

CONSENSUS

written by

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CHANCE (V.O.)
Can I tell you a ghost story?

LILY (V.O.)
(Sniffles)
O-okay.

CHANCE (V.O.)
Once upon a time there was a little boy who disappeared in the woods behind his house. His parents gathered everyone in town, and for six days and six nights they searched everywhere for him. A month or so passed, then a year and they never found that little boy. So, the town agreed that the boy was dead.

FADE IN:

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT

in the kitchen LILY (25+) is bound to a chair with duct tape. Tears stripe mascara down her cheeks. CHANCE (25+) leans against the sink smoking.

CHANCE
You know what that means? It means if that little boy showed up at home tomorrow he'd be considered a ghost. Can you believe that?

Chance pulls a twenty dollar bill out of his pocket and holds it up.

CHANCE
What's this?

LILY
It's, it's twenty dollars?

CHANCE
Okay, and why?

LILY
Because it says twenty dollars on it?

Chance tears a paper towel from the roll. Folds it in half. With his pen he writes, "TWENTY DOLLARS," on the paper towel. He holds it up.

CHANCE
So, by your logic, is this worth
twenty dollars then?

LILY
Obviously not.

CHANCE
See? It has absolutely nothing to
do with writing or the colors does
it?

He holds up the twenty bill.

CHANCE
This paper, is only worth twenty
dollars because we all agree, that
it is. Just like the town agrees
that the boy is dead.

LILY
What do you want from me?

Chance thinks the question over with a drag from his
cigarette.

CHANCE
Your vote.

Chance smirks.

CHANCE
And a cup of sugar.

INT. HALLWAY-NIGHT

Chance skips with a cup of sugar down the hall to the
neighbors door.

INT. JOSH'S PLACE-NIGHT

and Chance waltzes in with the sugar. JOSH BAUER(30+) is
taped and gagged in an arm chair.

CHANCE
Miss me? Josh? Josh speak up I
can't hear you.

Chance laughs. He clasps the tape edge of the gag.

CHANCE
Remember now, we agreed that
screaming is counter-productive.
Right?

Josh's worried face nods. Chance peels the tape off.

JOSH
You're a fucking dead man.

Josh squirms, Chance dresses a cup of coffee with sugar.

CHANCE
I know, isn't it great? I mean the possibilities are endless.

Chance sips the coffee scratching his head.

CHANCE
So, I've talked it over with Lily and Catherine and they have both agreed that having a vote is the most sensible thing to do here.

JOSH
Listen, okay, just, I've got money, I, I-

CHANCE
-Shh.

Chance kneels down to Joshes level.

CHANCE
Josh. Look at me. Do you think I really came here for money? We're going to have a vote. This is still a democracy we're living in isn't it?

Chance smiles.

JOSH
You're out of your fucking mind you sick-!

Chance quickly tapes Josh's mouth again.

CHANCE
If I was you I'd be thinking about my platform.

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Chance dances his way to the third apartment.

INT. CATHERINE'S PLACE- NIGHT

and Chance pokes his head in.

CHANCE

Boo!

CATHERINE (25+) trembles flat on her back. She's taped to her kitchen table. He saunters over to her.

CHANCE

Hello my dear. Are you ready to meet the other candidates?

Chance has a seat at the table. Lights a smoke and presses play on a tape recorder.

CHANCE

Candidate number one, Mr. Josh Bauer.

JOSH (V.O.)

(Voice
recording)

I'm unemployed right now okay, we're, we're in a recession what do you expect?

CHANCE (V.O.)

(Recording)

What did you do before you were unemployed?

JOSH (V.O.)

(Recording)

Assembled cars, what difference does it make?

CHANCE (V.O.)

(Recording)

You know, I'm wondering the same thing. Do you have any children Josh?

JOSH (V.O.)

(Recording)

No.

Chance presses stop on the recorder.

CHANCE

Unemployed and single, hm. What do you think Cathy? Ready to hear number two?

CATHERINE

What do you want from me?

Chances leans in close with a haunting grin.

CHANCE

Your undivided, attention.

He clicks play.

LILY (V.O.)

My name is L-Lily.

CHANCE (V.O.)

Pretty name.

LILY (V.O.)

Th-thanks.

CHANCE (V.O.)

And what have you made of yourself, Lily? Hm?

LILY (V.O.)

Uh, um, I, I'm a nurse.

CHANCE (V.O.)

Oh, how noble. You might prove to be useful yet. Do you have any children, nurse Lily?

LILY (V.O.)

Yes. Abigail. I have a six year old daughter.

Click! Chance stops the recording.

CHANCE

Well. The choice seems clear to me. Don't you think?

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT

Chance sits in a backwards chair facing Lily who is still bound in her chair own chair. He holds the tape recorder between them.

CHANCE

So we have Josh, the unemployed single guy with no prospects or plans for the future. Here is what Catherine had to say.

He presses play.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

J-Josh.

Josh slowly aims his teary stare at Catherine, her vacant eyes gaze back.

CHANCE (V.O.)

Well Lily, who do you pick?

LILY (V.O.)

Fuck you.

CHANCE (V.O.)

Come on just give me one name and this can all be over.

LILY (V.O.)

I won't play your twisted fucking game.

CHANCE (V.O.)

That's too bad.

Chance presses stop.

CHANCE

Well.

Chance smiles.

CHANCE

It looks like we have a tie. I'm sorry Lily but you've been disqualified.

Chance paces to Lily and cuts her free.

JOSH

Wait. What are you doing?

CHANCE

I'm going to make some room, it's a bit stuffy in here.

Chance drags Lily out of the apartment.

JOSH

No, no wait. Stop!

CATHERINE

Lily! No! Help!

Click! The door shuts behind Chance.

JOSH

Fuck! No! Oh my God. Oh my God.

CATHERINE

I'm, I'm, I'm sorry, I'm sorry,
I'm sorry. She, she has a kid and-

JOSH

-It's okay, it's okay forget about
it, listen, listen to me. I have a
gun in the closet. This isn't how
we die you hear me?

Catherine trembles a nod.

JOSH

Okay, now-

Josh wiggles in the binds edging his chair closer to
Catherine's.

JOSH (CONT'D)

-you have to-

He gets his chair back to back with hers.

JOSH (CONT'D)

-untie me quick, quick! Come on
Catherine, this is it wake up!
Take control of your life while
you still have a chance.

Catherine's shaky fingers work at the knots around his
wrists.

JOSH

Come on, come on!

CATHERINE

(sobbing)

I don't want to die, I don't want
to die.

JOSH

(Softly)

Just focus sweetie and everything
will be okay. Okay?

CATHERINE

O-okay, okay, I got it, I got it,
oh my God I got it your free your
free!

Josh wriggles his hands free and bursts out of the chair.

Catherine shines a teary smile. Josh begins untying her.

CATHERINE
We're not going to die-

Click! Chance enters the room wielding the kitchen knife.
Fresh blood glimmers on the blade.

CHANCE
-You two have been dead for years.

CATHERINE
Ah! You killed her? You killed her
oh no, no he killed her. He
fucking killed her Josh.

Josh postures up poised. Chance shuts the door and takes one
step forward. Catherine shakes between them.

CHANCE
I did what was necessary. I'm
doing what needs to be done. Don't
you see it?

JOSH
Not another fucking step! You sick
fucking freak.

CHANCE
You think I'm sick? What about you
Joshua. You're about to turn
thirty one and you've been
unemployed for seven months. No
girlfriend, no kids. What purpose
do you serve exactly?

JOSH
I just want to live my life man,
what the fuck is your problem-?

Chance takes a step forward.

CHANCE
-You've wasted your life. And you
Catherine, when you were little
girl did you used to dream about
being a waitress? Hm?

Catherines eyes find the floor.

CHANCE
I didn't think so.

JOSH
What the fuck does this have to do
with anything man-?

Catherine smiles to herself. She sniffles and her eyes have

accepted her fate.

CHANCE

-It has everything to do with everything! What are you going to Josh huh? Are you feeling brave.

CATHERINE

(exhausted)

Go Josh.

JOSH

What?

CHANCE

She said go.

CATHERINE

It makes no sense for both of us to, to, just go. Do it.

CHANCE

Wow. His bravery or her sacrifice.

Josh backs towards the bedroom slowly while Chance moves towards Catherine. Josh stops. Chance stops.

JOSH

I can't.

CHANCE

For a twenty eight year old waitress? Why? She's going nowhere Josh.

JOSH

So am I!

CHANCE

Well that's true, but come on she doesn't even have any kids, no men on the horizon. Did you know she wanted to be chef?

JOSH

No I didn't.

CHANCE

Yeah. I bet she bores the shit out of her friends at work with talk of how one day you know, she's going to get out of this stinking bar and become this amazing cook. Sound familiar Cath'?

Catherine resigns her eyes.

JOSH
Leave her alone.

CATHERINE
He's right. I'm all talk.

JOSH
So am I okay? I was going to open
my own custom car shop you know
but then the recession hit and-

CHANCE
-Oh shut up with the recession
Already. You worked there for
eleven fucking years Josh. How
many other excuses did you give
yourself before the recession?

JOSH
No, you're right. That's why I
want you to take me. I'm the
oldest. She still has a chance.

CATHERINE
No Josh-.

Josh and Catherine lock eyes.

JOSH
Promise me you'll do something
great.

CATHERINE
You can't do this. Go to your
closet like you said remember.

JOSH
No, this makes sense to me now.

Chance pulls a snub nosed revolver from his pocket.

CHANCE
Let's go then Josh.

JOSH
My gun. You had it the whole time?

CHANCE
Let's go.

Josh follows Chance to the door out of the apartment.

CATHERINE

(sobbs)

No, no, no, no, Josh don't-

Josh stops and looks back at Catherine.

JOSH

Do something great kid. Promise me that.

CATHERINE

No, no, Josh, Josh please, please you can't-

JOSH

Promise me.

CATHERINE

O-kay, okay, I promise.

Josh turns and leaves followed at gun point by Chance who shuts the door behind him.

Catherine breaks down crying.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

In the back seat Chance lights a cigarette. He looks down at his right pant leg and rolls it up.

CHANCE

Ah.

His leg is sliced open and blood is smeared all over. We follow his leg as he lifts it onto a woman's lap beside him.

Two female hands gloved in latex begin cleaning the wound.

The hands belong to Lily. She and Chance share a smile. Her mascara still streaking her face.

CHANCE

Told you you'd prove to be useful.

LILY

Jeez babe why'd you cut so deep for?

CHANCE

I wanted that dark color, you know.

LILY
Silly. I'm going to have to stitch
this up, a bandage won't do it.

CHANCE
Be gentle then sugar.

The drivers door opens and a Man gets in. The Man starts the
car up and looks back. It's Josh.

JOSH
Oh, that's a nasty one buddy. How
you feeling?

CHANCE
Fine.

Lily starts stitching the wound.

CHANCE
So, what do you think guys?

JOSH
I'd say it was a success.

CHANCE
Beautiful?

LILY
Honestly, I don't know. I think we
need to start getting them to open
up earlier.

JOSH
What do you mean? She fully
admitted her apathy.

LILY
Okay, I don't know then. You had
the last word this time, did it
feel sincere?

JOSH
Yeah, totally.

CHANCE
It was really good babe, she meant
it, I could feel it.

Lily finishes the stitching and ties the last knot.

LILY
Alright then, it was a success.

CHANCE

Well, we'll see I guess. Josh you
planted the culinary school
applications right?

Lily starts wrapping the wound in a bandage.

JOSH

I did.

CHANCE

There you go. That's all we can do
then the rest is up to her.

JOSH

Alright. Where to next?

CHANCE

There's a fella up in Canada who
keeps telling everybody he's going
to be a writer. Let's go see if we
can't inspire him a little.

JOSH

Alright, Canada, nice.

Josh turns around and buckles up. He starts driving. Lily
rolls Chances pant leg down and then they lean in close.

LILY

(whispers)

You're doing a great thing my
little ghost boy.

CHANCE

(whispers)

You're the great thing.

They smirk and then lock lips.

THE END

FADE OUT.