

"SUNSHINE PLACE"

Written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The streets are completely deserted except for maybe an occasional car or passersby. It's utterly silent save for the possible siren in the distance.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

A nervous man sits completely alone.

He's the very picture of lower middle class. This is MITCH. He fidgets as he looks around the small yet spacious room as it envelopes him, ominously. Engulfing him in its terrible silence.

His hands shake slightly as he reaches for his pack of cigarettes on the chair next to him. He lights one up and throws the match into an already overflowing ashtray.

Mitch takes a long pull and gets up to look through the nurse's booth, anxiously.

No one's there.

MITCH

Hello?

He knocks on the window. No answer. He tries to peer down the corridor and finally gives up, returning to his seat. As he sits down, another man walks in. Also, a bit on edge.

This man has a more intelligent look about him. Classier. This is LELAND. Their eyes meet briefly and Leland goes to the booth, looking for someone as well.

He's about to knock on the window when Mitch's voice interrupts him.

MITCH

Won't do no good, man. I think
they hide for spite.

Leland looks at him, then through the window and nods in agreement.

LELAND

Wouldn't be surprised.

Leland takes a seat a little farther down, across from Mitch as he takes another pull. After a few moments, both men notice each other's nervousness. Mitch looks like he wants to talk. Perhaps looking for comfort or a kindred spirit, he finally pipes up.

MITCH

This whole deal's kinda freaky,
huh?

Leland looks at him a moment, oddly, unsure of what he means.

LELAND

You mean...the "childbirth thing"?

Mitch smirks as he wrings his hands.

MITCH

Yeah. I'm freakin' out. You look
pretty freaked out, too.

Leland tries a smile.

LELAND

Yeah.

Mitch averts his eyes as he hesitantly pushes himself.

MITCH

It's- It's worse than that,
though, 'cause...well, my wife
doesn't know I'm here.

Leland looks confused as he watches him, carefully.

Mitch squirms a bit.

MITCH

We been fighting, you know? I walked out, like I always do. I wasn't there when it happened. When she went into labor. I went back home later and it looked like she left in a rush so I just got a bad feeling, you know? So, I came here to make sure she wasn't here and...

Mitch's voice trembles and he stops. Leland looks concerned.

LELAND

It's alright. You're here now. That's what-

MITCH

No. She's got complications. The doctor came out once, before they started working on her and told me she's in trouble, man. Serious trouble. She could...I'm such an asshole. This is all my fault.

Leland looks around, maybe as if searching for help that isn't there. It's up to him. He walks over, sits down next to Mitch and carefully puts a hand on his shoulder.

LELAND

Easy.

Mitch starts rambling quickly, talking to himself as much as he's talking to Leland.

MITCH

She dragged me to a shrink once who told me I was insecure and that it made me not trust her. I walked out and never saw him again. I got all macho and she
(more)

MITCH(cont.)

was right, man. She was right. It got to the point where I was always walkin' out of the house and leavin' her alone. I stopped doin' things with her. After awhile she was never home when I got there.

Mitch looks at him, squarely.

MITCH

I think she found a whole other life outside the house, you know? Her friends would call the house and hang up when they got me. She would go out but she would stop smiling when she came in the door and we wouldn't talk 'cause she was mad and I was too much of a dick.

Mitch puts his face in his hands.

MITCH

Oh, man. I'm a-

Leland's at a loss. Mitch freezes, staring into oblivion. There's a long pause and both men just sit there until finally...

MITCH

Y'know, my grandfather used to say to me that a problem could be as fierce as a storm but, believe it or not, easier to handle. You know why?

Leland shakes his head slowly.

MITCH

'Cause you have to wait for a storm to pass y'know? You got to wait it out. Tough it out. But with a problem, you had control.

(more)

MITCH(cont.)

You could part the clouds yourself
and the sunshine would be right
there waiting.

Mitch smiles into his past.

MITCH

Just part the clouds and the
sunshine is yours.

Leland smirks and nods.

Mitch suddenly realizes the spectacle he's abruptly made
and composes himself.

MITCH

Damn. Sorry, man. I don't even
know you and I'm dumpin' on you
like nobody's business. I'm sorry.
I'm just...I'm just...

LELAND

Freaking out?

They share a brief smile.

MITCH

Yeah.

LELAND

It's alright.

Leland extends his hand, warmly.

LELAND

I'm Leland.

Mitch is taken off-guard, then smiles as he welcomes the
gesture by taking his hand. He snuffles.

MITCH

Mitch.

LELAND

It's a pleasure, Mitch.

MITCH

Oh, yeah. I'm sure it's been a real ball for you, so far.

Leland laughs.

LELAND

You know, your wife is probably why they haven't been out here. I'm sure they're doing everything they can. She'll be fine.

MITCH

Thanks, man.

An awkward silence. Mitch tries to shake it.

MITCH

So, did you drop your wife off just now?

Now Leland squirms.

LELAND

Uh, actually, no. I'm here for my friend. She called me before she left for the hospital so I could meet her here. I wouldn't have made it to her in time.

MITCH

Oh. She doesn't have anyone?

Leland shakes his head.

LELAND

The father's not around.

Mitch frowns, sadly.

MITCH

That really sucks. I'm sorry.

Leland nods.

LELAND

I...yeah.

Leland hesitates.

MITCH

What?

LELAND

I care about her a lot.

MITCH

You mean, like a
boyfriend/girlfriend thing?

Leland smiles.

LELAND

More.

MITCH

Does she know?

LELAND

Well, we've had a thing going but
I'm not sure she knows exactly how
deep my feelings are.

Mitch smiles.

MITCH

Well, that's great, man. This is
the perfect time to tell her, you
know? With the baby and
everything.

Leland nods.

LELAND

I think it would make her happy. I
mean, I hope it does.

MITCH

You guys live around here?

LELAND

Yeah, we're both natives but we live a couple of zip codes apart. How about you?

MITCH

Oh, you kidding? My wife and I grew up on Sunshine Place. Right here off of Tavern Avenue.

Leland nods. Suddenly, Leland spots someone move across the corridor behind the window. He moves to the window.

LELAND

Hey!

He knocks on the window and waits. Nothing.

MITCH

Somebody go by?

LELAND

Just like you said. I think they do it on purpose.

They both exhale, frustrated.

LELAND

I'd just like to let her know that I'm here. I don't even know if she wants me in the room.

Mitch smiles.

MITCH

You better hope she didn't, otherwise she's gonna kick your ass.

LELAND

Not as badly as she'd kick her husband's, I imagine.

Mitch blinks.

MITCH
Your...Your friend's married?

Leland sighs.

LELAND
Unfortunately.

MITCH
You said the father wasn't around.

LELAND
Well, he's not.

Their tones change.

MITCH
That's kinda fucked up, though,
don't you think?

Leland turns to him, put off by his unapproving tone.

LELAND
Excuse me?

MITCH
I'm just saying, don't you think
you should let her settle things
with her guy before you-?

LELAND
I see. And how do you suppose she
should do that if he won't talk to
her?

Mitch fumes.

MITCH
You tryin' to say somethin'?

LELAND
Only that you should understand
the situation, especially being
that-

Mitch stands abruptly. Voices are raised.

MITCH
Being that what?!

Leland turns to face him defiantly.

LELAND
Being that you're doing the same
thing!

MITCH
Hey, fuck you, man! Maybe he needs
time to come around and you're
screwing it up! Maybe you're
ruining any chance they had of
fixin' things! Did you ever think
of that?!

LELAND
After four years?! How long am I
supposed to wait?! How much is she
supposed to tolerate?! That's four
fucking years she could have been
treated the way she deserved to be
treated! Four years that aged her
prematurely! That she'll never get
back! Instead she pissed it all
away on-

Mitch gets in Leland's face. Leland stands his ground.

MITCH
On what?!

Suddenly, a door opens and a doctor appears. Both Leland
and Mitch stop dead in their tracks and Mitch's face drops
as his eyes meet the doctor's blank expression.

Leland watches them and sympathy bleeds quickly into his
expression. All their anger dissolves. The doctor looks at
them, sensing the extreme tension.

Mitch approaches him, desperately and stares, speechless.
He can't speak so he waits. The doctor looks at a
clipboard.

DOCTOR
You're here for...

They both go to answer but Mitch gets it out first.

MITCH
Chris- Christine-

DOCTOR
Raffner?

MITCH
Yes.

Mitch doesn't see the shocked expression on Leland's face as he watches him with realization.

DOCTOR
Your wife and child are fine. It's
a girl.

There's a frozen moment, then Mitch smiles, elated. The doctor smiles back. Mitch drops to his knees and begins to cry tears of joy. Mitch rises suddenly and profusely thanks the doctor who's trying to write something on his clipboard.

MITCH
Thank you. Thank you so much.
Oh, God.

Mitch turns to a frazzled Leland who smiles for him, weakly.

MITCH
She's alright. You said it. You
said it, man. She's gonna be fine.

Leland nods, at a loss as he tries to maintain his composure. Mitch struggles, trying to find the right words.

MITCH
If I can- I know I can- If I can
just bring her back to me, I know
I can make her happy. The way she
(more)

MITCH(cont.)

used to be. And she won't need to live her whole life outside her home. If she would just believe me and give me a chance, I'll show her. I will.

Leland stares at Mitch, affected deeply by his words.

LELAND
I believe you.

MITCH
I swear it on my miserable soul.

Mitch turns to the doctor and Leland walks across the room to get his coat.

MITCH
Can I see her?

DOCTOR
In a few minutes you can come on back.

The doctor leaves. Mitch turns back to Leland who's putting on his coat. Mitch frowns.

MITCH
What're you doing?

Leland smiles a sad smile. There's an awkward pause as he tries to find words.

LELAND
Parting the clouds.

Mitch looks confused as Leland goes to the door.

MITCH
Aren't you going to see how your friend's doing?

Leland stops at the door, averts his gaze as he quickly wipes a tear away, then looks at Mitch.

She's going to be just fine.

Leland opens the door and smiles as he looks back at Mitch.

LELAND

Enjoy the sunshine, Mitch.

Leland leaves and Mitch watches him go.

FADE OUT:

THE END