP. A fifteen-year-old boy.

YOUTH C (V.O.)
Hello, Mr. Jenns. I understand you're ready to proceed?

MR. JENNS
I'm ready.

YOUTH C (V.O.)
Ok, then.
Remember, you'll read from the script first.
Once you finish the script, the timer will begin.
That will be your time, to say whatever you wish, as long as you do not reveal your identity or that you were in their position earlier. Nor can you reveal the specifics of what will happen if you are unsuccessful.
You've been informed of what happens if you violate these rules.

MR. JENNS
I understand.

YOUTH C (V.O.)
Thirty-four days. You've read all the reports and the literature we've given you. Familiarized yourself with the various mitigation plans. You watched the other sessions.
Is there anything else you think you might need to make your case?

MR. JENNS

No. I'm confident.

YOUTH C (V.O.)

And you feel, from what we've provided, you know enough about your peer? Enough to overcome their resistance?

MR. JENNS

I know them well enough.

YOUTH C (V.O.)

That's good to hear. We trust your approach will be effective.

Do you need to watch the end of Mr. Maxwell's tape again? For motivation?

MR. JENNS

No. I'm aware of the stakes.

YOUTH C (V.O.)

You indicated that you've memorized the script. Is that correct? We can put it on the screen if you like.

MR. JENNS

No need.
I know it.

YOUTH C (V.O.)

And you know what to ask for?

MR. JENNS

I know what's being asked.

YOUTH C (V.O.)

Excellent.
Your peer is being situated.
The signal will appear on the screen shortly.
Do you have any last questions?

MR. JENNS

No.

YOUTH C (V.O.)

Then good luck.

The Youth's face disappears. A few seconds goes by.

Then the visual of an AUDIO SIGNAL comes on the SCREEN.

A voice, that of another PEER.

PEER (V.O.)

What is this?
Where am I?
What the hell is going on?

MR. JENNS

I'm going to say a few words, and then you and I
are going to have a conversation.

CREDITS begin to ROLL over BLACK to MUSIC on the right half of the
SCREEN.

CREDITS and MUSIC PAUSE...

FACILITATOR (V.O.)

All right, so I'm gonna pause it right here and bring everyone back onto the screen. There's a couple visuals at the end of the credits, but they're not crucial to our discussion.

A VIDEO GROUP CHAT shows a man inside a box titled FACILITATOR, then shows six more boxes for ELISE - 25 years old, JASON - 30, JENNA - 19, DEE - 49, GAIL - 66, EVAN - 27.

FACILITATOR

Looks like no one is snoring. That's good. Before we get things rolling, I would like to reiterate that we appreciate you coming in to participate in today's focus group, and being patient with our precautions. We acknowledge that sitting in a booth and staring at a computer screen is not the most conventional focus group setting, but please take our word that it is far better than testing, masking, social distancing, and then asking everyone *not* to be nervous or distracted. I'll remind you that we're going to be recording the session for later analysis. But only the filmmakers will be seeing this, so feel free to speak your mind.

Ok, so just out of curiosity. Raise your hand if you've been in a focus group before.

Dee, Elise, and Evan raise their hands.

FACILITATOR (cont'd)

Well, that focus group will probably not be like this one. I won't tell you why. But I will say we believe our method of conducting focus groups makes the experience far more engaging and frankly more fun. So let the fun - begin.

The Facilitator pauses to smile.

The FOCUS GROUP members reciprocate, some awkwardly.

FACILITATOR (cont'd)

We usually start off by asking if there was anything that caught your eye, good or bad. Anything you had to make sure you mentioned. And you can--

EVAN

It needed more color.
It was too dark.

FACILITATOR

You mean the lighting?

EVAN

Everything. There wasn't hardly any color.

FACILITATOR

You don't think it being that dark is appropriate for the feel?

EVAN

I just would like to have seen more color.

FACILITATOR

Where would you like to see the color?

EVAN

I don't know. Maybe the guy's clothes, or his tie maybe.

FACILITATOR

Mr. Jenns.

EVAN.

Yeah. Jenns.

FACILITATOR

Do you think that would have made you feel more comfortable with his character, or the situation?

EVAN

I think so. I just feel better watching something when there are - some nice colors in it.

FACILITATOR

Well, thank you for sharing.
(MORE)

FACILITATOR(cont'd)

Did anyone else have anything that didn't sit right with them?

GAIL

I was a little thrown as to why they manipulated the one guy's voice on the laptop.

FACILITATOR

You mean Mr. Maxwell.

GAIL

Yeah, the person who gave the speech in the beginning and all that. I didn't get why he had to have that strange, disguised voice.

FACILITATOR

Does anyone have an answer?

DEE

I think it was so there would be no way for the hostage to recognize the voice. Because remember at the end, the hostage guy--

FACILITATOR

Mr. Jenns.

DEE

Mr. Jenns says that he knows Mr. Maxwell and that he wouldn't do this.

JENNA

It needed to be something he didn't know until that moment. To make it more real.

FACILITATOR

Can anyone else think of a reason to disguise the voice like that?

ELISE

I wondered if they had done it to make Mr. Jenns focus on himself.

FACILITATOR

How so?

ELISE

Like if the voice he's hearing doesn't sound like a human voice, or at least not with any distinguishing features, it's like he's still kind of alone in the room with these questions coming at him about his actions, and what they've caused.

I thought maybe it was some kind of metaphor for him having to acknowledge his conscience over whatever he's done to enable Climate Change getting worse.

EVAN

I thought it was a metaphor for AI, like how AI is going to kill us all.

DEE

You didn't think it was actually about Climate Change?

EVAN

If you wanted to take it literally.

GAIL

Why wouldn't you take it literally?

EVAN

You could. But it just seems kind of boring.

JENNA

You think Climate Change is boring?

EVAN

I didn't say Climate Change was boring. I said taking things at face value is boring. But, for the record, Climate Change is way more boring than AI.

FACILITATOR

What did you think, Jason?

JASON

I just thought it was to scare him. Like if he couldn't tell who it was, he wouldn't have a strategy for getting out. And it would be even more intimidating.

FACILITATOR

These are good responses. I like where the discussion is going. Did anyone else have any issues with the communication between Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Jenns?

DEE

I have a question that's kind of about communication. Towards the end, what is Mr. Maxwell looking at on the screen?

FACILITATOR

What do you think it is?

DEE

I assumed he was watching someone he loves be tortured.

FACILITATOR

Is it necessary to know for sure?

DEE

I just feel like not knowing, it's like we don't know what they're really up to.

ELISE

Don't you think not seeing it, but still seeing his reaction, is more powerful?

JENNA

Plus, it leaves it open to interpretation.

JASON

What other interpretations are there?

ELISE

Maybe he's not watching a loved one. Maybe we not seeing it, we're supposed to take it as a metaphor for him finally seeing what his inaction is going to cause. And when he sees the real consequence, he can't take it.

EVAN

Look at us, just full of metaphors.

DEE

I like it.
Like watching a terrifying historic event in real time, but truly feeling the profound injustice and loss, and not being able to do anything to stop it.

JENNA

Except it's worse because he's caused the event, or helped cause it.
Like maybe it's a metaphor for him seeing himself. And what his actions contributed to. What he's become that can't be reversed.

DEE

I kind of like that too.

JASON

Or maybe it's just him watching a loved one be tortured.

EVAN

Looks like Jason is not full of metaphors.

JASON

I'm not against reading anything into movies. I just think that taking this film as something different than what the filmmakers are implying spares them for no good reason.

DEE

You think the implication is that clear cut?

JASON

Do you really not think some people are going to take a movie like this the wrong way?

ELISE

Or maybe they'll finally take Climate Change the right way.

GAIL

What do you mean?

ELISE

Maybe it is violence he's watching. But we can't see it, because to us it's violence in the abstract.
(MORE)

ELISE (cont'd)

But him being the one seeing it, and seeing it at the end of the film, is like him finally being able to identify with the very real people who will suffer and die from his decisions. And us assuming that it's someone close to him speaks to the problem of his disproportionate power and the normal disconnect people like him feel from the consequences of their actions.

EVAN

I'd liked to have seen the violence.

DEE

You mean see what was on the screen?

EVAN

Yeah. I would have liked to have seen it.

DEE

Why?

EVAN

Why not?
If he gets to see it, why can't we?

DEE

Are you saying maybe it stands for everyday people still not coming to terms with Climate Change either? And if we see it, the visceral reaction will make us realize how serious our actions are as well?

EVAN

No. I just want to see it.

FACILITATOR

Does anyone else have anything to say about the implication of violence?

GAIL

I don't know whether it was the violence or the whole thing. But to me it just seemed too heavy-handed.
I know it's specifically about Climate Change, but it seemed kind of like too in your face.
It was almost like not fiction. Like...

JASON

Like propaganda or something.

GAIL

Yeah. Like that. It was way too political.

EVAN

I agree. It didn't really work for me either.
It was depressing.
It should be more enjoyable.

FACILITATOR

Do you think the filmmakers should add something to it, make it more artsy?

EVAN

Either that, or make it more subtle.

JASON

I just don't want to be beat over the head with the message. It should be entertaining first.

GAIL

The deeper stuff should be more hidden. Where you have to want to see it to see it. But if you don't want to see it, it's not distracting you from the story.

FACILITATOR

That puts the filmmakers in a predicament, seeing that the story is overtly political.

EVAN

Maybe you could make it not about Climate Change. Maybe it could be about something else Mr. Jenns has influence on.

GAIL

Like a cure for cancer.

JASON

That way, if you're not political or you don't follow what's going on with Climate Change, you can still be entertained by it. But if that *is* your thing, you'll see that part too and it will be even better for you.

DEE

The film doesn't seem like it's geared toward just being entertainment.

JASON

That doesn't mean it has to be so heavy-handed.

JENNA

I think the filmmakers just wanted to make sure the message wasn't lost on anyone.

JASON

Then maybe I'm not their audience.

GAIL

Me neither.

ELISE

But you're going to be affected by Climate Change, just like anyone. The film should appeal to you as well.

JASON

Well, it doesn't.

FACILITATOR

Then how can the filmmakers make it appealing to you, but without changing the subject matter?

JASON

I don't know. I just think it's too political the way it is right now.

EVAN

And too brainy.

FACILITATOR

Gail, you appear to agree.

GAIL

I think I just don't like political movies. I don't like having to think this hard, about this stuff. It makes me anxious.

If I want to get political, I'll turn on the news. When I watch a movie, I just want to be entertained.

FACILITATOR

Didn't the movie give you a scenario that was interesting and even suspenseful on its own, in spite of the political implications?

GAIL

Maybe, but I feel like with all this talking, that's kind of been ruined. And I can't remember it like that anymore.
Now it's got all this stuff attached to it.

EVAN

It was good before we talked about it, but not now.

GAIL

Kind of, yeah.

FACILITATOR

Interesting.
Does anyone else feel this way?

JASON

I don't mind a movie having like underlying messages in it. But talking it to death like we're doing here does kind of take the fun out of it.

EVAN

But you said it wasn't for you.

JASON

I just feel like when you've got a movie that is so heavy-handed, talking about it like this is like beating a dead horse.

EVAN

So do you not like the movie, or do you not like the conversation?

JASON

Maybe I don't like being in a focus group.

EVAN

Having to talk about it.

JASON

I guess I just don't like being forced to talk about something.

DEE

Don't you find the conversation we're having interesting?

JASON

I guess. But I could have this conversation even if I didn't watch the movie.

ELISE

Could you?
When was the last time you had a conversation at all resembling this one?
You and your friends sit around and talk about scenarios like this?

JASON

We've talked about Climate Change.

ELISE

At this level?

JASON

Maybe not this level, but we've talked about it.

ELISE

When the movie comes out, do you think you'll bring up what we talked about to those same friends?

JASON

Probably, I guess.

ELISE

Do you think they would find the premise interesting, maybe see the movie?

JASON

Probably.

ELISE

Well, there you go.

JASON

You don't get it. All of that is because we've had the conversation already. But we're having *this* conversation because I'm being forced to talk about it.

JENNA

No one's forcing you to talk.

JASON

You know what I'm saying.

DEE

What are you saying?

JASON

Look, if I just saw the movie on my own, I don't know if I would have a conversation like this afterward.

ELISE

Why not?

JASON

Because I don't know if I would have enjoyed it enough to want to talk about it.

FACILITATOR

So it really does matter how good the movie is.

EVAN

Not necessarily. He said that he doesn't like talking things to death. So even if it was good, there's no guarantee he would have talked extensively about it after. Is that right?

JASON

Yeah, I guess.

ELISE

Then does it really matter how good the overall execution of the movie was if the idea or the plot itself is enough to get people talking?

EVAN

Yet we don't know if the plot would get him doing this kind of talking either.

JASON

Look, all I said was that I agreed with Gail and that it was a bit too heavy-handed.

DEE

Yeah, but we've also been talking about metaphors and different meanings for things.

JASON

But we're being steered in one direction. Even with the metaphors, it makes it too simple.

FACILITATOR

Which part do you think is too simple?

JASON

All of it. It's gotta be more than just rich people. The rich are an easy target.

JENNA

You don't think rich people have the most power?

JASON

I think rich people are people who made a lot of money in the same system that other people did not make a lot of money in.

JENNA

You didn't answer my question.

JASON

Yes, rich people have more power. That's how the game works. They didn't invent the game.

JENNA

Don't hate the player, hate the game. Very profound. What I'm asking is - how are we losers supposed to play the game when it comes to Climate Change? That's what the film is asking.

JASON

You play the game just like everybody else plays the game.

JENNA

You mean get rich? Is that your answer? We just need more rich people on the side of not letting the planet fall apart?

JASON

Either that or learn to talk to the people you need help from in a way that doesn't make them feel like scum of the earth.

JENNA

They're not doing what's right because their feelings are hurt? And that makes it ok to allow this to get worse?

JASON

Did you not watch the film? It's playing with the idea of kidnapping these people and torturing them. How do you think you would respond to that kind of a threat?

JENNA

I don't know. I'm never gonna be rich.

JASON

Great answer.

Jenna shakes her head.

JENNA

You really think you've got enough?

JASON

What's that supposed to mean?

JENNA

You might have enough to keep your children safe. But how many generations after that?

GAIL

What are you talking about?

JENNA

Isn't it obvious? He's rich.

EVAN

Why do you think that?

JENNA

Why else would he be more worried about this one person than all the people that person's damned?

JASON

No one is defending the man in the film. I just believe stereotyping the rich is not doing your cause any favors.

JENNA

So it's my cause now. As opposed to your cause?

JASON

You know that's not what I meant.

JENNA

Cops and gates are not going to be a permanent solution.

JASON

And violence is?

JENNA

Did you make it yourself? Self-made zillionaire?
Or did you marry into it?
Or were you born into it? Counting the days until the will is finally read and you get the rest of it?

GAIL

Why aren't you stopping this?

JASON

Yeah, dude, are you even paying attention?

FACILITATOR

I'm paying attention.

GAIL

Then why aren't you stepping in?

DEE

She's right. This can't be what you wanted. Us fighting?

FACILITATOR

Why do you say that?

DEE

We're only here for this one session. Is this what you want to waste our time on?

FACILITATOR

I wouldn't say it's a waste of time.
If this is the reaction that the movie is producing, there's something to be learned from that.

GAIL

Learn for what?

ELISE

Where we stand. And how a movie like this brings that out of us.

FACILITATOR

Very perceptive.

Elise looks away and refrains from smiling.

EVAN

So, Jason. Are you or are you not?

JASON

Am I what?

EVAN

Richie Rich.

JASON

Why would I answer that?
And what would it matter if I was? It wouldn't make me Mr. Jenns.

EVAN

But it might make *them* Mr. Maxwell.

JENNA

What's that supposed to mean?

EVAN

You seem so sure about things. People this sure have to convince those who are unsure.

JENNA

With outcomes this serious.

EVAN

Someone could just as easily say it's all in God's hands, so why bother?

JENNA

You can't prove God.

EVAN

And you can't prove that Richie Rich here is the problem either.

JASON

I didn't say I--

EVAN

Correction. You can't prove that Mr. Jenns is the problem either.

JENNA

If they're not the problem, who is?

EVAN

Maybe it's God.

JASON

No one's saying it's God.

EVAN

Lots of people are saying it. Like when they say everything happens for a reason. They mean that God is just fine with a few million dying here, a few million dying there. And not just dying but dying under the most horrid circumstances. It happens all the time.

Whether or not Jenna is right about you being rich, it's pretty obvious that you do not want the rich to go down for this.

But if *they're* not to blame, then maybe you have to blame the God you believe in.

JASON

That's not the God I believe in. The God I believe--

EVAN

The God you believe in is all powerful. Meaning the God you believe in could suck out all the excess CO₂, and set us back on the path of having a habitable earth, in a millisecond. But your God doesn't do that. Why is that?

JASON

We were given free will.

EVAN

That still doesn't answer the question. You agree God is all powerful. So God could in fact do just that. And it wouldn't take any more effort than you or I blinking. So either you really don't believe in that God. Or you believe that God is a monster.

JASON

You wanna have a theological discussion, we can have it.

ELISE

Don't humor him. He's not serious. He's messing with you. He's messing with all of us.

EVAN

Why do you say that?

ELISE

Dude, you're a fucking troll, and you know it. Seriously, why is he even here?

EVAN

You think you know me?

ELISE

I don't want to know you. But I'd bet anything you're a total right-winger who won't even admit Climate Change is real.

FACILITATOR

If that were the case, why would that disqualify him from the focus group?
If we're going to find a solution in time, it's going to require diverse agreement.

JENNA

But if he's just trolling us, then it's bad for the focus group.

FACILITATOR

Maybe he's here to see if he can be convinced.

EVAN

Or maybe I'm here to show you how full of shit you all are.

ELISE

I told you he wasn't here to be serious.

FACILITATOR

Perhaps he has a point.
Perhaps he is a right-wing troll. What's the difference between him and the well-meaning liberal in Congress who's applauded the measures that will obviously not be enough to save us? What's the difference between actively being the problem and *actively* not doing enough to stop it?

JASON

Well, I tend to agree with that.

FACILITATOR

It's not that our friend Evan here may be a Climate Change denier, or perhaps just some nihilist who doesn't care about his own life or anyone else's. The net effect of his actions is the same as the person who wants to defeat Climate Change but wants to respect the parameters of the current system.

EVAN

He's right.
You got one party in Congress, representing close to half of the voting population, that acts as if nothing really has to be done.

(MORE)

EVAN (cont'd)

And the other party, representing close to the other half, acts as if it will be enough to do what their donors will allow. When their donors are people like Mr. Jenns.

And none of them are villains. They're just like you and me, except they have a greater interest in keeping things so so status quo.

JENNA

So wait, you're not a troll?

EVAN

Of course I'm a troll. I told them as much when I applied.

DEE

Why would they take you?

EVAN

Maybe to show you that the trolls are not the obstacle.

ELISE

Well, now that it's out, can you at least be serious? It's even lamer once you've admitted it.

EVAN

I'll see how I feel.

Uncomfortable silence, as Elise peers at Evan's box on the SCREEN. Inside the box, Evan smiles back.

FACILITATOR

Speaking of feel, what did you feel about the characters?

Was there any emotional connection, or maybe a lack of?

DEE

I normally have a hard time staying interested in movies where I don't care about or connect with any of the main characters.

EVAN

You didn't feel *anything* for Mr. Jenns?

DEE

Do you? He's a pretty bad guy.

GAIL

Didn't you care about Mr. Maxwell?

DEE

He was a bad guy too. For all we know, he's just doing this now to save himself from what happens if he fails.

JASON

Can't you at least put yourself in his shoes?

DEE

He couldn't put himself in ours. Except for when he was in our shoes.

JASON

We're supposed to be the bigger person.

DEE

Maybe. Or maybe being the bigger person is going to allow him to ignore us and our Climate screams.

FACILITATOR

Is that why you didn't enjoy it?

DEE

I didn't say I didn't enjoy it. He didn't let me finish.
What I was saying was that normally I wouldn't stay interested.
But I think I did stay interested because I saw the movie differently.
You could see the story as this guy being taken hostage and having to play this sick game in order to not be tortured.
The way I saw it, it was more like him being arrested and being put on trial.

EVAN

What he's done isn't technically illegal.

DEE

That doesn't change the consequences.
(MORE)

DEE (cont'd)

If we had a better world, we'd have better laws.
And what this guy has been doing *would* be
technically illegal.

EVAN

We don't live in that world.

DEE

And people like him ensure we never change the
laws.

JASON

Still, how is this a trial?

DEE

Mr. Jenns even called it that.

JASON

There's no jury. Or judge for that matter.
Mr. Maxwell is more like a prosecutor.

DEE

There is no judge, because Mr. Jenns is his own
jury.
And when he ultimately refuses to help, that's
the verdict.
This is totally a trial.

GAIL

It's not really a fair trial.

DEE

Why isn't it?
They're giving him a chance to get out of it.

JASON

By threatening him.

DEE

Everyone who's on trial is threatened. That's
why you see so many innocent people making
plea deals.

GAIL

So that's his plea deal?

DEE

For what he's being accused of, he had the chance to get off easy. But he literally couldn't give up being a bad guy.

EVAN

Does that justify his punishment?

DEE

That's a philosophical question. Besides, they lock people up and take away their freedom for all kinds of stuff. In some countries they give drug dealers the death penalty.

JASON

It's not just philosophical; it's a moral question.

DEE

A pretty easy one if you ask me. We're talking about saving hundreds of millions of lives and preventing the suffering of even more.

EVAN

But we don't know it will work.

DEE

Just like you don't know whether someone going to prison is going to rehabilitate them. We don't make people serve time because we believe they're going to come out better people. We do it as a deterrent.

EVAN

How is this a deterrent if once they let him go and he actually does come across, no one is going to know that he was doing it under duress?

JASON

He's right. Deterrents only work before you commit the crime, or at least before you commit enough crimes to get arrested.

ELISE

That's what the movie is for.

GAIL

The movie is the deterrent?

DEE

It's better than actually doing it.

JASON

Then that definitely means the movie is a threat.

DEE

Not necessarily.

The movie is just illustrating a common-held belief that if you don't give people nonviolent options, all they're left with is violence.

JENNA

But is a movie enough?

DEE

Isn't that why we're here, in the focus group?

ELISE

If the movie isn't enough to make a difference, then what?

What do the other people who watch the movie do? Like not the rich people, but people like us?

EVAN

Not people *like* us. But us.
What do we do?

JASON

What we do is our business.

JENNA

Says the guy who identifies with Mr. Jenns.

JASON

I told you I don't identify with Mr. Jenns.

JENNA

Ok, says the guy who seems to be annoyed with the desperation of those trying to do something, when he won't do anything.

JASON

May I just remind you that you don't know anything about me?

EVAN

But are you that guy? Because if you're not willing to do anything, you might just be leaving it to people like Jenna who seem to be pretty ok with kidnapping people like Mr. Jenns, which may or may not mean people like you.

JENNA

I didn't say I was ok with kidnapping people.

EVAN

For someone intent on tying good old Jason here to Mr. Jenns, it's not hard to believe you identify with the hostage takers.

JENNA

One doesn't have anything to do with the other.

EVAN

But do you? Identify with the hostage takers?

JENNA

I sympathize with the desperation. But it's not something I would do.

EVAN

What if the movie is right? And that's what it would take?

If you're not willing to do what it takes, then you're leaving it to the people who are. Just like good old Jason.

And kind of like Mr. Jenns.

JENNA

So just because I'm not in agreement with their tactics, that makes me Mr. Jenns?

EVAN

No. It makes you you.
Just as full of shit as Jason.

JASON

Hey, watch it.

EVAN
Just - as full of shit as me.

ELISE
And who do you identify with, Mr. Troll?

EVAN
I identify with the hostage takers.

ELISE
So you believe violence is the answer.

EVAN
I didn't say that.
I identify with them because they're trolls.

DEE
How is that?

EVAN
They put this guy in an impossible situation.
Then when he finally is ready to give in and do
whatever they ask, it's not enough.

DEE
Maybe you're right.
Maybe *he's* not the one who needs convincing.
Maybe it's us.

GAIL
Convincing of what?

DEE
I don't know.
But convincing Mr. Jenns seems like asking for
permission.

ELISE
Not permission. Assistance.

DEE
People like Mr. Jenns don't assist. They give
orders.
Not because they're worthy of it. That's what
they've been trained to do.
They might as well be circus monkeys.

FACILITATOR

If I may jump in...

Did any of you care for or care about Mr. Jenns?

GAIL

I don't care about him in the sense of identifying with him, but I still care what happens to him.

ELISE

Me too. But I'm not sure it's in the way *you* mean.

I wanted Mr. Jenns and Mr. Maxwell to do the right thing. But even if they did do the right thing, I still wanted them to pay.

JASON

Really?

ELISE

I was thinking about it when Dee was talking about it being a trial. And you can even take Mr. Jenns helping them out of it altogether.

Just say there was some kind of breakthrough that comes along tomorrow and fixes Climate Change. Do we just forgive people like Mr. Jenns? Do they just get to go back to being greedy assholes?

GAIL

What does that have to do with the movie?

ELISE

I guess it has to do with whether or not you think that people like Mr. Jenns deserve some kind of punishment, even if it's just being scared really bad.

GAIL

They're torturing people in the movie.

ELISE

This is a guy who has more money than God and won't risk a dollar of it to save half the planet.

JASON

So what, there should be trials for the rich and powerful for just being big meanies?

ELISE

If you take someone's baby carriage and roll it down a hill toward a busy intersection--

EVAN

Oooo, another analogy.

ELISE

Dude, it's tired already.

FACILITATOR

Please continue.

ELISE

If you take somebody's baby carriage and roll it down the hill toward a busy intersection, but a good samaritan jumps out and stops it before the carriage rolls into traffic, is all forgiven? For you?

JASON

Mr. Jenns didn't cause Climate Change.

ELISE

He's enabling it.

JASON

I don't accept the premise.

ELISE

Ok, then say a woman loses control of a baby carriage and you're at the bottom of the hill and could easily stop it but you refrain. Is that not worth some accountability?

JASON

You're doing the same thing. You're assuming Mr. Jenns could stop Climate Change by himself.

ELISE

Ok, let's say there's no guarantee you could stop the carriage, but you could easily *try* to stop it by simply putting out your hand. But doing that would mean you dropping the scone you were enjoying.
And you choose the scone. Can a bystander at least slap the shit out of you?

EVAN

I definitely vote we slap him.

JENNA

Slaps for sure.

DEE

It's hard to argue against just a slap.

ELISE

Thank you.

EVAN

But that's not even the real analogy. The analogy is that there is a group of people who are going to try and stop the baby carriage, but you decide to trip a few of them and then try to convince a few more that there really is no baby carriage, and then convince the rest that the baby will definitely be ok going into the intersection. If we could slap you in the previous awful but much less awful scenario, what do you get for this one?

GAIL

Nothing. That's not the way things work. If we solve this without the help of people like Mr. Jenns, or even despite people like him, the most we can do is shame him.

JENNA

Then what if we don't solve it? And he's actively enabling that?

GAIL

I get what you're saying. But I don't think that's the world you want to live in.

JENNA

If he gets his way, some of us may not be living at all.

JASON

You're making it about him.

ELISE

That's because it is about him.

JASON

No, it's about us.

We absolutely have to find a solution. Which means we can't get distracted with who's to blame.

DEE

What if who's to blame is part of finding a solution?

GAIL

We still can't do anything more than shame them.

Solution or no solution.

ELISE

Then you might as well be forgiving them without them asking for it.

JASON

What do you want us to do? You started all this by saying what if we actually save ourselves. You want to kidnap the guy and torture him after we win?

JENNA

Depends on what winning means.

GAIL

What are you saying?

ELISE

If we avoid the worst, this time, but the system that got us here is still in place?

JENNA

And this guy is using all his power to keep that system in place?

GAIL

I can't believe what I'm hearing.

EVAN

Oh, come on. We're just talking about a movie.

JASON

But what if Mr. Jenns had helped? That's what you said before. That you wanted him to pay.

ELISE

Does finally hitting the brakes on the train count if half the cars have already gone over the cliff?

DEE

It's a good question.
Does helping now wash away his previous wrongdoing?

ELISE

Does he get some reduced sentence?

JASON

There is no sentence.

ELISE

I'm not saying he gets the death penalty.

GAIL

Being wrong is different than being a criminal.

EVAN

Not even jail? Not even probation?

JASON

If you don't like the laws, you work to change them.

JENNA

And who do you think is whispering in the ear of the lawmakers?

GAIL

I thought I was here to talk about a movie.

JENNA

We are talking about it.

GAIL

Well, *this* is not what I expected I'd be a part of.

A few seconds go by, no rebuttal.

FACILITATOR

Maybe we can switch gears.

I want everyone to be as fair as they can when answering this question.

After the conversation you've had thus far. Do you think the film is calling for violence or trying everything to avoid it?

DEE

If I had to say which way it leans, once you've thought about it, I really don't think it is.

JASON

Well, I do. I think it's definitely more on the side of violence than not.

GAIL

Me too.

ELISE

I'm with Dee. I think if you're willing to take it seriously and talk about what the movie is trying to accomplish, it's almost begging for us to be more creative in our actions. But creative without violence.

JENNA

I agree. You kind of have no choice but to ask yourself what will work, nonviolently.

FACILITATOR

What about you, Evan?

EVAN

I don't have to have an opinion. Seeing that I'm a nihilist who doesn't care about his own life or anyone else's.

JENNA

He said perhaps that's what you were. And it was just to make a point.

ELISE

Even trolls have opinions.

EVAN

True. But in this situation, mine doesn't matter. Neither does yours.

JASON

It doesn't matter if the movie is pushing violence or not pushing violence?

EVAN

The only thing that matters is if we're talking about it.
That's what the movie is pushing.

GAIL

And what happens if people watch it but don't talk about it?

EVAN

That's what's dangerous.

FACILITATOR

Very perceptive.

DEE

That's why you've just let us talk like this, isn't it?

FACILITATOR

The focus group is meant to gauge audience reaction.

ELISE

But doesn't it matter what comes out of the discussion?

FACILITATOR

It does, certainly.
But the film won't decide that, nor can it. Nor is
it meant to.
The film is merely the filmmakers' contribution
to a larger dialogue.

EVAN

Is that what they told you?

FACILITATOR

It was implied in the guidance provided me.

EVAN

But you don't know.
You're just here to facilitate the conversation.
For all you know, the filmmakers may want this
to *be* a blueprint.

JENNA

Or the exact opposite.

JASON

Either way, it's pretty obvious the movie could
be perceived as a threat.

DEE

Maybe it should.

JASON

You said it wasn't trying to push violence.

DEE

Maybe part of doing everything to avoid violence
includes the threat of violence.
I don't know.

FACILITATOR

None of us do.
But these are the kinds of questions the
filmmakers are hoping the audience will ask.
The kind of conversations the movie will
provoke.

GAIL

It feels like something more than that though.
More than just asking questions.

JASON

Like a call to action.

GAIL

Yeah, like a call to action. It feels like that.

FACILITATOR

What kind of action?

JASON

You tell us.

FACILITATOR

I can't. The movie has to tell you.

GAIL

And what if it *is* telling us to do what they're doing, in the movie?

DEE

It could. Or, like we were saying, it could tell you to do everything but that.

GAIL

Isn't that irresponsible? That much ambiguity?

EVAN

You don't think art has license?

GAIL

Is this art?

EVAN

Assume it is.

GAIL

It has license. But I don't know how much.

ELISE

Then how do you decide?
Art has always been crucial to resistance, to victory.

But only because of that license.
Art has always granted us more political protection than the soapbox.

(MORE)

ELISE (cont'd)

Is it really worth losing that protection, to provide a hypothetical extra layer of security to our murderers?

JASON

Just calling them murderers.
It's that language that nurtures violence.

ELISE

Which violence is that? The murder or the resistance to murder?
Even if you absolve the actors within our system, then you have to concede the system itself is murderous.
Is that system worth more protection than the promise of art?

GAIL

But is this art?
What are the filmmakers really trying to do here?

ELISE

They're doing what we're all doing. Trying not to get murdered.

JENNA

Why are you afraid for these people? The powerful?
They're not afraid.
The people we're up against don't fear a film leading to violence.
They fear a film leading to non-violent mass mobilization.

GAIL

I just think there's a possibility the filmmakers *are* shooting for violence, and this film could lead to it.

EVAN

You don't know if it won't actually take violence.

GAIL

Just like they don't know it will.

EVAN

Are you saying that a film like this loses its status as art once it becomes effective?

GAIL

I'm not saying that; I'm asking if it's art to begin with. If it could lead to this type of violence. Or is it something else? Something wrong?

EVAN

Can't art be wrong?

ELISE

There is no right or wrong with art.

GAIL

But there is right or wrong with this.

JENNA

Maybe you've got a point.
Or maybe those questions are too much of a privilege, right now.

DEE

He said that's what the filmmakers do want.
Questions.

ELISE

But what kinds of questions?

JASON

We know what kinds of questions.

DEE

What kind depends on the person watching.

JASON

Then what good is the movie?

DEE

It's only good if it gets them to ask.

GAIL

Ask what?

EVAN

Are you saying certain questions are off limits?

GAIL

If they could lead to violence.

ELISE

But if we can't know that, but we do know how much is at stake, wouldn't we err on the side of questioning versus not questioning?

GAIL

And if something bad happens?

FACILITATOR

You're asking - does it make it irresponsible, after the fact, to have released the film?

GAIL

I'm asking - does it make you *responsible*, after the fact?

FACILITATOR

The question is not for me. It's for you.

JASON

How so?

FACILITATOR

What if I told you that you're not here to improve upon the film, but rather to help decide whether it should be released at all? As it is right now, with no changes, should the filmmakers release this film?

EVAN

Ahhh! Now that's a question.

ELISE

Is that a real option?

FACILITATOR

It's always an option.

GAIL

Why would you make a film and then not release it?

EVAN

That's not the point of the question.

JENNA

But didn't we already answer this? When he asked us whether the film was encouraging violence?

EVAN

That's a different question.
What he's asking is: If the film could even possibly give the wrong ideas to people, should it be released?
Or, even with those wrong ideas out there, is it still worth releasing if it could possibly give the right ideas to people?

JASON

Do we even know what the right ideas are?

ELISE

I would think it's finding whatever will work nonviolently to save us.

EVAN

What if nothing will work nonviolently?
Wouldn't wasting your time on nonviolence be the wrong ideas?
And if something will only work violently, but it *will* work. Then wouldn't those be the right ideas?

JASON

You can't let the end justify the means.

DEE

It's not that simple.
I don't believe in violence either. But if the means are a handful of people versus the end of human life on the planet?
It's just not that simple.

JASON

I'll let you take that up with God.

ELISE

You think it's clear what God would want you to do in this situation?

JASON

You think God would want you to use violence?

ELISE

If there's a God, I would think--

EVAN

God, no God, who cares?
Should this film be released?

DEE

What are the pros and cons of each?

GAIL

It doesn't matter about the pros, it only matters about the cons.
What's the worst that could happen if it gets released, and the worst that could happen if it doesn't?

JENNA

Maybe the pros do matter. What's the best that could happen if it gets released?

GAIL

You can't know that.

DEE

You can't know about the cons either. And if we don't even know what the right message is, we probably can't be sure what the pros and cons are either.

EVAN

Enough with the stalling. We have to make a decision.
Should this film get released? Yes or no.

JASON

Well, on a purely First Amendment basis--

EVAN

To hell with the First Amendment. Should it get released?

(MORE)

EVAN (cont'd)

If there was no First Amendment and this kind of movie was banned, just for the kinds of worries we've been talking about, should it get released?

JENNA

You mean like distributed underground?

EVAN

However.

Whatever situation you want to imagine, should a film like this get released?

GAIL

It depends on how well the audience is equipped to deal with the themes in the film.

EVAN

But we don't know that, and the film is not changing. Do we still release it?

DEE

Maybe there's a warning that can be--

EVAN

No warning. As is, do we release this film or not?

JASON

It's not our decision.

EVAN

It could be.

Any of us could have come up with the idea for this film. And for all we know, it might catch fire and spark a national conversation that leads to change we could have never predicted.

If you believed that conversation was possible, but it would require art that shocks us out of our current comfortable laments over Climate Change. Would you make this film? Would you release it?

GAIL

Knowing the potential downside? No.

DEE

Well, I would.

ELISE

Me too.

JENNA

I would too.

EVAN

Jason?

JASON

I wouldn't make a movie like this myself, but I wouldn't tell someone they couldn't release it. Based purely on grounds of freedom of speech.

EVAN

Well, now you're just as guilty as the filmmakers. All of you except Gail. The only thing she's guilty of is being here.

GAIL

What do you mean guilty?

EVAN

You can think this is a focus group all you want. But, as far as the filmmakers are concerned, we might as well be professional consultants.

JENNA

Meaning what?

EVAN

We're just as culpable.

FACILITATOR

In what way do you think anyone is culpable here?

EVAN

Are you serious? You know what it looks like out there. Aren't you worried that a film like this will get you death threats or maybe even have you targeted by somebody?

FACILITATOR

Do you mean me personally or the filmmakers?

EVAN

Whichever. The filmmakers for sure. But people could say that you're just as guilty for helping make the film better with these focus groups.

FACILITATOR

I guess it depends on how much we're all devoted to satire.

GAIL

I don't get it.

FACILITATOR

At the heart of satire is irony. Wouldn't it be ironic if one of the people this film was actually trying to save were to get so upset about the political implications that they sought out violence against the filmmakers?

ELISE

It's like that weather dude at that Midwestern news station. He kept talking about Climate Change and trying to educate people, and they like ran him out of town for it.

JENNA

He wasn't even an activist.

FACILITATOR

Do you think this film is a form of activism?

JENNA

Even if it's not, Evan's right. If people think what you're doing is out of line, they could go off anyway.

FACILITATOR

I'm asking you, here in the group. Do you all think this film is a form of activism?

DEE

Not really. It might be a vague call to action, like Jason said. But it's not really doing the thing. It's trying to get us to do the thing. Whatever that is.

FACILITATOR
So it's not activism, it's organizing?

ELISE
Is it organizing or is it mobilizing?

GAIL
What's the difference?

JENNA
Mobilizing is getting people who are already committed to an issue to act. Organizing is working to make them care enough to commit.

EVAN
You know that's academic. I asked if it would put him and the filmmakers in danger.

DEE
And he said it depends on how much he was devoted to satire.

FACILITATOR
No. I said how much we're all devoted to satire.

GAIL
Meaning what?

EVAN
Meaning it's not him, or the filmmakers. It's us too.

JASON
How is it us?
We're just here to talk about whether it's a good movie or not.
That's all I signed up for.

GAIL
That's all a focus group is. We're not professionals, or consultants.

EVAN

Focus groups are used to improve upon a movie. Assume something you say helps the filmmakers make the movie better, but the result of it being a better movie means it inspires people to do the wrong thing.

JASON

You said it's supposed to be art.

EVAN

And Gail said it wasn't. You both said it was like propaganda. And you both feared it could lead to violence.

GAIL

What are you saying?

EVAN

You both continued participating. You both are a part of this film now. And if something does happen--

GAIL

You wait just a minute. I did not and will not--

ELISE

Gail, he's trolling us again. Can't you see that?

EVAN

Then what about you? Are you ok with your part in this if the movie inspires something awful to happen?

ELISE

I said that I thought it was a case for nonviolence.

EVAN

That doesn't mean you're right.

ELISE

My intentions are to contribute to nonviolent solutions.

EVAN

You're smarter than that.
You can pull intentions out your ass however
and whenever it suits you. What matters is what
you can reasonably expect.

ELISE

And I said the movie is meant to inspire
nonviolence.

EVAN

Those are *intentions*. It's not what it's meant to
inspire. What *will* it inspire?
That's why you voted nonviolence, isn't it?

JENNA

I voted nonviolence too. So what?

EVAN

So what - is you, Elise, and Dee voted
nonviolence for what you *hoped* the movie
would do. Those are intentions.
But Gail and Jason voted violence because that's
what they *feared* it would do. Those are
expectations.

JENNA

I don't know what that's supposed to prove.

EVAN

It proves that Gail and Jason are more honest
than you.
You want Mr. Jenns and Mr. Maxwell, and all
their buddies, to get their comeuppance. But
you want to cover your ass if it goes too far.
If you want violence, you should say it.

ELISE

I didn't say I wanted violence, because I don't.

EVAN

But you think violence may be part of the
solution.

ELISE

Anything could be *part* of the solution. But I
still believe it could be avoided.

EVAN

But you're not as afraid of it being utilized as Gail or Jason.

DEE

So we're the only ones with our hands dirty?
Like we're not already in a whirlwind of violence?

EVAN

Now, see, at least she's willing to admit it.

JENNA

Well, if I remember right, you didn't answer at all.

FACILITATOR

That's right.
You didn't answer.
Is this film calling for violence? Or everything but violence?

EVAN

I didn't answer because there's a more interesting question.
What are *we* calling for? Violence? Some violence? Just a little violence? Or no violence ever ever ever?
We know Gail and Jason aren't.
But Dee, Jenna, and Elise are less convincing, considering what they've said here.

JASON

Hold on now, that's not what freedom of speech is all about.
You can't judge them entertaining certain ideas for the sake of debate. Just like you can't judge Gail and I for staying part of the conversation.

JENNA

And you still haven't answered.
Would you call for violence?

EVAN

Of course I would. I'm a troll.

GAIL

Doesn't that put *you* in danger?

EVAN

That's the beauty of being a troll. I can always say I was just joking.

Just like Dee, Jenna, and Elise can say they were just entertaining certain ideas for the sake of debate.

We're all trolls here. Engaging with this potentially volatile film, thinking that no one will ever know who we are. We might as well be anonymous.

JASON

We just signed up for the focus group. We didn't even know what the movie was about.

EVAN

But you're here now. And now that you know what the film is about, and now that you've been a part of this conversation, you can't ever go back.

GAIL

Can you please stop him?

DEE

Yes, please. You said it would be unorthodox, but this is ridiculous.

FACILITATOR

I would stop him, but I think he's just about to get it.

EVAN

And what do I not get?

FACILITATOR

The other reason why they're like you. A troll. They may not be the know-it-all nihilist that you are.

But they're definitely not taking it seriously enough.

ELISE

What are we not taking seriously?

FACILITATOR

Are you going to leave here and kidnap a rich person?

ELISE

No.

FACILITATOR

Are any of you?
No.

JASON

If the film gets seen by enough people, someone could.

FACILITATOR

I'm not talking about someone. I'm talking about you.

DEE

None of us are going to do that.

FACILITATOR

Then what are you going to do?

JENNA

Isn't that the point of the movie? That we don't know what *to* do?

FACILITATOR

But if you did know, would you do it?

GAIL

You can't know.

FACILITATOR

But would you still do it anyway?

GAIL

I don't understand.

FACILITATOR

Do all of you understand the stakes of the Climate Change conversation?

ELISE

I think we do.

FACILITATOR

Then, with that knowledge, to prevent the worst from happening, will you do whatever it takes, without knowing what it will take?
Or, because you don't know what it will take, you'll do nothing?

JENNA

Not knowing what it will take doesn't mean we'll do nothing.

FACILITATOR

True. But it's pretty safe to assume you won't do what it takes.

ELISE

How do you know we're not already doing all we can?

FACILITATOR

That's not the same thing.
And even if it was, you're not doing that. Even though you all agree you know the stakes.

DEE

How are we supposed to do - what we don't know?
I understand the movie is supposed to get us to ask that question. But asking is not the same as knowing.

FACILITATOR

And asking means nothing if you're not committed to whatever answer you find.

JASON

It also means nothing if you can't know whether the answer was right until after you've tried.

FACILITATOR

Why do you keep insisting you don't know?

JENNA

Because we don't know.

FACILITATOR

Well, then I'll make it easy for you. Just answer one question.

If this could work, would it be worth doing?

If all it took to turn the tide socially, politically, was for a number of truly terrible people to be tortured. And you were tasked with torturing just one of those truly terrible people.

But by doing this, you could preempt the suffering and death of hundreds of millions to come. Would you sacrifice this one awful person? To save generations of good people, of innocent people? Would you sacrifice one guilty person?

EVAN

Mmm, I like this. I like this a lot.

Who's going to answer first? Should we do Eenie Meenie Minie Mo?

GAIL

This isn't ok.

EVAN

Then just answer.

JENNA

It's not that easy.

EVAN

What's not easy about it?

JENNA

Obviously, the moral wager seems clear.

EVAN

Then you are a yes.

JENNA

That's if you don't have to do it.

As much as I hate Mr. Jenns, I don't think I could actually be the one to do that to someone.

EVAN

Then you're a no.

Who's next?

JASON
I'm with Gail. This stuff, what you're doing here, is not ok.

EVAN
Does that mean you're on the fence?

JASON
Of course I'm not on the fence.

EVAN
Then what's your answer?

JASON
No.
I'm not going to torture anyone.

EVAN
Even if it saves all those people?

JASON
That's not a decision for me to make.

GAIL
Me either. I couldn't do it either.

EVAN
So three no votes.
What about you, Dee?

DEE
The answer doesn't matter. We could say anything in the moment, and it doesn't mean anything.

EVAN
Then go ahead and say it. If it doesn't mean anything.
In this moment, what's your answer?

DEE
I said before it was pretty easy.
If we're really talking about saving hundreds of millions from what they believe Climate Change is going to do, and it would really work. Then yes. I would do it.

EVAN

We have a winner.
Our hero, stepping up when no one else would.
What about you, Elise? Are you gonna show a
little backbone and do what it takes? Or are you
gonna punk out like the rest of them?

JASON

I didn't punk out on anything.

EVAN

Excuse me. Are you going to be immaculate-
hearted, God-fearing pacifists like Jesus and
Jason and Jenna and Gail?
Or are you going to be a badass like Dee?

ELISE

I said I was for nonviolence.

EVAN

But?

ELISE

But if you could somehow know for sure. I
don't see how you could be against the trade.

EVAN

So two yes and three no.

DEE

It's only a yes if it were a certainty.

EVAN

But it is a yes. You and Elise are officially ready to
put the hurt on some poor - excuse me, rich but
unsuspecting - Mr. Jenns out there.

JENNA

Well, what about you, asshole?
What's your vote?

EVAN

Isn't it obvious? I'd gladly go with the torture.
After all, I'm a troll.

GAIL

Because you're a troll, or because you want to save the people?

EVAN

I don't care about the people. They can all get swallowed up by a Climate Change black hole as far as I'm concerned.
In fact, I'd just as soon torture one of them.

JENNA

You don't mean that.

EVAN

Just like I'd torture any of you.

GAIL

She's right. You can't mean that.

EVAN

Oh, I can. And I do.
If you're going to be a troll, you can't just put the tip in.
You gotta be down to fuck.

ELISE

You're full of shit.

EVAN

Then let me restate my answer. I wouldn't just torture one of them. I'd torture as many as I could.
But I'd torture you first.

FACILITATOR

That settles it then.
Three for. Three against.

JASON

What does it matter?

FACILITATOR

It matters for what comes next.

EVAN

Next?
How much better can it get than this?

FACILITATOR

I'm glad you asked that, Evan.

The video and audio for Evan change to MUTE.

FACILITATOR (cont'd)

Neither myself nor the filmmakers are naive enough to believe this movie is going to be enough.

Even if it were to shake the powerful when they watch it, they can all just tell themselves it's fiction.

But if we can show the monsters most responsible for the next few years of Climate policy that three out of six random people were willing to watch someone who doesn't have that kind of power be hurt, be tortured? Then they'll know.

They're definitely in trouble.

GAIL

What are you talking about?

FACILITATOR

It's the name of the film. We have to get - their attention.

ELISE

Dude, what are you saying?

DEE

This focus group...

It isn't for the filmmakers. It's for the Mr. Jennses.

JASON

Are you saying you're going to let other people see this?

FACILITATOR

Not just anyone.
We have a list.

JENNA

You've got to be kidding.

GAIL

This has gone way far enough.

JASON

You got that right.

I don't know what kind of game you're playing here, but I sure as heck ain't playing anymore.

ELISE

It's ok.

GAIL

What do you mean, it's ok?

ELISE

Maybe he's right. Half of us did say that we would be ok with watching those greedy fucks get theirs.

Maybe they need to see that. We're not in a movie. We're real people. Maybe they need to know that real people would be ok with it.

DEE

It won't be effective.

We agreed we would make the trade if we knew it would work.

But we don't know. And we're not really doing it.

FACILITATOR

That's where our friend Evan comes in.

JENNA

What does that mean? Where did Evan even go?

FACILITATOR

It's true Evan told us he was a troll when he signed up to be part of the focus group. He actually went to great pains to illustrate just how despicable his attitudes were.

I guess he wanted to see if we would really take on someone that loathsome.

What he didn't know is that he was exactly who we were looking for.

Someone who has no regard for human life. By his own admission to us, not even his own.

JENNA
What the fuck is going on here?

Evan's video and audio UNMUTE.

Evan is tied to his chair with tape over his mouth. He struggles, screaming through his tape.

GAIL
Oh my God.

JASON
Uhh uhh, no. This ain't happening.

JENNA
Is this some kind of sick joke?

FACILITATOR
We needed someone who was random, with no real power. But we didn't want someone who was innocent either. This way, Evan gets to prove how much of a troll he is. And Elise and Dee get to prove how serious they were.

DEE
That's not what I said. That's not what I did.

JASON
Let him go right now, or I'm calling the police.

FACILITATOR
You, Gail, and Jenna don't have to watch. But if you call the police, we'll kill him.
As it stands, he's only going to be tortured. And seeing that it's about to begin, there's nothing you can really do about that.
But you can make it worse. I assume by your answers, you don't want that.

DEE
We can't just look away.

FACILITATOR
I didn't say you. You and Elise *have* to watch. You said you would do it. And that means you have to know it really happened.
You have to bear witness.

JENNA
This is fucking crazy.

GAIL
You can't do this.

JASON
Don't do it, y'all. I'm begging you.

Jason, Gail, and Jenna's mics are all MUTED.

They are seen to be yelling for the rest of the SCENE.

FACILITATOR
The only people that matter are the ones who voted yes.

DEE
You can't make us watch.

FACILITATOR
If you don't watch, we kill him. Same as if the other three call the police, we kill him. The only way our little troll friend walks away from this alive is if you can prove to our powerful friends that their goose is not at all safe from being cooked.

DEE
You're going to go to prison for this.

FACILITATOR
That's a safe assumption. Someone's got to. But once the people on our list see this recording and realize that we're going to leak it online, along with their names and addresses, then it's up to them to decide whether things can go along business as usual. That no one else is going to get any bright ideas.

DEE
You can't believe this is going to work.

FACILITATOR
Working, in this scenario, is a relative term. What it most definitely will do is get their attention.

DEE

And what if none of us would have said yes?

FACILITATOR

Do you think you're the only focus group? Or the first one?

You're actually the ninth. And we have more lined up after you.

You're right though, to be suspicious of just one focus group video working. But so far, we've got six winners - including you. That's quite a ratio. To folks who are attuned to gambling in the stock market, those are not going to be odds you want to play around with.

DEE

Well, I take mine back then.

FACILITATOR

You can't take it back. He's getting tortured one way or the other.

DEE

That may be. But I still take it back.

And if you really are recording this, that's got to count that we took it back.

FACILITATOR

I understand what you're doing. Two other groups tried to do the same thing.

You think if you all take it back, then we won't torture Evan.

But your initial acquiescence is only to show that random people *would* support this.

By still going forward with the torture, without your approval, we show them that there's still people who *are* willing to *do* this.

And while your backing out may give comfort to the members on our list, it's a big world out there. And not everyone is going to be as sympathetic to our Climate Change trolls.

DEE

What about Evan? What about the others you've tortured? And are going to torture? Don't they matter?

FACILITATOR

They matter a lot.
In fact, they're getting the greatest reward of all.
Knowing that they sacrificed for a good cause.
Which is so deliciously ironic, because they're all
trolls. And none of them would lift a finger to
save anyone of us.

DEE

If you've got the other videos already, you don't
need ours.

FACILITATOR

As the cliché goes, every little bit helps.

DEE

Please, I'm begging you. Don't do this.

FACILITATOR

To Evan? Or to you?
Or to the Mr. Jennses on our list?

DEE

To anyone. This is wrong.

FACILITATOR

You said, and I quote, "A pretty easy one if you
ask me. We're talking about saving hundreds of
millions of lives and preventing the suffering of
even more." You said it was a deterrent. Elise said
it too.

DEE

I also said the movie was actually better than
doing it.

FACILITATOR

I think we know what you meant.
Enough so that you're one of the three yeses.

DEE

I didn't know that you were really going--

FACILITATOR

If you want to take it back, take it back.
But you don't get to act like you didn't say yes.

DEE

Then I take it back.

FACILITATOR

Ok. Noted.

And what about you, Elise? You said the suffering was violence in the abstract. And that Mr. Maxwell's torture was him finally being able to see the violence he had caused and the real people who will suffer from his decisions.

Well, this is you seeing the reality of *your* answer. And the real person who is going to suffer.

DEE

She didn't know you were going to use her words against her.

FACILITATOR

You mean the word yes?

ELISE

I don't believe you.

FACILITATOR

What don't you believe?

ELISE

Any of this.

I don't believe any of this is real.

Evan's not a troll. He's a facilitator, like you.

FACILITATOR

Interesting. You're the second person that has come to that rationalization.

What makes you think that?

ELISE

The way he acted. So cold, so brazen.

Even a troll wouldn't do that.

FACILITATOR

Just like people wouldn't allow Climate Change to decimate our planet?

Think about this. You don't believe someone would really act like Evan.

But what does that say about me, and the filmmakers?

(MORE)

FACILITATOR(cont'd)

To traumatize you like this would mean the joke is on you, and not Mr. Jenns.

ELISE

It's a good setup. I'll give you that.
But I don't believe you. The movie is about finding a nonviolent solution.
This is not that.

FACILITATOR

The movie is about whatever you make of it.

ELISE

And I say it's about nonviolence.

FACILITATOR

Does that mean your yes stands?

ELISE

If I take back my yes, I can't call your bluff.

FACILITATOR

But I most definitely can call yours.

ELISE

You said you were going to do it anyway.
If you're really going to go ahead with this either way, why would I take back my yes?

FACILITATOR

You take back your yes because you have to watch. Just like Dee still has to watch.

DEE

But I'm not a yes anymore. I--

Dee is MUTED.

FACILITATOR

As I was saying, you have to watch or else we kill him.

ELISE

But why?
Assuming I believe this is still real. Why would we still have to watch if we take back our yeses?

FACILITATOR

The same reason why you're flirting with not taking back your yes.
If I allow you to look away like Jenna, Jason, and Gail, you won't see that it's real. That the violence is real. And that Evan is getting punished.
Besides, you had a choice before. When you were like Mr. Jenns. And the consequences of your actions didn't seem real. And you let the violence go forward.

ELISE

So if the violence is real and I look away, I can still believe it was fake.

FACILITATOR

If you believe the violence is fake, you can just look away. And then we'll kill Evan.

ELISE

And how would I know?

FACILITATOR

Because you'll look.
You may be sure enough to look away. But you won't stay sure.

ELISE

Then why take back my yes at all?
If you're not bluffing, and Evan is going to, at the least, get tortured, then why not keep my yes, and send a message to the people on your list?

FACILITATOR

Not that I'm trying to sway you one way or the other, but keeping your yes still makes you responsible for Evan's punishment. If you say no, it's totally on us. And on him.
But you can walk away knowing what happened to him was not your call.

ELISE

I still think you're bluffing.

FACILITATOR

You call a bluff in a poker game, Elise. This is not a poker game.

Elise thinks.

FACILITATOR (cont'd)

Once you do this, you can't go back.

ELISE

But if I can't do it, does that mean I'm not willing to do what it takes to save us all? If this is all the power I have, right now. And I can't make this trade. Wouldn't that make me just like Mr. Jenns?

FACILITATOR

Mr. Jenns has already caused his share of violence.

ELISE

Haven't I as well?
You said it yourself. I'm not doing what it takes. I'm not even doing all I can.

FACILITATOR

This is what we think it will take. If you think it will take something else, then you have the free will to go do that. Just like you have the free will to take back your yes. But you should understand two things. First, you're not going to leave here and do what it takes. You may leave here and become more active. You may even spend all your free time devoted to this one issue. Granting all of that, it's still not going to be enough. You know that. But second, you must *also* know. This. Is real. We are about to hurt Evan in a way that you would have to live with for the rest of your life. That can be ours only. Or it can be yours as well. But it is most certainly about to happen.

Elise looks at the SCREEN and sees the other Focus Group members silently pleading with her to say no, as tears stream down Evan's face.

ELISE

This isn't real. If I say no, the joke *is* going to be on us.

FACILITATOR

I'm telling you, Elise. Whatever you decide, you should not make it on that wager.

ELISE

Promise me this is real.

FACILITATOR

I. Promise you.

ELISE

All right.

I take it back.

You said the movie is whatever I make of it.

Whether this focus group is real or not, I still believe the movie is about a nonviolent solution. And I think that means I do really still believe in nonviolence.

So I take my yes back.

FACILITATOR

Ok. Noted.

But remember. If he gets to live, you have to watch.

Both of you. Every second.

That's the deal.

ELISE

Ok.

FACILITATOR

Dee?

Dee reluctantly nods.

FACILITATOR(cont'd)

Well then.

Let's begin.

CAPTION over BLACK reads:

November 17, 2101
Book Club - Uruguay

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Meeting room of the local library.

Five friends in their early twenties, GIMENA, THIAGO, BELEN, LUCIA, and PACHI, lean back in their seats, discussing *Do We Have Your Attention* .

Translated from Spanish.

BELEN

I understand that the book, or I guess the script, is from a time when they didn't know how bad it was actually going to get. But, even with that in mind, it was really hard for me not to be resentful of the focus group people's lackadaisical attitude.

LUCIA

I was resentful too. But I was resentful because they *did* know. I've read up on this. The scientists at the time were sending out reports and warnings like every six months, with the predictions getting worse and worse. And even those scientists couldn't see where it was really going.

THIAGO

From what I've read, people weren't paying attention to the scientists. It wasn't even in their top political concerns.

GIMENA

How is that possible?

THIAGO

You saw what happened when the second wave of pandemics came through. The Americans didn't have the greatest track record.

PACHI

You really believe they were going to take it as seriously as we do?

GIMENA

Not as much as we do, obviously. But if they did have the facts in front of them, I don't understand how they only took it as seriously as they did.

BELEN

Did it not bother you?

PACHI

Are you kidding? It's beyond maddening. With all we know from history, I still had a hard time believing the characters were going to act this way. But I think that's the power of it. In showing how little thought our generations were given.

With that acknowledged, the point of the book *I think*, at least for us - decades since, is not to be mad, but to understand how such a threat can be dismissed.

LUCIA

They don't deserve understanding.

PACHI

It's not about what they deserve, it's about what we deserve.

I think you can definitely hate-read something like this. But what good does it do? I'd much rather read it for the lessons.

THIAGO

Because they're humans just like us.

PACHI

That's right. These were people with the same blood, body, and brains as us.

BELEN

So what's the lesson we're supposed to take?

PACHI

I'm not sure if I can even put it into words. But, for instance, did anyone feel claustrophobic during the focus group?

GIMENA

I did for sure. I felt like I was trapped online, inside these boxes, with this group of idiots.

THIAGO

I don't know if I felt claustrophobic, but I definitely felt a little too close. As I was reading it, it's like I could see them on the screen. Like a little too good.

LUCIA

Yeah. It was almost easier to imagine them, and what they looked like talking, than what the hostage scene looked like.

BELEN

That's because the focus group was a simple setting. The hostage scene was an actual location with more than two dimensions.

PACHI

That's exactly what I'm saying. The whole focus group discussion, the members of the focus group. If you imagine them on screen, talking, it was literally two dimensional.

GIMENA

Where the setup with Mr. Jenns and Mr. Maxwell was three dimensional.

LUCIA

There was more depth.

PACHI

So was the author saying that the focus group members *didn't* have enough depth, or that they *couldn't* have that depth because of the parameters placed upon them?

GIMENA

You mean like the screen is a metaphor for the box *they* were put in?

PACHI

I guess so. Like maybe it wasn't their fault they were so shortsighted.

BELEN

Are you saying we're supposed to feel sorry for them? After everything they let happen?

PACHI

You don't have to feel sorry for them. But you should at least be clear about what their circumstances were.

LUCIA

Why? They didn't care about what our circumstances were going to be.

PACHI

If you don't care about theirs, why should they care about yours?

LUCIA

Because we didn't cause their circumstances. They caused ours.

PACHI

You're assuming they knew what would happen. I don't believe they did.

LUCIA

They should have known. They had the information.

PACHI

That's not the way life works. No one thinks things will really get that bad, until they do.

THIAGO

It also ignores Mr. Jenns and his friends and how much there was going on to not make them believe it would get this bad.

GIMENA

Stuck in the box.

BELEN

Then why did I feel more frustrated watching the focus group?

(MORE)

BELEN (cont'd)

As tense as the scenes were in the first half of the book, I felt less hatred listening to Mr. Jenns make excuses than I did hearing members of the focus group say he shouldn't be harmed.

LUCIA

Mr. Jenns at least had incentive to not do anything. Even if it was selfish, it was still a reason. The fools in this focus group are virtually apathetic.

THIAGO

Apathetic or oblivious? There's a difference.

LUCIA

They're both.

THIAGO

They're only that way because of Mr. Jenns.

LUCIA

That's not true. They're not robots. They're responsible for their actions, no matter what box Mr. Jenns put them in.

GIMENA

But aren't we doing the same thing? We're talking more about the focus group than we are about the hostage situation. We're placing our anger more on them than Mr. Jenns.

BELEN

That's because they lost the plot. Without the twist at the end, the entire focus group session amounts to nothing.

LUCIA

Mr. Jenns at least acknowledged his agency.

PACHI

So who does that make the villain? Mr. Jenns or the morons in the focus group?

GIMENA

I want to say Mr. Jenns, because he has the power. But if the focus group represents society, then they're the ones who allow him that power.

THIAGO

It's not as easy as just hating one or the other.
They're all guilty.

PACHI

What about the hostage takers? Did anyone feel
any animosity toward them?

BELEN

Not in the least. They're the only ones at least
trying to do something different.

LUCIA

It's true. Even the ones in the focus group that
cared the most about Climate Change still
couldn't bring themselves to seriously consider
violence. And definitely not commit to it.

BELEN

Some couldn't take the appearance of violence.
The chance of it.

THIAGO

It's a bizarre account. It's like watching a movie
about everyday life in Weimar Germany, right
before the rise of Hitler. When they should have
seen the warning signs.

GIMENA

It's funny you say that. I kept thinking
throughout the script about how I've heard
about university philosophy classes in the past
posing the question: If you had a time machine
and could go back and kill Hitler before he took
power, would you do it? And how for most
people back then, just like for us now, that seems
like such an easy answer. To save tens of millions
of lives, Hitler and a handful of others is not
even a question.

THIAGO

Which is appropriate too because I think there's
as much time between us and them as there
would have been between them and Hitler.

LUCIA

I think that's right. This was written around 2021. So about 80 years in between both.

BELEN

Does anyone in here think they wouldn't have done what the hostage takers did?

No one protests.

PACHI

We could say that now. But we don't know what we would have done back then. That was a long time ago. My grandfather told me that his father described the way people viewed Climate Change during that time. It's not too far off from the way the characters are in the book.

GIMENA

It doesn't really matter. It's too late now anyway.

LUCIA

I would have taken Mr. Jenns hostage, no doubt. But I also think it would be nice to give the focus group members a taste of what our people were going to have to go through. And not just torturing some troll. Like... a real taste.

BELEN

A little time machine revenge.

LUCIA

At the time, it wouldn't have been revenge. It would have been a tactic.

GIMENA

But I don't think the author thought people at the time were going to do enough to save us.

BELEN

So revenge in advance.

THIAGO

But we don't believe in revenge.

LUCIA

Not even for them?

THIAGO

Well, maybe.

GIMENA

We could just say we were taking the last resort
that no one ever took.

PACHI

It's that frustration and almost hatred inducing
back and forth that I liked the most.
To end with the focus group was both
infuriating and perfect at the same time.
I was imagining reading it like someone
watching this historical moment in real time but
from afar. But not like a person. Like a Martian
watching.
From afar, you would be expecting this big save-
the-day moment to come at the end. When all
you really get is this boring, inane focus group
that ends in doom.

BELEN

If the doom was just fiction. You can't look back
and be happy with a book like this.

PACHI

It's not about being happy. It's about seeing
what you don't want to see. And people at the
time did not want to see this.

GIMENA

Then what do we not want to see?

THIAGO

That they're our ancestors.

PACHI

Our family.

A moment, reflecting on this thought.

GIMENA

I have a question about format.
Why a screenplay?

LUCIA

It was originally supposed to be a movie. But the writer couldn't get enough interest to get it made.

BELEN

Then why leave it that way?

THIAGO

I think leaving it that way was smart. It almost gave it this surreal feeling, at least during the focus group. Like you couldn't believe it was real. Or hinting that maybe it was something more than that.

GIMENA

Which goes along with the trick ending.

BELEN

So why not just have the focus group end, and that be it? If the whole point was the banal evil in their apathy, then why not just let that be? Why scare them with torturing the troll?

THIAGO

To get people's attention. "Do we have your attention?"

GIMENA

That's cheesy.

LUCIA

And it didn't even get made.

PACHI

It *was* a pretty big book.

LUCIA

Not at the time. It became a cult classic decades later.

BELEN

Decades too late.

LUCIA

When it was initially released, it went nowhere.

PACHI

That's what's perfect about it becoming a cult classic. The same people that let this happen are the same people that couldn't be bothered with a book like this.

The same movie studios that couldn't be bothered to make the movie.

LUCIA

Maybe it was too real.

BELEN

Maybe they saw it as insulting.

GIMENA

No, it was definitely the violence.

THIAGO

Maybe it was the explication. Maybe critics thought it was infantilizing readers by commenting on all the aspects of the hostage scene during the focus group.

BELEN

So insulting in a different way.

PACHI

But that makes it even more perfect. It's like the author was telling people not to waste their time with deciphering, or even critiquing, the story setup.

LUCIA

Just get out there and do something.

GIMENA

And here we are, 80 years later in a book club. Doing just that. Deciphering. Critiquing.

THIAGO

We're the only ones with the right to.

CAPTION over BLACK reads:

Questioning

Los Angeles - 2026

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT smiles at DANI RAMIREZ, a 46-year-old writer.

Dani pulls her phone out and opens an app.

DANI

I'm recording.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You look irritated.

DANI

I'm trying to wrap my head around why I'm here.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You're free to go. You're not being arrested. We're just asking you a few questions.

DANI

No, I think I'd like to hear these questions you have to ask.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Good then. We can start with why you felt the need to review *Do We Have Your Attention*.

DANI

I reviewed the film because that's my job. I review films. Why wouldn't I review it?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

A movie that wasn't going to be shown anywhere?

DANI

That makes the review even more valuable. And I'm not the one who piqued people's interest in the film. Banning it did that.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

How did you see the film?

DANI

I traveled outside the country to view it. To one of the many countries that apparently has more freedoms than we do now.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Still, you wrote about it in this country, for an American publication.

DANI

Which is not against the law. Nor is it unethical. If anything, it was more journalistic than straight review. Not that a simple review wouldn't be covered under the First Amendment.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You don't think writing a review of the film comes off as trying to get pressure put on the government to allow its release?

DANI

If only I were that political in my reviews. I wrote the piece because I thought it was important to address people's curiosity about the film. Did you even read the review?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

I did.

DANI

Then you know it wasn't favorable by any stretch of the imagination.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

It wasn't favorable because you thought it should have ditched the focus group and the book club scene and expanded upon the hostage setting.

DANI

I would think you'd be thrilled over that. From what I understand, it wasn't banned for the first part. It was banned because of the last part, the future book club meeting.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

It was banned for the combination of those scenes.

DANI

Don't you think the focus group scene was meant to disarm those sentiments?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

The focus group was there to be ridiculed. To suggest how weak and shortsighted we are.

DANI

Or to show that it's not as easy to get people to agree on what needs to be done. You do agree something needs to be done about Climate Change, don't you?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Everybody does. But resorting to violence is not going to be tolerated.

DANI

Evidently, freedom of speech is not going to be tolerated.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Promotion of violence is not going to be tolerated.

DANI

I wrote a bad review. You should be thanking me.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You chastised the filmmakers for not enhancing the most dangerous element of the film.

DANI

It's fiction.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Everything is fiction until someone mimics it.

DANI

It's not against the law to review a banned film.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

And I would say you played quite loose with the definition of a review.

DANI

How is that?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You practically paraphrased the entire book club scene.

DANI

You can't write a review of a film that no one will be able to see without giving certain details.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

It's not the details I'm worried about. It's the sentiments.

DANI

I gave them my honest take on it.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Honesty is not the matter.

DANI

Obviously.
And apparently trusting readers is not the matter either.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

What's the difference between them watching the film and getting the message - and just getting it from reading your review?

DANI

That's what reviews do. They convey things about the movie. This is preposterous.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

It won't be preposterous if one of your readers takes your little trip across the pond to review the film as a signal.

DANI

So that's where we are? It's bad enough you banned the film.

(MORE)

DANI (cont'd)

To imply that a somewhat less than vague review is somehow dangerous shows more than just concern for public safety.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

And what would that be?

DANI

It implies you don't even want the discussion to be had.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

A discussion about what kind of violence to try?

DANI

A discussion about what will work.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Do you think those are the same things?

DANI

I have no idea. But it sure seems like you do. The whole movie begs those in power. To simply respect the planet and those who live on it. But to do it soon. Before people resort *to* other measures.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

The movie *begs* for violence.

DANI

Did you ever consider that this particular reception is a form of projection?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You heard what they said in the book club scene.

DANI

A scene that I wrote was unnecessary and bordering on trite.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Unnecessary in the sense that the focus group was also unnecessary. Because everything that needed to be said was in the taking and torturing of an innocent man.

DANI

That's not the way I characterized it. And innocent is a legal term.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

I see. Innocent is a legal term.
What about ethical?

DANI

What about moral?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You think breaking the law is moral?

DANI

Making something illegal doesn't make it immoral. Just like the companies who are ushering us to our death are not simply moral because they've bribed our politicians into keeping their actions legal.
Besides, I didn't break the law.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

It could be said that you're encouraging it.

DANI

I may not be a free speech absolutist, but viewing this film should not be against the law.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Forget the film. Should people give in and resort to, as you said, other measures?

DANI

What does it matter what I think? I have no plans of committing violence, if that's what you're asking me.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You don't have to commit violence when you can get thousands of others to do it for you.

DANI

Because I reviewed a film?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You distributed the message. You amplified the message.

DANI

You amplified the message. I simply stated the message.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

And you don't see a problem with that?

DANI

It's not like it's a thought no one would have ever come across on their own. Or a thought that isn't already in the minds of millions.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

It's not just a thought. It's a threat. *Do We Have Your Attention?* It's obvious what that means.

DANI

I don't think it's obvious at all. I think there's multiple ways the film can be interpreted. And the varying takes and the heated discussion that arises from that disparity in reception is probably the only real value I see in the film. But there is value in it. And that's just as much your fault.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Everyone's fault but yours.

Dani just stares, without blinking.

DANI

You ever watch slasher films?

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

You mean like from the 80s?

DANI

Sure. But there's been lots since then too. Some of them are ridiculous, and some are pretty good. But a common theme with a lot of them is this killer that appears to be unstoppable.

(MORE)

DANI (cont'd)

No matter what you do to them, what you throw at them, they just don't seem to die. They just keep coming for you.

You can run. But somehow no matter how fast you run, you look back and the killer is right behind you.

You can try to fight. But you can't match their strength. After the first couple times you knock them down and they get back up, you realize you can't play on their terms. Because you can't *really* hurt them.

So what do you do with the monster you can't kill? One or two might be susceptible to silver bullets. One or two might succumb to a stake through the heart. A number of them you can set on fire.

But that's only if you know ahead of time. If you've been given the information regarding what can end their reign of terror.

But what if you don't know the solution?

There's only been one sure fire way to stop a killer like this.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

What's that?

DANI

You have to cut off the head.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

What are you saying?

DANI

When we made corporations into people, we made those people immortal. And some of those corporate people are killers. Actually, lots of them. And little by little, they're all coming to get us.

It's like being in a real-life slasher film. Except in this one, all the killers from all the horror movies are in it. And you're running from all of them.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

That's your thesis? Capitalism is one big slasher film?

DANI

The biggest.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

No wonder you just write reviews.

DANI

I didn't say it was a good movie. Most slasher films aren't.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

So how do you cut the head off of a corporation?

DANI

Depends on if you believe they're real people. If you do, you can play by the rules of the institutions that made them into people.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Legally.

DANI

So far, that hasn't stopped even one of them.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

What if you don't believe they're real?

DANI

You have to go after the people that are. You have to go after the real killers. The people who head these corporate monsters.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

And cut off the head.

DANI

There's really no other way.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

What if they are real? And what if they are immortal? Truly immortal. You cut the head off an energy giant, there's a line of people waiting to fill that role.

DANI

The first time. Maybe even the second time, or the third.

(MORE)

DANI (cont'd)

But the fourth time. Or the fifth time. The line may not be as long. And the one who assumes that role next may just have second thoughts about whether they want to continue on being killers.

Of course, I'm only speaking metaphorically.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

How do you metaphorically cut off someone's head?

DANI

That's what *you* should be asking.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

Why me?

DANI

Because that's the movie *you're* in. Activists have been trying for decades to change the ways of these people legally, nonviolently. But now it's your turn. Because - if you can't. If you *don't* figure out how to cut these killers' heads off metaphorically - and soon, it's only a matter of time before someone else does it literally.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

If that's the movie I'm in, it's only because of the message you helped relay.

DANI

If *Do We Have Your Attention* hadn't been banned, I probably wouldn't have reviewed it.

OFFICER CARTWRIGHT

I suppose you think that's ironic.

DANI

Ironic is doing everything to keep the killers alive and accidentally making this film immortal.

CAPTION over BLACK reads:

The Judiciary
Washington, D.C. - 2027

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

30-year-old PATRICK DANIELS-JACOBSON stands before a heightened semicircle of FIVE JUDGES. The COURT OFFICER steps forth.

COURT OFFICER

State your name.

PATRICK

Patrick Daniels-Jacobson.

COURT OFFICER

Patrick Daniels-Jacobson, law enforcement has presented the courts with evidence of your guilt. You are being afforded the time and consideration of five members of the Judiciary. The following dialogue is a privilege earned solely through absolute honesty. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

PATRICK

I do.

COURT OFFICER

The judges will now ask you questions.

The Court Officer steps back.

PATRICK

I don't know what I'm supposed to be asked. I didn't write the script. I didn't direct it. I didn't put any money in, to produce it.

JUDGE TWO

You put in your time.

PATRICK

I was paid for my time.

JUDGE THREE

There are all kinds of ways to make money. You wouldn't do just anything for money.

PATRICK

I guess it depends on how desperate I was.

JUDGE THREE

You're not hurting for money.

PATRICK

It's not that kind of desperation.

JUDGE FOUR

So you agree with the sentiments in the film.

PATRICK

There are multiple sentiments in the film. Many of which conflict with each other. That's why I was drawn to working on it.

JUDGE FOUR

Some of those sentiments are clear encouragements to take up violence as a strategy.

PATRICK

And some are not.

JUDGE FIVE

The film didn't get banned for the ones that don't.

PATRICK

I worked on the film before it was banned.

JUDGE FIVE

Your point?

PATRICK

How can I be guilty of helping create a piece of art before the art was deemed illegal?

JUDGE ONE

Were you not aware of the criteria?

PATRICK

The criteria has nothing to do with me. It has nothing to do with anything. It might as well *be* anything.

The criteria's only relevance is the subjective nature in which it's applied.

(MORE)

PATRICK (cont'd)

If whatever members on the Review Board, at that specific time, see it in the film. Something I couldn't possibly know.

JUDGE ONE

Life isn't objective, Mr. Daniels-Jacobson. All choices are of a subjective nature. You stand before us because of the choices *you* made.

PATRICK

And the context of those choices.

JUDGE THREE

The context is the criteria. Now answer. Were you or were you not aware of the plainly stated criteria?

PATRICK

I was.

JUDGE THREE

And you still agreed to participate in this project.

PATRICK

I contracted to work on a film.

JUDGE TWO

You participated in a propaganda operation that targets the successful.

PATRICK

I would neither characterize the film as a propaganda operation, nor the merchants of our destruction as successful.

JUDGE TWO

You obviously harbor animosity towards them.

PATRICK

You have children, grandchildren. Don't you?

JUDGE FOUR

The situation we are in is a tragic one. But it can't be attributed to particular individuals.

PATRICK

Are you admitting the culpability of the system?

JUDGE FOUR

I said particular individuals. To whatever degree there is blame, it must fall on all of us.

PATRICK

None more than any other?

JUDGE FOUR

That's correct.

PATRICK

Then I'm no more to blame for this film than you are.

JUDGE FOUR

I was referring to Climate Change.

PATRICK

But you agree we have to do something about it.

JUDGE FOUR

We do.

PATRICK

And according to our best science, nothing we have done thus far will avoid catastrophe.

JUDGE FIVE

So you're opting for violence.

PATRICK

I opted for art.

JUDGE ONE

Art is a convenient word. It implies ambiguity.

PATRICK

I think the movie is plenty ambiguous.

JUDGE THREE

I would expect someone in your role to say that.

PATRICK

Why is that?

JUDGE THREE

Because you could have made a different movie.

PATRICK

Editors aren't allowed to change the tone of the film. Besides, I'm only able to work with what I was given.

JUDGE TWO

And you took those pieces and orchestrated them into an advertisement for violent protest.

PATRICK

That's not the instruction I was given, and that's definitely not the approach I took.

JUDGE ONE

Yet here we are.

PATRICK

We're here because of members on a Review Board. Not artists.

JUDGE FOUR

We're here because of activist artists.

PATRICK

Those activist artists are here because of activist industrialists.

JUDGE TWO

So a clear villain *is* identified.

PATRICK

I think it *is* quite clear, at least that part.

JUDGE FIVE

And what do you do with villains?

PATRICK

You would hope that the judicial system would address them.

JUDGE ONE

That would require evidence of broken laws.

PATRICK

And that would require a legislative body that cares about more than just the industrialists.

The Judges almost seem amused by this show of defiance.

JUDGE FOUR

You say that you only worked with what was given you. But you were given the scene in the police precinct.

PATRICK

The questioning.

JUDGE FOUR

You may see it for the questions asked. I saw it for the answers given.

PATRICK

That's the beauty of art. It's open to interpretation.

JUDGE TWO

There's not much room to interpret the attitude of the woman giving these answers.

PATRICK

The detained film reviewer - is being grilled over what she thought were her God given rights.

JUDGE THREE

Yet she shows no regard for the public.

PATRICK

She shows no regard for the individuals who don't use the power they have to save the public.

JUDGE FIVE

Then what of this childish mockery of the justice system? The sarcasm. The self-righteous rationalizations. It's clearly meant to target those who keep order as well.

PATRICK

It's the order being kept that is going to kill hundreds of millions of people.

JUDGE TWO

So now we're the targets.

PATRICK

The only thing you're a target of is the message. Which clearly you don't want to see. I could edit it ten different ways. If you go in determined to see one thing, that's all you'll perceive. No one can tell you any different.

JUDGE THREE

What is it we should see? From a law-abiding man being taken hostage, and tortured? From a group of individuals in the future agreeing that vigilante mass violence should have been taken in our time? From a detainee who dismisses the authority of those trying to keep society safe? What should we take from this?

PATRICK

I can't tell you what to see. I can only tell you what I see. I see a group of elevated country club members who are so detached from the connection that has fostered our survival that you're not aware of the very scene you're writing. When future films are made, after we've lost all that *this* film is warning we will lose, there will always be some variation - of this. This is the scene they will show. And you will all look like fools. Educated, pampered, arrogant, corrupt, damned fools.

JUDGE FOUR

You were promised a civil dialogue with High Court judges. If you wish to go beyond civility, we can surely oblige you.

PATRICK

Dialogue is not in the talking. It's in the listening. That's what I learned as an editor. You have to listen for where the pauses should go. For the placement of silence. For the presentation of conflict. And nuance. The space allowed joy, rage, laughter, defeat, idiocy, the profound.

JUDGE FIVE

None of that is of any value, if we do not have order.

PATRICK

I think you just proved my point.

The Judges no longer look almost amused.

JUDGE ONE

Philosophy of your trade aside, you must have sensed the danger in what you were touching. The scene in the police precinct is a foreshadowing of the fate of anyone associated with this film.

That's something you must have seen.

PATRICK

I did.

But when I was editing that scene, I didn't know that was all there was. I kept expecting them to send more footage. When nothing came, I felt uneasy. Like there should be more. It seemed incomplete.

Now I know. It was perfect. Tragic. And grotesque. But perfect, still.

For it *was* completed. Here.

That scene is not a mockery. It is a lament. For our lives. And for your souls.

It is finished. *Because* you finished it.

JUDGE FOUR

I think we've heard all we need to hear.

CAPTION over BLACK reads:

Winston Wanderers Sci-Fi Writers
Group

Winston-Salem - 2021

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The WRITER takes a sip of his drink, puts it down on the printed-out copy of *Do We Have Your Attention* in front of him, opens his notebook, and addresses LINDSAY, RYAN, DONIE, and TERRA.

WRITER

So look, I know this is the first draft, and we usually are pretty gentle with critiques on first drafts. But you can let me have it. If it's shit, you have to tell me it's shit.

LINDSAY

I don't think it's shit. But I don't know if it's the right format. Do you really think the average novel reader is going to want to read a whole book in script form?

DONIE

And do you really think a sci-fi reader is going to read a book that has almost no science and is more of just people talking about the event than showing what the event really looks like?

WRITER

You don't think letting people imagine it works?

RYAN

Is that what you were really trying to do?

WRITER

What do you think I was trying to do?

RYAN

It's not what I think. It's what readers could think.

WRITER

Then what could readers think?

RYAN

I'm sure there are readers who'll believe you kept it a script throughout because you had some grand theme you were trying to drive home, and it forced them to create a whole world and be in it and all that.

WRITER

Or.

RYAN

Or they might just think you were being lazy.

WRITER

Is that what you think?

RYAN

I told you, it's not what I think. It's what the average reader is going to think.

WRITER

That I'm just being lazy.

RYAN

Maybe.

LINDSAY

You think scriptwriting is easier?

RYAN

I don't think it's easy. But it's definitely not as much detail. It's mostly just dialogue.

TERRA

Exactly.

RYAN

Exactly what?

TERRA

In the story, what does everyone seem to be doing?

DONIE

Talking.

TERRA
And what should they be doing?

DONIE
Acting.

TERRA
Acting. That's right.

WRITER
Look at you, making my case better than I could.

Unconvinced looks.

WRITER (cont'd)
What?

LINDSAY
Let's assume for a moment that's effective with the readers rather than only a slightly clever vehicle that's lost on everyone. Let's just assume you made the right choice. In a script, what are the actors doing?

WRITER
I know, they're acting.
But they're acting the wrong lines.

DONIE
How are they acting the wrong lines? Those are the lines they were given.

WRITER
Yes. They didn't choose them. They were given them.

LINDSAY
And you think the readers are supposed to get some commentary on "free will and the system" out of the whole screenplay format thing?

WRITER
Not only are they supposed to get it, they're supposed to be disappointed in certain characters. They're supposed to feel like they should be doing something different.

DONIE

Won't that just translate into disappointment with the author?

TERRA

Maybe. But it forces them to put themselves in the position of the characters and ask, what would I be doing differently?

RYAN

That assumes they'll even get the context. To understand how you would act, you have to comprehend the threat.

WRITER

You don't think they would?

RYAN

Well, at the risk of losing my sci-fi writers group cred, I personally don't remember a lot from history class about the science of Global Warming. Was it really that big of a threat?

TERRA

They say it would have been.

RYAN

That's what I'm saying. I guess it's hard for me to take seriously how dangerous it would have been now, in 2021, if we never saw that danger. Like in the original movie part, with the hostage guy, he's talking about it like they're on the verge of having a whole planetary meltdown. But for us, it's like a footnote in environmental news, like acid rain.

LINDSAY

I agree.

WRITER

Ok, but maybe that's part of it. Maybe you're supposed to have a hard time imagining it.

LINDSAY

How would that be beneficial to the story?

WRITER

Would you resort to what they're resorting to?

LINDSAY

I don't think so.

WRITER

But why? Because you're having a hard time imagining this even being a real thing.

LINDSAY

Maybe. But I think I would be against that kind of violence anyway.

DONIE

You don't really believe the teens in the beginning are sincerely trying to find a nonviolent solution?

LINDSAY

They're kidnapping and torturing people. Last time I checked, that's not something out of Dr. King's playbook.

DONIE

So you think, where they got to, where they're at with the problem of Global Warming, there *would* be a nonviolent solution?

LINDSAY

I'm saying, I don't think they would have ever gotten there. We nipped Global Warming in the bud so quickly, the whole premise doesn't even make sense.

TERRA

But what if we hadn't, forever ago?

RYAN

Why wouldn't we? We transitioned away from fossil fuels when there wasn't even a protest movement.

TERRA

I understand that. But this is sci-fi. You're supposed to go with it.

LINDSAY

The scenario and the violence go hand in hand. If you're asking us to believe that businesses would get so greedy that they would do this to almost the whole population. Then, yeah, I'm sure some people would be violent in their protest.

TERRA

Then where's the problem?

RYAN

Because that's just not human nature.

DONIE

You're acting like we don't have greedy rich people.

RYAN

We do. We have greedy rich people and they do awful things all the time. But they've never done anything even close to this.

DONIE

Not yet.

LINDSAY

That's because there is a limit to what humans consider acceptable behavior.

TERRA

Someone should tell that to the Nazis.

LINDSAY

I'm not saying there aren't exceptions. Yet those exceptions are not enacted with an explicit understanding that you're doing yourself harm as well. Even in the most vile genocide, the perpetrators had contrived some notion, however false, of self-interest or perceived self-preservation.

DONIE

You don't think the people at the top of the business world could convince themselves that their financial interests are what is more important?

LINDSAY

I think they do that all the time. But not for something like this. Not if the science was clear. Besides, your first part belies all this. Rather than just go on a killing spree of these presumed villains, they concoct this elaborate almost comically impossible scheme to beg for a nonviolent answer to their problem. If humans are that opposed to violence *and* that determined to survive, then the humans who run these industries couldn't possibly make the decision we're supposed to accept they made.

DONIE

You don't think the money and the power make the difference?

LINDSAY

I think it makes all the difference. But not that much difference.

TERRA

Then flip it around. If the people at the top were actually that awful, then it might become less a problem for those at the bottom to imitate their lack of morality.

LINDSAY

But our assholes *weren't* those assholes. And I think it's going to be hard for people to get on board with that.

DONIE

So it's not the science part so much as the question around human nature.

LINDSAY

I don't have a problem with the science part. That's why *we* made the right decision in the first place, when it was our problem.

RYAN

Science fiction has to be true not only to science but to the actors within those circumstances. Or else it quits being satire and starts being a benign variety of parody.

TERRA

But it didn't end with the hostage story or the focus group or the book club. It ends with the judicial story.

DONIE

And that's something we *can* relate to.

LINDSAY

Are you saying it's not really about the sci-fi aspect at all, that that's just a vehicle to get us to the judges?

TERRA

I don't think that. I think, like lots of novels, it can be about many things at once.

RYAN

This is different. If it's really about the judges, then what is it trying to say?

DONIE

It's about us being the judges.
It seems obvious the hostage scene is begging us to put ourselves in the shoes of either Mr. Jenns or the person questioning him, or the teens that felt they had to set it all up. And we oblige.
But every scene after that one, the characters find themselves judging something. For some, it's the artistic merit of the script. For others, it's the philosophical value of the dilemma. For the interviewer in the precinct, and for the judges, it's the legality and fitness for society.

LINDSAY

And we're judging the whole thing.

TERRA

Another focus group.

RYAN

I hope you're not comparing us to them.

DONIE

We are a focus group, kind of. And maybe not that different from the one in the book.

(MORE)

DONIE (cont'd)

When you read this, in the beginning you're like unconvinced that it could have ever gotten to that place with Global Warming. But then what's the reason they give for the ban on the film?

LINDSAY

They said it was because of the book club scene.

TERRA

Which is the story's potential reality.

DONIE

Not potential reality. Actual reality. You have to think of those consequences, talked about in the book club scene, as a certainty. Anything less than that allows you to make excuses for not doing enough. That's what the whole future book club was for. To not allow you to center yourself. But to think of those in the future.

LINDSAY

The book club members have had 80 years to reflect on things. They're the only judges who have the evidence in front of them.

TERRA

Everyone else is speculating.

RYAN

So what are we supposed to be judging? Global Warming is an afterthought.

DONIE

I don't know. But that's what bothers me. What if we're too busy judging? What if we're as oblivious as the focus group?

LINDSAY

You mean like, what if we're allowing something right now that will ultimately end up in a similar book club scene?

DONIE

No one ever asks: Are we the Nazis?

(MORE)

DONIE (cont'd)

In the beginning of the book, the people who allowed it to get this far, with Global Warming, certainly don't see themselves in the same light as how those in the book club 80 years from then see them.

RYAN

You mean like Mr. Jenns? Or the focus group?

DONIE

All of them. Everyone. Everyone who wasn't taking chances and risking their own well-being to save the most vulnerable might as well be the Germans who just went along. As the death was quietly somewhere else.

TERRA

We look at the Nazis, those who went along, with the same disdain that the book club looks at the focus group.

DONIE

The same disdain as the judges in the last scene look at those who violated the ban order. A setting where anyone with any curiosity for an alternative, to this utter disaster, is suspect.

RYAN

But it ends with those judges. Not the book club. We're not given a Nuremberg. We're given the opposite.

DONIE

We're only supposed to get a glimpse of clarity. And then we're shown again, who we really are.

LINDSAY

You really think we're the judges?

DONIE

We're the ones putting ourselves in the wrong shoes.

TERRA

Maybe *Do We Have Your Attention* is a question not to the powerful, but to us.

DONIE

It's not who it's to, it's who it's from.
Who's the "We" in *Do We Have Your Attention?*

LINDSAY

In the beginning, it's just words given to Mr.
Maxwell to read to Mr. Jenns.

DONIE

Who did they come from?

LINDSAY

They came from the teens.

DONIE

Not *any* teens though. The ones who took them
hostage.

RYAN

The ones who are the most afraid their
grandkids will end up in the book club scene. Or
worse.

TERRA

It doesn't mean they're right though.

DONIE

Right it will work? Or right to try?

RYAN

Depends on if it's you asking or the state asking.

TERRA

So what, the only way we can keep from being
the judges or being the Nazis is to commit to
violence?

DONIE

The teens aren't committed to violence. In fact,
they're going to the most extreme measures to
avoid it.
What they're committed to is ceasing the
violence being done by those in power. And at
the same time, the teens are giving every benefit
of the doubt to those in power.

(MORE)

DONIE (cont'd)

They're merely and literally begging the ones who've signed their death warrant to let them know how they can survive *without violence*. Just say what will work, and we'll do it.

RYAN

And Mr. Jenns just can't.

TERRA

Mr. Jenns won't.

LINDSAY

Because *he's* the one committed to the violence.

DONIE

Then you have the judges at the end. Who are like spies giving a report on an enemy they were hired to hate. They still have the freedom to write a fair report, to make a decent judgment. But instead, they prefer to take their self-loathing out on the curious.

RYAN

They're committed to the same violence.

DONIE

They might as well be pleading to be the next one taken.

Silence.

WRITER

Damn, y'all went deep.

Laughs.

LINDSAY

Deeper than you did.

WRITER

That's always the hope with readers, right?

RYAN

I'm not saying it's a great read, but it's a pretty good conversation starter.

WRITER

Well, thank you for that underhanded compliment.

RYAN

You're very welcome.

TERRA

How are you thinking about ending it?

DONIE

Wait, I thought the scene with the judges was the ending.

WRITER

No, I told you last month I was trying to figure out the actual ending. That each part when you get to it, in the scheme of it being a movie, could be seen or is maybe supposed to be seen as the last scene in the film. But for the real ending, I want something that really packs a punch.

LINDSAY

Are you asking for suggestions?

WRITER

Yeah, I mean I have some ideas in my head, but maybe I could incorporate some of what you give me into that.

LINDSAY

Well, I've got an idea that might be something.

WRITER

Let's hear it.

LINDSAY

So, I kept thinking throughout reading it about that laptop with just an audio wav and the manipulated, monotone-sounding voice. And how creepy it was, at least for me. And I was wondering, what if you get to the end of the judges scene and then the next thing you see is the laptop with that audio signal? And it's like this weird monologue being spoken to the reader?

WRITER

What would the monologue be about?

LINDSAY

I don't know. I don't know if you keep it in their world with the Global Warming thing, or you bring it back to our world and it's addressing something that we're kind of sleeping on.

DONIE

I think bringing it back to our world makes it cheesy. You want to keep it in that world and then if there's a metaphorical significance, let us draw that from it.

TERRA

But if you take it back to our world, maybe the computerized sounding voice is a metaphor for the robotic arguments we've been making for our issues.

RYAN

I don't know. I think Donie's right. You would leave it in that world.

WRITER

Would it still be 2021?

RYAN

Yeah definitely. You still want it to be an alternate timeline where we have to imagine ourselves having everything the same except for this one thing.

DONIE

That's how the monologue seems more eerie. Because you really have to figure out what it's getting at, in our context.

TERRA

Does it have to be just a monologue? What if it's like one side of a dialogue?

LINDSAY

How would that work?

TERRA

Like maybe it's a dialogue where you have to anticipate what the viewer would say, and then you just keep it going on the end of the laptop.

RYAN

So a dialogue with the readers, who are actually supposed to be the viewers of this film, where the judges scene was the last scene - of the film.

TERRA

Yeah. Like it puts you back in the actual feeling of watching a movie, but makes you self-aware. And just as eerie, because you have to participate, in your head. And it's like talking back to what you're thinking.

WRITER

An anticipated dialogue.

DONIE

That only works if you can anticipate the reader's response. And with all variety of readers, it wouldn't work.

LINDSAY

Unless you ask questions that everyone has the same answer to. Like "What have you done? Was it enough? What are you going to do? Not enough; you have to do bla bla bla."

RYAN

Which you might be able to pull off if you're keeping it in their world and not bringing it back to ours. In their world, they screwed everything up and apparently keep screwing everything up. So maybe the answers would all be the same.

DONIE

But in ours, we didn't.

TERRA

But like you said, what are we missing?

LINDSAY

What if the weird, computerized voice reveals itself to be the viewer themselves?

DONIE

Like the viewer of the movie?

LINDSAY

Yeah.

DONIE

If it's supposed to be an actual movie, then is the viewer talking to themselves?

LINDSAY

Maybe.

RYAN

That may be a little *too* tricky.

WRITER

It's ok, we're just throwing around ideas. I love this.
Do you have any other ideas, for this?

DONIE

I think there's an even better monologue you could have.
What if instead of going back to the laptop from the original hostage scene, what if you go back to Mr. Jenns? Except instead of him having taken on the role that Mr. Maxwell took on and having to convince a new hostage, Mr. Jenns is speaking to the reader, or the viewer of the film.

TERRA

What would he be saying?

DONIE

It would be the opposite of what we thought the laptop would say. It would be like him mocking us.

WRITER

The big twist at the end.

DONIE

Because we all thought he was going to end up like Mr. Maxwell.

RYAN

But because of how the movie is set, and the viewers of this movie are also fictional, and they haven't been doing what's right on Global Warming, there's no more convincing. It's just making fun of them.

TERRA

Which could be seen as a form of reverse psychology.

DONIE

Or maybe it's worse than that. Maybe he's just there to prove that he won and that all of this entire movie/book/thing was not enough for them to do what is going to be enough, and he's the one getting the last laugh, even if they torture him.

LINDSAY

Uhhh. Just trying to imagine what Mr. Jenns would say in that scenario makes me instantly mad.

TERRA

Even though he's not actually mocking us?

DONIE

Even mocking a fictional audience, it would infuriate us as well.

LINDSAY

You could leave what he's saying ambiguous enough that maybe we could project our own problems onto it.

DONIE

So he's also talking to us. Us, who couldn't take *their* problem seriously.

LINDSAY

Just like them.

DONIE

Just like him.

RYAN

Leaves you wondering if we're going to identify our blind spot, before it does us in too.

TERRA

That's - pretty good.

RYAN

It's like the worst way of saying *Do We Have Your Attention.*

WRITER

Damn.

Ok...

Anyone else got an idea?

TERRA

I was thinking, like the focus group was, that we never do really get to see what was on the screen Mr. Maxwell is watching. What if you end it by showing what *was* actually on the screen?

RYAN

You end with what we presumed it was, showing Mr. Maxwell's family being tortured?

TERRA

That's why it would be a good ending, because it's *not* his family being tortured. It's something else.

RYAN

Then what?

Is it something the focus group suggested?

TERRA

I don't know. Maybe it's actually him watching his family being shown the real consequences of *his* actions, and their profound disappointment in all that he allowed. And he can't take it.

LINDSAY

If you wanted to go that route, maybe you could make it God's judgment. Like he actually gets a glimpse of God's disappointment in what he's done to God's creation.

RYAN

Which would explain his writhing in agony as he is shown the severity of his shame.

LINDSAY

I think both could produce that kind of reaction, but maybe God's judgment would be even scarier for him.

DONIE

But not all readers are going to believe in God, and some readers may not have a traditional family. What if you make it him getting a glimpse into the future, like around the time of the book club scene? And it shows who he's become in the history books. And everyone is looking back on him like he was this piece of shit.

LINDSAY

And it's totally unanimous.

DONIE

That's what he can't take.

RYAN

Or. Maybe you go back to Mr. Maxwell's face watching the screen, from the floor, screaming as the sound is pumped into his ears through the headphones. And maybe you just describe this agony for pages and pages, but you never show what it is on the screen.

TERRA

So again, the audience is left asking, "What's on the screen?" Where, before, it seemed like the point of originally not showing it was to put it in the imagination of Mr. Jenns.

DONIE

But the real target is the literal audience.
Us, as the audience.

TERRA

What could be so awful to make Mr. Maxwell so horrified?

WRITER

Look at you all. Trying to steal my thunder with better ideas than I had.

Laughs.

RYAN

Ok, well, what if we don't show what Mr. Maxwell is seeing, but as he's screaming, the camera closes in on his face, at the same time that it seems to be rotating to where it no longer looks like he's sideways on the floor, but sitting up straight? But then you get to his eyes, full of terror, and then it goes silent.

The camera then starts moving back out until we see that he's not in this room any longer but actually sitting in a chair in a movie theater. And it's implied the screen he is looking at is actually a movie screen.

LINDSAY

Is he still screaming?

RYAN

Yeah, he's still in the same apoplectic panic, but you just can't hear it.

And then the camera starts to pan to the right, and we see that the person sitting next to him in the theater is Mr. Jenns. And Mr. Jenns is screaming with the same level of terror.

But then the camera keeps panning to the right, and you see that the next seat is occupied by one of the focus group members. And it keeps panning and you see another, and another.

TERRA

And they're all screaming?

RYAN

Yeah, the sound from the movie is dead silence, but all of them are screaming and crying the same as Mr. Maxwell.

And if you could picture that Mr. Maxwell was in the first seat, and Mr. Jenns is in the second seat and so on, after you get to the last member of the focus group, the camera keeps panning to the right and the next seat is filled by the police officer in the precinct scene.

LINDSAY

And the next seats are all filled by the judges.

RYAN

Yep. Every character in the film that wasn't doing everything to stop it is in the theater, watching what's on the screen. All screaming in terror at the consequences of their apathy.

TERRA

What if you made it even sicker and once you got to the last judge you started to pan back to the left, and each one of them is a little bit older? And once you get to Mr. Maxwell it pans back to the right, and they're even older this time. And it just keeps panning back and forth, watching them get older and older.

LINDSAY

Is that supposed to represent how long they held out doing what they should have?

TERRA

I was thinking more like it was a life sentence. Having to face what they've done for the rest of their time on this earth. But really having to face it. Having to endure the shame, for what will seem like an eternity.

WRITER

So, basically, they're in hell.

TERRA

I don't think you say it explicitly, but at least a hell of their own making. Whatever that may be.

LINDSAY

Whatever may be on the screen.

DONIE

If we're going that direction, let's make it even sicker, where we see that not only do they have to watch their shame on the screen, but they have to stuff themselves with candy and soda and popcorn as they watch.

RYAN

But not just consuming it, gluttonously consuming it.
Like a movie theater/vomitorium.

TERRA

It's like a juxtaposition.

DONIE

It's part of the torture. They have to consume and consume and consume as part of their punishment while watching what they're consumption has done. So at this point, they no longer have the option to stop consuming. At this point, they're forced to.

LINDSAY

It's like the parent making the kid smoke a pack of cigarettes for getting busted smoking one.

DONIE

Except this would be like chain-smoking over years while watching your future spouse die of cancer from the secondhand smoke induced lung cancer you gave them.

TERRA

Jesus.

DONIE

Hey, y'all are the ones that came up with adding on the hell element to it.

RYAN

Either way, at the end, they're all in the hostage seat in a way. Being forced to come to terms with their contribution.

LINDSAY

At the *end*, anyone exposed to this shit is going to feel like they're in the hostage seat.

Laughs.

RYAN

No, but that's what I was going to say. What if you get all the way to the last judge again, maybe after multiple times of panning back and forth or whatever, and then it keeps panning to the right, and the seat is empty? And it just stays focused on this one empty seat for the rest of the movie, however long you want to make it. Maybe even minutes.

TERRA

And the viewer is supposed to understand that that seat is for them.

RYAN

That's what I was thinking.

DONIE

That's not bad.

WRITER

Not bad at all.

The Writer shakes his head, and smiles.

WRITER (cont'd)

I love this.

(musing)

But Jesus.

There's so much still to figure out.

CAPTION over BLACK reads:

The Pitch

INT. CORNER OFFICE - DAY

PRODUCER

Look, I know you're passionate about Climate Change. *I'm* passionate about Climate Change. But this? I don't even know what this is. And what is it with this ending - where you don't even get an ending, just them giving suggestions for endings? What is that?

DIRECTOR

I admit. It's not a normal film project.

PRODUCER

That's the understatement of the millennium. This is weird at best, and weird is not enough to get greenlit. You know that. If you want to rework the first part, with the hostage, make it a feature, I might be interested in that.

DIRECTOR

It's a package deal.

PRODUCER

Says who?

DIRECTOR

Says the author.

PRODUCER

The author is a fucking nobody.

DIRECTOR

Everybody's a nobody until they get a hit.

PRODUCER

This is not a hit. It's not even a film. It's more like an art school graduate thesis. How do you even know this guy?

DIRECTOR

I don't know him.

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

He's a friend of a friend. That friend asked if I would give it a read.

PRODUCER

So your friend hands you what amounts to an experimental book of stage plays that's neither been published nor produced, and you decide you have to adapt and direct it for the screen?

DIRECTOR

I think there's something there.

PRODUCER

Then let it be a book. Let it get produced for the stage. If it catches fire, then we can revisit it.

DIRECTOR

If this is going to get made, it has to get made now.

PRODUCER

If it was good, it would have been published by now.

DIRECTOR

He just wrote it this year. And it will get published.

PRODUCER

Only if you make it as a movie.

DIRECTOR

It's a good project.

PRODUCER

I'm taking this meeting because I like you; I think you're immensely talented. But this is--

DIRECTOR

You think I'm talented because of the risks I've taken.

PRODUCER

I've taken risks too.

DIRECTOR

And that's why I requested the meeting.

PRODUCER

If this were just a risk, I would consider it.

DIRECTOR

You're not giving it a fair chance.

PRODUCER

I can tell a loser when I see one.

DIRECTOR

You know my track record. I've never had a flop.

PRODUCER

You're a good director. Hell, you're a great director. And that's not something I just say. I mean it.

But even you can't pull this off.

DIRECTOR

Just hear me out.

PRODUCER

What's there to hear? It's not a film. If you expanded out the middle parts, it's possible it's a mini-series. But TV is not going to--

DIRECTOR

It's a film. It's got to be one experience.

PRODUCER

Your notes said you want to play out each suggested ending given by the Writers Group members, and maybe even add more of them.

DIRECTOR

The author and I discussed making the endings more and more vulgar, saving the most vulgar for last.

PRODUCER

You do that, and the shit will end up 4 hours.

DIRECTOR

Maybe 5.

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

The *time* is the point. It's all the focus on these possible magical endings, instead of what we should be focused on in *avoiding* them all.

PRODUCER

5 hours of dialogue?

DIRECTOR

It'll keep their attention.

PRODUCER

You've got an intermission built into the fucking script.

DIRECTOR

It's a break for discussion.

PRODUCER

That's great. Maybe the audience can figure out what the hell it is they're watching.

DIRECTOR

You're making it out to be way more complex than it is.

PRODUCER

Are you kidding me? First it's a film, then it's not, then it is, then it's not. First it's about Climate Change, then it's about something else, then kind of about Climate Change, then kind of not. Never mind it weaving between this time over here and that reality over there. It lost the thread so many times, I almost forgot what the original story even was. And if you tell me that's what the author intended, because it's some kind of brilliant meta metaphor, I'm going to beat you to death with the script.

DIRECTOR

Everything in the script serves a purpose.

PRODUCER

That's assuming anyone is going to put up with it.

DIRECTOR

Are you paying attention to what's going on around us? It couldn't be more timely. There's literally millions of kids freaked the fuck out over their future.

PRODUCER

That doesn't mean those kids are going to buy tickets.

DIRECTOR

Why wouldn't they?

PRODUCER

It's not a movie. It's a fucking conference.

DIRECTOR

It's an event.

PRODUCER

By the time you're done with it, it'll be a *half-day* event.

DIRECTOR

So? Young people do music festivals all the time.

PRODUCER

That's because music festivals are fun. And you can take a shit load of drugs. This is not that.

DIRECTOR

There's a market for this.

PRODUCER

No way. It's too meta, it's too cerebral, too philosophical.

DIRECTOR

Since when do you make comic book movies?

PRODUCER

I'm all for making smart movies. And experimental movies. But this whole jerkapalooza? No one's going to take it seriously. The critics will burn you at the stake.

DIRECTOR

Critical success isn't going to get us any closer to a solution.

PRODUCER

And you think this film will?
You know I care about the environment. When your agent told me you had a novel take on the Climate Crisis, I was eager to read it. And I'm not saying there aren't novel parts to it. But novelty is not enough.

DIRECTOR

When was the last time a movie did something no movie has ever done before?

PRODUCER

Sometimes things aren't done for good reason.

DIRECTOR

It'll get attention just for the attempt.

PRODUCER

Attention is different than commitment.
Watching a multiple-hour movie is a commitment.
Watching a movie in so many parts is a commitment.
Asking people to talk to strangers - is a commitment. Most of these kids can barely look you in the eye; you think you're going to recreate the salons of yesteryear?

DIRECTOR

The film is not the point. It's the dialogue that comes out of it.

PRODUCER

But that's *my* point. These kids barely talk to their friends when they're sitting at the same table in a restaurant. You think they're going to instantly turn into campers around the bonfire? And what's there to discuss? Every section, you dissect the section before it. You're supposed to show, not tell.

DIRECTOR

The exposition is intentional.

PRODUCER

Oh yeah? Well, it comes off as you not trusting the audience.

DIRECTOR

I *don't* trust them. Things are where they're at because no one has been willing to ask questions that reflect the true threat.

PRODUCER

That may be true, but you can't make art if you don't trust what the audience will do with it.

DIRECTOR

Maybe I'm not making art. Or maybe I'm making a different type of art.

PRODUCER

Are you listening to yourself? Do you know how pretentious that sounds?

DIRECTOR

It's not pretentious; it's patronizing.

PRODUCER

Even better. You know how much kids *love* being condescended to.

DIRECTOR

It's better than lying to them.

PRODUCER

You just said you don't trust the audience.

DIRECTOR

But I'm not lying to them. I'm manipulating them.

PRODUCER

Manipulating is a form of lying.

DIRECTOR

Not if you're up front with it.

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

You don't believe people will come out to something like this. But what if we make it explicit in the marketing?

"This movie is not entertainment. This movie is meant to manipulate you. Somewhere between art and propaganda, it is an experiment. On you. Do you think you're smart enough to figure out what it wants? Do you think you're smart enough to know whether to resist or to give in? One day of your life. Could change everything. Your future depends on this movie. Do We Have Your Attention?"

PRODUCER

You're nuts.

DIRECTOR

They'll take it as a challenge. They'll show up just for the challenge.

PRODUCER

They'll show up to be patronized?

DIRECTOR

They will show up to be manipulated. But only if we tell them that up front. That way they have it in the back of their mind as they ask the same questions you did.

PRODUCER

Like why all the exposition?

DIRECTOR

Exactly. You said show, not tell. But this is an interactive piece. Where the audience does the showing.

PRODUCER

Audiences aren't used to that.

DIRECTOR

Audiences aren't used to their planet burning the fuck up either. They have to know there are certain expectations of them, or else they'll look at it like an art film.

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

If all people do is guess what stood for this and what metaphor was that, then it's an abject failure.

I don't want people leaving the theater sniffing their fucking farts.

PRODUCER

Then what *do* you want from them?

DIRECTOR

I don't know. It's an experiment.

PRODUCER

An experiment or a game?

DIRECTOR

It's more like a provocation. Leading them so far from the original premise is kind of like fucking with them.

PRODUCER

More like shaming them.

DIRECTOR

Not just them. All of us. Myself included. The author included. We should all be ashamed. A movie like this ever being conceived of is a show of collective shame. Just like the characters analyzing all the previous scenes demonstrates how misguided our focus is and how trivial our discussions have been. How we got this far away from the decisions we need to make.

PRODUCER

And you think they're going to get that?

DIRECTOR

I know they're going to get it. Because I'm going to make them get it.

PRODUCER

Well, I didn't get it.

DIRECTOR

That's because I didn't give you the ending.

PRODUCER

I thought all the stupid Writers Group suggestions was the ending.

DIRECTOR

I couldn't give away the twist at the end.

PRODUCER

The twist at the end is me not giving you the money to make this movie.

DIRECTOR

Come on. You know you could sell this. You've put out some of the strangest films I've ever seen. And you made money. You know you can sell this.

PRODUCER

I don't know that at all.

DIRECTOR

Even if it doesn't work in the theaters, it'll become a cult hit. I promise. You're not going to lose money.

PRODUCER

It's not the money. Well, it is the money. But it's not.

DIRECTOR

Then what is it?

PRODUCER

All studios have flops. But if this flops, it's different. I look like I took a gamble for the wrong reason.

DIRECTOR

Saving the planet is the wrong reason?

PRODUCER

No one in my cohort is going to see it that way.

DIRECTOR

Because of the not-so-subtle implications surrounding capitalism?

PRODUCER

That's part of it.

DIRECTOR

As long as you show them you made money from it, all will be forgiven.

PRODUCER

Not all.

DIRECTOR

Then what else is it?
Is it about the violence? Because the last time I checked, your crown has some pretty fucking violent gems in it.

PRODUCER

That was violence in the good way. This is not violence in the good way.

DIRECTOR

No one in the film even gets touched. The worst thing that happens is they imply violence.

PRODUCER

The worst thing that happens is they talk about violence. And not in the good way.

DIRECTOR

What is it with this good way shit? What the fuck is good violence?

PRODUCER

Grow the fuck up, you know what good violence is.

DIRECTOR

Then say it.

PRODUCER

Good violence is the violence that doesn't happen to people like us, or it's...

DIRECTOR

Or it's what?

PRODUCER

Or - it's violence that happens in our favor.

DIRECTOR

And you don't find anything wrong with that?

PRODUCER

No more than you have, since you joined the club.

DIRECTOR

Ok, fair enough. Whatever.
It's bad violence. They talk about it. So what?

PRODUCER

So what - is you'd have been better off just showing Mr. Jenns getting tortured and killed. Instead, you have everyone mull over whether that's an acceptable course of action for the rest of the film.

DIRECTOR

How is that worse than showing it happen?

PRODUCER

You show it, you move on. People get a nut in their pants, then go home and wash the dishes. It's fiction. And it stays fiction.
What you're doing, suggesting it's an option? That's not fiction.

DIRECTOR

I'm not suggesting it's an option. I'm suggesting it's inevitable.

PRODUCER

Either way, you're suggesting it.

DIRECTOR

The film is about finding a nonviolent solution. From beginning to end.

PRODUCER

If that's true, then why do so many people in the script imply that they understand violence being tried?

DIRECTOR

Because it's a warning. It's a fucking preemptive prophecy. Violence is coming. And if you want to deny it, you're going to be as disappointed as the motherfuckers who keep denying Climate Change is going to get worse.

PRODUCER

I'm not denying anything.

DIRECTOR

Well, you seem to be shocked that this is on the horizon.
We can't just fuck over on people this bad, with a violence they know is going to be worse than anything we've ever seen, and not expect those people to use violence to fight back.

PRODUCER

What's with this "we" shit?

DIRECTOR

Tell me you don't have shares in fossil fuels.

PRODUCER

Tell me *you* don't.

DIRECTOR

That's why I said we.

PRODUCER

So if I divest, will you drop this?

DIRECTOR

Stocks are only a small part of it. It's the industry you have power in. That I have power in.
How many movies have offered a serious take on what has to be done about Climate Change? On *why* we're not doing it?
The movie isn't about a mixed-up band of teens kidnapping some 5th Avenue asshole. It's about all of us acknowledging we have a place in this. And yes, we have power. And immense fucking privilege.

PRODUCER

There's different ways to say that.

DIRECTOR

Not to people like us. People like us have to be scared into it.

PRODUCER

That's bullshit.

DIRECTOR

Then tell me, when are you going to get arrested? When are you going to risk something precious to you?
We've got more money than we could have ever dreamed. Why haven't we taken more chances when it comes to this subject matter? Where's our sacrifice?

PRODUCER

Don't talk valor to me. It's self-righteous. You sound like the addict who just got clean telling everyone else not to party.

DIRECTOR

You're right. I've been signing my checks to the same charities you have. But I know now, I've got to do more. And I'm asking you to join me.

PRODUCER

Pushing violence is not courageous.

DIRECTOR

I'm telling you. The author wants nonviolence, and I want nonviolence. All this is - is us doing our part to ensure a nonviolent solution.

PRODUCER

And what if the audience doesn't see it that way? What if the critics don't see it that way?

DIRECTOR

You mean what if our peers don't see it that way?

PRODUCER

What if?

DIRECTOR

Then I'll tell them. I'll call everyone we know and tell them. And I'll do a press tour just to drive the point home to viewers.

PRODUCER

It doesn't matter what you say you believe, or even what you really believe. If some shit goes down, critics will paint the press tour as covering your ass and the movie as a wink and a nod.

DIRECTOR

I'll have the cast do the tour with me. I'll get the author too.

PRODUCER

You don't get it. This kind of shit takes on a life of its own. If anyone is underestimating the project, it's you.

Did you ever stop to ask yourself: What if they don't care what you think? Or what the author thinks?

What if they care what the characters think?

What if the characters are more persuasive than you are?

DIRECTOR

As much as I *am* for nonviolence, the truth is it doesn't matter whether we're for violence or against violence. What matters is a solution getting past the institutions.

Who cares if this film is an outright call for violence? That's of almost no significance, compared to what is ahead of us.

And don't give me that bad strategy backfiring shit. We're a fucking millimeter away from the point of no return.

Now, I'm telling you I'm for nonviolence. And I *think* you know me well enough to know I'm not lying. But my biggest concern is finding a solution. And I can't make any guarantees that the solution is going to look like, or that violence won't be at least some part of that.

PRODUCER

But why the hard sell on violence throughout the script?

DIRECTOR

Because there's different audiences. Even if the big players don't see this movie, they'll get wind of it. And they need to know. The violence they're committing, the violence we're committing, is not going unnoticed. And the system isn't infallible. Eventually the autopilot is going to run into something the engineers didn't prepare for. Then you crash.

PRODUCER

And you know what happens after a crash? Lawsuits. Lawsuits for everyone in the zip code.

DIRECTOR

We have insurance for that.

PRODUCER

If it were only that simple.

DIRECTOR

It is that simple.

PRODUCER

It's a headache I don't need.

DIRECTOR

That's your answer? In the face of this future?

PRODUCER

You know this movie is not the only way you can contribute.

DIRECTOR

I started giving to the nonprofits two decades ago. Half those organizations are now relying on funding from the very industries they're supposed to be fighting.

PRODUCER

Then go start your own. You'd be a hell of a spokesperson.

DIRECTOR

Spokesperson for what? What the fuck am I going to say?

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

"Listen to me and the celebrity friends I had to beg and plead before they would be a part of this..."

I might as well sign another fucking petition.

PRODUCER

I'm not even saying it can't be a movie. But why *this* movie?

DIRECTOR

I don't know what to tell you other than I have to do this.

PRODUCER

I understand that you have to do *something*. But you don't have to do *this*.

DIRECTOR

But I do. And you have to do it too.

Can you not see? This is not the warning I want to make. But I'm making it to try and save my friends.

I'm trying to save you. And myself. This is as much for us as it is for the fucking commoner. But the commoners are out there. And the temperature is going the fuck up. And if you can remember what it was like to be one of them, you know. People are not going to wait around forever as the system kills them.

We can wait for it. But I care about our friends, even if most of them are as heartless as we've been.

So I'm not going to wait. Scaring our friends into real action is a much better way of recognizing there's a few less people at the cocktail party.

And maybe you're right. Maybe this isn't *the* way. But it's one way. And, short of me taking an AR to the next Exxon shareholder meeting, I don't know any other ways right now that are going to deliver the message with any more force.

PRODUCER

You see, it's that mentality that's going to wind us all up in a knot.

DIRECTOR

We'll lose the planet before we lose freedom of speech.

PRODUCER

Jesus Fucking Christ. Are you listening to yourself? Freedom of speech. We don't have freedom of speech. We have amplitude of speech. And amplitude is a matter of purchasing power. When you give your couple grand to that politician, and then give another twenty grand to their Super PAC, you think you're participating in some egalitarian market of deliberative dialogue? Your money is there to eclipse any and all honesty. Any and all real debate. It's about getting the most and loudest megaphones. It's about pumping the voters full of fat until election day. So we can spend the next two years eating their votes like it's fucking foie gras.

Just because the policies you and I may want are better for those voters than the other side doesn't mean it's a game of equals. The point is that if we switched over and joined all the oil and coal worshipping cocksuckers, if we just woke up tomorrow and said fuck the people we used to be. We could do that. We could make sure those poor fuckers are fucked.

No matter how much the salt of the earth use their First Amendment, we could fuck them.

Because we can outspend them.

And right now, even though we're on the right side of this, we can't get around the fact that the other side can outspend us. And they're going to outspend us.

DIRECTOR

It's more than just money. That's why it has the extreme premise.

PRODUCER

Let's say you're right. Let's say you can find a way that makes philosophical reflection on the definition of violence sell popcorn and sodas.

Let's say this script were a hundred times better and I was rock hard from the moment I started reading it.

(MORE)

PRODUCER (cont'd)

I still wouldn't put it into production.
Because I know. I know more than you believe.
Freedom of speech isn't real. It's just another god
the hopeless pray to.

DIRECTOR

What are you saying?

PRODUCER

If I give you the money to make this movie, you
don't think word is going to get out? You don't
think our friends in *certain industries* are going
to confer on what to do about it?
You don't think they're going to all ante up a
little pocket change and hire some PR firm to
start a pressure campaign on theaters and
streaming services not to carry this "blatant
incitement to violence"?
Not because it is violent. But because you used
violence to make the point.
For all I know, this could be the movie that really
does save the planet. But it'll never see the first
movie screen.

That's the punchline. If violence is the premise,
they're not going to let you save them *from* that
violence.

DIRECTOR

But you're acknowledging that I'm trying to save
them.
The before it's too late part of the movie is not
about Climate Change. It's about the violence.
It's about saving *us*.

PRODUCER

There's a bigger violence.

DIRECTOR

And what's that?

PRODUCER

Going back to what we used to be.
Why do you think the splats on the streets
increase when the stock market crashes?
(MORE)

PRODUCER (cont'd)

It's not like these people aren't going to survive being *only* middle class, again. It's that they refuse to survive like that.

DIRECTOR

No one's talking about making the rich poor. We're talking about adjusting to a new reality where we might have slightly less than we had, in the short term. If anything, they should be jumping at the chance.

I like what we have to keep. I want to keep it. But they're going to stall so long they fuck it up for the rest of us.

When all they have to do is quit being complicit in the violence taking place right now.

That's all.

Quit funding it. Quit supporting it. Quit ensuring it.

We do that and we get to keep 70 percent of the playground.

PRODUCER

This isn't the way to convince me. I'm not our friends.

DIRECTOR

But you're the one I have to convince.

PRODUCER

It won't be a good movie.

DIRECTOR

It doesn't have to be a good movie. It just has to work.

I believe in the movie. But it's not about the movie.

It's about the window. We only have so much time.

PRODUCER

When you have no reason to believe giving up everything would even make a difference, you have all the time in the world.

DIRECTOR

Then we might as well be masters on the plantation, waiting to get murdered in our sleep.

PRODUCER

And you know what that would do? It would make it worse for the slaves on the next plantation over.

DIRECTOR

Maybe so. But that doesn't mean it won't happen again. On the next plantation over. It also doesn't make the masters right. We may debate whether it was wrong for the entire family to be killed in the revolt; we may acknowledge the repercussions for others enslaved. But we can't deny them the righteousness of trying to free themselves. Of trying to survive, with some kind of say in their lives.

If the Jim Crow South would have produced an era where black people *only* resisted with violence. Regardless of the outcome, it wouldn't have changed *why* they had to resist.

Whether it's Jews and Poles and Slavs and Gypsies before the death camps. Or Indians during Victorian brutality. You can't just say violence is not an option when a people are on their way to destruction.

If someone really did the worst things the movie implies, over and over, and it didn't work, and instead it backfired and got all the bad press in the world. It wouldn't even be a blip in history. Because it wouldn't change the fact of what's coming with the climate. Or the morality of trying to find a solution.

If we had a full-on civil war over this, and the forces ushering in Climate Change won that war? You think a hundred years from now the rebels are going to be seen as the bad guys?

I don't want violence. I don't want violence. I don't want violence. I don't believe - in violence. I'll say it a thousand times if it matters. But not stopping violence, or at least not fighting against violence, this type of violence, is a form of fucking violence.

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

Like everyone who stands by and watches a people get slaughtered are a part of that violence.

I don't want people to watch the movie and turn to violence. I just want them to not do nothing. Right now there's too many of us not doing anything. If everyone, and I mean everyone, put some form of concerted effort to turning the ship around, institutionally, politically, economically, it would be enough. And no one would have to resort to violence.

But until that happens, they're just making violence a certainty. They're ensuring that what little nonviolence is being tried will not be enough. And eventually those people will give up. Just like JFK said with that whole "those who make peaceful solutions impossible make violence inevitable" quote.

PRODUCER

You're using Jack Kennedy to make your point now?

DIRECTOR

How long are a people expected to lobby peacefully, while they're being violently oppressed?

PRODUCER

If they're the *oppressed*, forever.

DIRECTOR

I can't believe you're saying this.

PRODUCER

I'm not saying I believe it. I'm saying that's the way the world works. It's the world we live in.

You want me to make a movie for a world we don't live in.

You want to get philosophical, but you don't want to get real.

(MORE)

PRODUCER (cont'd)

The reason why it won't even make it to the theater is because of just how many Normal Nates and Regular Rhondas there are that have internalized their own oppression.

You try to save those people by threatening the rich, a huge number of them will side with the rich. Because we've told them their whole lives that one day they're going to be one of us.

You want to keep the lifers quiet in their cell? You promise them a lottery. Not to be let out.

But to become a prison guard.

I didn't fuck the world up. But I know how fucked it is.

If you want to save it, you better factor that into your script. A different script.

DIRECTOR

Now who's being philosophical?

PRODUCER

This isn't philosophy. It's who we are. You think you achieved freedom. You just achieved success. Real freedom looks like something else.

DIRECTOR

You're saying you're a prison guard.

PRODUCER

In as much as I have a higher ration of freedom, yes. A much higher ration I'm proud to say.

Don't get me wrong. If you're a prisoner and you want to escape, I'll encourage you.

I'll tell you what it's like on the outside. I'll even slip you a chisel.

But I'm not the one you ask to blow a hole in the wall.

DIRECTOR

Because they'll put you back in the cell?

You're already in a cell.

PRODUCER

I am.

Just not that one.

DIRECTOR

It's a cheesy analogy.
I expect more from you.

PRODUCER

That's your problem. You expect too much.
Just like you expect too much from your
audience.
This whole climate absurdity-revolving door
marathon?
It's not going to enlighten anyone. It's just going
to make them dizzy.

DIRECTOR

It's worth making.

PRODUCER

It's too heavy, it's too convoluted. It's too -
much.

DIRECTOR

It has to be a journey, one they have to see to the
end.

PRODUCER

But they won't.

DIRECTOR

Only because you won't put the money behind
it.

PRODUCER

This isn't art.
I know you think it's Kafka and Serling and
Mailer and Malcolm all wrapped up in one. But
all I see is a wannabe, at best.

DIRECTOR

You can sell a wannabe.
It may even be more effective if it isn't Kafka. If
there's less to rave about literarily, then maybe
it's less a distraction from what needs to be
talked about.

PRODUCER

Again. Are you hearing - what you're saying?
(MORE)

PRODUCER (cont'd)

You want me to put my money into something you're admitting is not high art, but we're supposed to present it like high art, so everyone will talk about why it's not high art.

DIRECTOR

Yes. Because dying from Climate Change is not high art.

PRODUCER

Neither is losing millions of dollars. My dollars.

DIRECTOR

High art loses millions all the time.

PRODUCER

It doesn't lose you reputation.

DIRECTOR

Our reputation is flying around on private jets while women in the third world have to walk an extra mile this year to get water.

PRODUCER

I know. We're despicable. How many times do you want me to say it?

DIRECTOR

How many times *can* you say it before you're interrupted by a knock at the door?

PRODUCER

You see?
Threats, my friend, are never benevolent.
And you sound like a broken record.

DIRECTOR

You have to do this.

PRODUCER

Why me? There are other producers out there, other studios.

DIRECTOR

You don't want to make this film, then don't make it. But at least tell me. What do *you* think will work?

PRODUCER

So I'm the hostage now? Is that it?
Here's my answer. Fuck you. I want a solution as bad as you do. But I know it's not for me to dictate one. You ever stop to think that the scenario you're suggesting endorses the power structure you're claiming to despise?
If you could get the three richest billionaires in the world into your fictional lair, *and* Mr. Maxwell could get them all to agree, *and* it actually worked. You'd be saving us through dictators.

DIRECTOR

The movie is not meant to imitate.
But if we're talking consequences.
In order to live to fight another day, you have to be living.

PRODUCER

You're not going to give up, are you?

DIRECTOR

I can't.

PRODUCER

Of course you can. You can make a different film.
I'll make that film.
I'm just not making this one.

DIRECTOR

If I showed you the ankle bracelet they gave me, would it make a difference?

PRODUCER

Ha ha ha. Fuck you.
I could look down and realize I'm tied to my chair and you've turned into a laptop with a weird computer voice coming out of it, and I still wouldn't greenlight this.
That *would* probably make for a better ending though. Better than that stupid Writers Group shit.

DIRECTOR

You're not that far off actually.

PRODUCER

How's that?

DIRECTOR

I told you. There's a twist.

PRODUCER

Then what's the twist?

DIRECTOR

The twist is: If you don't want to make this film. If you're not going to try whatever it takes. Then I just need you to admit it. I just need you to say it out loud.

PRODUCER

Say what?

The Director hands him a folded piece of paper.

The Producer unfolds it and reads aloud.

PRODUCER (cont'd)

"I am going to do my part to make sure that my children, my grandchildren, all the generations of humanity that come after me, face a planet that was not meant for them. I'm doing everything I can to make that happen, by not doing everything I can to stop it."

Shakes his head, as he looks up.

PRODUCER (cont'd)

You really are an arrogant prick, aren't you? A delusional, self-righteous, arrogant prick.

DIRECTOR

You don't even really need to say those words, and mean them. You just have to tell me you're not making the film.

PRODUCER

I've been telling you that. I'm not making the film.

DIRECTOR
Ok then. That's all I needed.

PRODUCER
That's it?

DIRECTOR
That's it.

PRODUCER
Why do I get the feeling, all the sudden, that you wanted me to say no?

DIRECTOR
I wanted you to say yes.
But by saying no, you got to choose the ending.

PRODUCER
And how do *I* get to choose?

DIRECTOR
The last chapter.
That's what this was?

The Producer stares, in disbelief.

PRODUCER
You're fucking with me.
Are you recording this?

DIRECTOR
I had this whole monologue in my head I was going to lay on you if you said no.
But I think we both said all that was needed saying.

PRODUCER
Are you really recording this fucking conversation?
Because if you are, I'm going to make sure you never make another movie again. This one or any one.

DIRECTOR
Probably better anyway. That we both leave disappointed.
Don't worry. I won't use your name.

PRODUCER

Fuck you wasting my time. You never had any intention of making this movie.
This whole meeting was just to prove a point.

DIRECTOR

I had every intention of making the movie. I'm still going to try and make it.
But you're right. The meeting did prove my point.

PRODUCER

So I *am* Mr. Jenns. Is that it?
Is that your stupid fucking twist?

DIRECTOR

No. You're Mr. Maxwell now. You just don't know it.

The Director gets up to leave, extends his hand.

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

Thanks for taking the time.

The Producer declines shaking his hand.

PRODUCER

You really are something.

The Director walks to the door.

PRODUCER (cont'd)

And what if I would have said yes?

The Director doesn't answer, just walks out.

RESUME CREDITS from the original *Do We Have Your Attention* short film.

CREDITS continue to ROLL over BLACK to MUSIC on the right half of the SCREEN.

Seconds later, a TIMER appears in the middle of the SCREEN and begins to COUNT DOWN.

FOOTAGE appears at the bottom of the left half of the SCREEN. It scrolls upwards.

In this FOOTAGE, a new PEER is pleading at the end of their particular session acting as the Convincer.

Below this FOOTAGE is new FOOTAGE. It's the same person, delivering the first line of the script.

As that FOOTAGE scrolls up, the FOOTAGE below is yet a new PEER/ Convincer pleading as the clock ticks down.

And so on, over and over, while the CREDITS run.

The AUDIO goes in and out of each FOOTAGE so we can always hear the one in the middle, delivering the first line of their given script.

When the CREDITS are done and the TIMER reaches zero, we are left with FOOTAGE of Mr. Jenns.

As he looks directly into the CAMERA, the CREDITS and FOOTAGE disappear and the MUSIC stops.

The SCREEN is BLACK.

Mr. Jenns' WORDS appear, as he speaks them OFF SCREEN.

MR. JENNS (V.O.)
Do we have your attention?

The WORDS remain on the SCREEN for fifteen seconds.

This is the last thing we see.

FADE OUT

