

METRONOME

by

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"METRONOME"

FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

There is a soft light glowing in the this empty yard. A sprinkler fills the frame. It quickly shoots on. The water droplets slowly come down, as the sound of many sprinklers and the crickets chirping fill the scene, until--

PACE

Oh crap!

PACE (male, mid 30s), wearing a security uniform and a heavy backpack, is seen struggling his way through the sprinklers. He twists and turns on his way down the path from his apartment.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

A light mist hangs in the air, and the street lights are the only lights coming through. BRUNA (female, late 20s), who is attractive and has a slick look to her, comes walking along the sidewalk.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - EVENING

In his awkward half sprint, Pace is trying to gather his backpack and push his jacket out of the way. He comes to a complete stop. He just missed the bus.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Bruna walks calmly. She raises her arm as she comes to a stop. A black car slides next to her, and she slips in.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - EVENING

Pace walks off the bus and it speeds away behind him, splashing his back with street water.

Bruna steps out of the car and starts walking forward. She passes the bus stop, past Pace, and walks away.

Pace is in the background, looking around for something. He too walks away, but in a hurry.

INT. UNDERGROUND METRO STATION - EVENING

Pace is running down the escalator.

PACE

Excuse me! Move!

Pace pushes past people on the escalator, struggling with his backpack.

A stranger bumps into Pace and Pace trips. A gun and some paperwork slips out his backpack. He shoves everything back in and stands up.

The metro train whips into the station, screeching to a halt. The doors ding open.

INT. DC METRO CAR - EVENING

Pace runs through the metro doors and slides into a seat out of breath.

The doors begin to close, until we see a foot shoots between them. The doors stop, and open.

Bruna slowly walks through the doors and sits across from Pace. Silence.

INT. DC METRO CAR - EVENING

Bruna is staring straight at Pace. Pace tries not to notice.

Bruna begins to open her mouth --

There is loud yelling, and everyone turns to look. Two men are wrestling their way through the car.

MAN 1

You still owe me. I'm short 5 grand, and you expect me to --

Bam! Man 1 gets punched in the face, and his tooth shoots out of his jaw. The fight continues. Man two grabs Man 1's wrist.

MAN 2

You got your money! Now stay the hell away from me, and be grateful you are still here to spend it.

Man 2 leaves.

Bruna walks up to Man 1. Man one looks relieved.

BRUNA

You okay there? He got you good. Let me take a look.

Man 1 looks relieved to see Brunna and opens his mouth as wide as he can, moaning with pain. Brunna looks inside.

BRUNA (CONT'D)

Well, there's nothing I can do for you now sir, but come see me sometime this week. Just make sure you put some ice on it when you get home.

MAN 1

I really appreciate this. You aren't gonna charge me for this one, are you, Dr. Rousseau? I know how you love to collect your money.

BRUNA

While tempting, I'll give you a break this one time.

Bruna turns away from the man and sits back in her seat. Now Pace is staring at her. Bruna looks back.

PACE

I'm sorry, but do I know you from somewhere?

BRUNA

No. You don't know me.

PACE

Then, can I help you with anything? I mean, ha, is this like your seat or something?

BRUNA

Nope. You don't know me, but I do know you!

PACE

I really don't get out much, and can't imagine where you would know me from.

BRUNA

You were Happy Loman. Right?

PACE

Death of a Salesman! Now that was a while ago. About a year now I think. Gosh feels like ten. So you're into local theatre then?

BRUNA

If I remember correctly, I thought you were pretty good. Any shows since?

PACE

Those days are over. I would say
Happy was actually my biggest role.
That is since my middle school
rendition of Peter Pan.

Bruna turns away from Pace and reaches into her black purse.
It takes her a while to find exactly what she's looking for,
but when she gets it; a grin shines over her face.

BRUNA

Here.

Bruna hands Pace her business card.

BRUNA (CONT'D)

Well, if you ever do get back into
the theatre game, give me a ring.

PACE

I won't be getting back. Those days
really are over.

Pace looks down at the card.

PACE (CONT'D)

Ms. Rousseau, I know there's better
theatre out there than the company
that put on my show anyway.

BRUNA

Like I said, if you ever do get
back into it, you have my card.
Please, Bruna.

PACE

Alright, Bruna. I'm Peter.

BRUNA

Peter? I could have sworn the
playbill had you listed as Pace.

PACE

Kind of embarrassing. That was the
name people called me in the
theatre. Too many Peters. It got
quite confusing.

Pace takes another look at the card Bruna handed him.

PACE (CONT'D)

You know that I'm a failed actor?
And here I see you're a dentist,
yes?

Bruna nods her head

PACE (CONT'D)

And you knew the man who was in the fight?

BRUNA

He's one of my patients.

PACE

Hope you're patients don't always come from a fight like this one here.

BRUNA

Well. Not always.

INT. METRO CAR - EVENING

METRO VOICE RECORDING

This station is DuPont Circle. This is the red line train to Shady Grove. The next Station is Woodly Park Zoo/ Adams Morgan.

Old man walks into the Metro car. He is wearing tattered clothes and is shaking a jar of coins.

OLD MAN

If I could have everyones attention! I am a veteran and I could use some help to get food--

Bruna walks over to the man and puts a dollar in his jar. Then she sits back down across from Pace.

BRUNA

Not willing to share your money then? Must not have a soul.

PACE

Excuse me?

BRUNA

No money, no soul.

PACE

That's not true at all! And who are you to ask?

BRUNA

You're saying you don't feel guilty at all?

PACE

It's not worth it. He's probably just going to spend that money on drugs anyway.

BRUNA

So you know this man?

PACE

No, but--

BRUNA

No you don't, so don't assume. I didn't make assumptions about you.
(BEAT)
But perhaps I will.

PACE

I'm sorry?

Bruna looks Pace up and Down

BRUNA

Your what? Some sort of police officer, or security guard? You didn't just get off your shift thought. No. If that were the case you might still look this exhausted, but would have some gleam of hope that you could crawl into bed or do whatever shit it is that you enjoy. Your just headed to work now.

PACE

Okay lucky guess. Such a different scenario than some dirty bum.

Bruna thinks for a moment.

BRUNA

I have a proposal for you.

PACE

I don't want shit from you.

Bruna crosses over to sit right next to Pace.

BRUNA

Death.

PACE

Sorry, what?

BRUNA

You and me, a team. We don't need to commit suicide, but we could fake it.

PACE

What exactly are you proposing?

BRUNA

It's the perfect scheme! If you can convince everyone in my life that I'm dead, and I do the same for you, we can start over!

PACE

Your crazy.

Pace gets up to walk out of the train car and into the next one over.

INT. DC METRO CAR - EVENING

Bruna sits back in her original seat across from Pace.

Some stranger, now sitting in the seat beside Bruna, gets right up in her face.

KAYDEN (45), a very peppy and outgoing man.

KAYDEN

Hello!

Pace turns to look.

BRUNA

Do I know you?

KAYDEN

No, but I sure as heck do know your friend here.

Bruna looks at Pace. Pace sits back down.

BRUNA

You know Pace, yet you are talking to me.

KAYDEN
Any friend of his is a friend of
mine. I'm Kaden!

Kaden reaches out to shake Bruna's hand. His hand sits there
for a moment, then he puts his hand back down.

KAYDEN (CONT'D)
And how are you doing Peter?

Pace stares at Bruna, saying nothing.

KAYDEN (CONT'D)
Tired I bet. I know for sure that I
am! Though our night has just
begun.

BRUNA
Your night? You two work together?

KAYDEN
In a sense. I sell him burritos
right outside the museum. It's
always a good time when I see his
face around. Never before ran into
him on this metro ride though.

Pace looks at Kayden, clearing his throat.

PACE
How much of our conversation did
you overhear?

KAYDEN
Not much. Why do you ask? Really
all I heard is that you're thinking
of getting back into theatre? I
would love to see a show! Other
than that not much. I've been
listening to this great podcast
about--

PACE
I'm not getting back into theatre.
That was just--

Bruna starts coughing. Pace and Kayden turn to look.

KAYDEN
You okay there?

Bruna's coughs get louder.

PACE
Is she choking?

KAYDEN
Ma'am are you okay?

Bruna's heaving now and falls to the floor.

PACE
Is there a doctor! Anyone know the Heimlich?

People crowd around Brunna.

MAN 3, (late 30s), stands forward.

MAN 3
I'm no doctor, but I know CPR!

This man reaches down over Brunna.

Bruna pops up, taking a deep breath.

BRUNNA
I'm okay. Thanks everyone! Just choked on an almond.

Kayden leans over to Pace.

KAYDEN
She wasn't eating though?

Bruna jumps up.

BRUNNA
It was very nice meeting you Kayden.

Kayden, confused, clears his throat.

KAYDEN
Very well then. I better get back to the other car. Getting off at the next stop, and the conductor mentioned this door won't open their. Ridiculous!
(BEAT)
Nice meeting you. I'll see you around later this week Peter!

Kayden turns to walk out of the metro car.

BRUNNA
What a friend you got there.

PACE
What the hell?

BRUNA
Sorry?

PACE
Your fake choking.

BRUNA
Had to get rid of your friend
somehow. He would have figured out
our plan.

PACE
There is no plan!

BRUNA
Why?

PACE
Because it's insane!

BRUNA
Why?

PACE
Logistically. Even the thought. It
would never--

BRUNA
Consider this. Is there anyone
currently in your life who you want
to be around? Or what about anyone
who would care to be around you?

PACE
No, but that still--

BRUNA
So it seems simple to me. We work
together.

Pace gets up to walk into the other car. As he opens the car door to step into the next over, he gets faint.

Pace has flashbacks.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

MPD
(V/O on phone)
Hello this is the MPD.

PACE
Sorry wrong number.

MPD
Son, we have custody of your
mother. She is currently being held
at the Montgomery County Police
Department.

Pace hangs up and throws the phone on the ground.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

PACE
Hey mom. If you keep up the way
it's been going, you're going to be
out in time for my show!

MOM
What makes you think I want to see
it?

PACE
I don't assume. Just thought I'd
tell you.

MOM
Knowing how much these cops hate
me. I won't be out in time.

INT. METRO CAR 2 - EVENING

KAYDEN
You okay there?

PACE
Sorry what?

Kayden drags Pace from the metro car door and over to a seat.

KAYDEN
You looked a little faint.

PACE
Yea I'm fine. Hey how are you?
Didn't you? You were getting off.

KAYDEN
Well obviously I couldn't do that.

PACE
Huh?

KAYDEN

When the metro breaks down in the middle of the tunnel, it's pretty hard to get to where you're going.

PACE

The car stopped?

Pace has another flashback.

EXT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - NIGHT

Pace approaches Kayden in his food truck.

KAYDEN

Welcome back! Will it be the usual?

PACE

You know it.

KAYDEN

And how has your day been?

PACE

Good. And yours?

KAYDEN

Doesn't sound convincing to me?

PACE

No?

KAYDEN

You got some time to talk before your shift starts. Come on, what'd you do?

PACE

Not much. I went to the supermarket last night though, so I finally had toilet paper in the house.

KAYDEN

That's good.

Kayden hands Pace his burrito. Pace reaches out to pay.

KAYDEN (CONT'D)

This one's on me!

INT. METRO CAR 2 - EVENING

Pace rushes back to the other car.

INT. DC METRO CAR - EVENING

Half the lights are out and everyone in the car is muttering.

BRUNA

Hello again. Nice journey?

PACE

What do you get out of your little agreement?

BRUNA

I'm sorry but I don't know what you're referring to.

A little boy (2) starts tugging on Pace's pants. Pace looks down.

A woman runs over to Pace.

WOMEN

I am so sorry sir. The dim lights are really freaking out my son here.

The woman picks up her child and walks away.

PACE

Follow me.

Pace leads Bruna into two seats in the back of the car.

PACE (CONT'D)

Now answer the question.

BRUNA

I don't see why I have to.

PACE

You seem to know almost everything about me, and all I seem to know about you is your passion for teeth.

BRUNA

I know very little of you.

PACE

Yet you trust me enough to tell your whole family you're dead when you aren't?

(BEAT)

Do you even have a family?

BRUNA

I have a mother, father, and five siblings whom you will all tell I am dead.

PACE

And how do you suppose I do that?

BRUNA

Quite simple. You just give em a visit. Say you were one of my patients, and that you were notified of my death. Word will spread quickly.

PACE

There are still a ton of pot holes here. They will launch an investigation. Why me? Why didn't the police tell them? How do I even know them!

Silence.

PACE (CONT'D)

How would you fake my death?

BRUNA

You can figure this one out on your own.

PACE

My boss would be easy. She doesn't care at all. One call to say I'm dead and she'd move on. Same with my land lord.

BRUNA

You're forgetting.

PACE

Forgetting what?

BRUNA

Kayden. What do I tell him?

PACE

You don't.

BRUNA

Good.

PACE

I just stop showing up.

BRUNA

Now you get it.
This will be easy.

Bruna pulls her phone out of her purse and hands it to Pace.

BRUNA (CONT'D)

You are going to call my mom and
tell her I'm dead.

PACE

We are doing this now! I never
accepted this.

BRUNA

Do it! It will be easy.

PACE

What do I even say? I don't know
anything about you.

BRUNA

I don't care, just make it up. Say
I fell into a metro tracks and am
dead now.

PACE

Your mom won't just accept that!
She will call the police, look on
the news!

BRUNA

It's late. Say you didn't know what
to do. You are the only one here.
You saw me fall in and the next
thing you know the metro came by.
When it left, no part of my body
was there.

PACE

They will investigate me. The cops
will still get involved!

BRUNA

But by then, you will be dead too.

Then the metro kicks back on and starts moving again. Both
are silent for a moment.

PACE

I'm getting off at the next stop.

Pace is staring at the phone in his hand. The phone starts ringing. It's Bruna's mom.

BRUNA

Go on. Answer it.

METRO VOICE RECORDING

This station is Woodly Park/ Adams Morgan. This is the red line train to Shady Grove.

Pace picks up the call

PACE

Hello, Ms. Rousseau, I have some terrible news. This is Peter Evens calling. I am a patient of Dr. Rousseau.

Pace gets up and walks out of the metro. Bruna follows closely behind.

FADE TO BLACK.