

BARBED WIRE & CHAINS

A screenplay by

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INT. AN APARTMENT - DAY

The light bulb swinging overhead is burnt out. The only light is a pale blue haze from the window. The walls are bare, the floor is bare (save for the dirty laundry and other refuse), dust is the only accent piece.

In the corner, Warren lays sideways on a worn cot. Lazily, he raises his hands above him, and lights a cigarette with a lighter shaped like a handgun. Once the flame catches, he lifts himself up and takes a long drag.

A female hand slides up his back and onto his shoulder.

WARREN

You up already?

A groggy female voice responds from under the sheets.

CONNIE

Yeah.

WARREN

Good, we're going out.

CONNIE

Mmmh . . .

Warren looks down at her.

WARREN

What's wrong?

CONNIE

. . . I'm cold.

Warren looks around, surveying his local dump.

WARREN

Yeah . . .

He takes another drag and sighs, letting out a plume of smoke.

WARREN

It's a bitch, but it's the best
I can do.

(Playfully)

At least I've got you with me.

CONNIE

Oh?

Her hand traces up his neck to stroke behind his ear.

CONNIE

And what happens if I walk out
on you?

WARREN

Hmph.

He smirks, and points the lighter at her.

WARREN

Bang.

They giggle. Warren shakes her, and stands up, pocketing
the lighter, and dropping the cigarette in a beer bottle.

WARREN

Get up, we're going to school.

Connie sits up, somewhat puzzled.

CONNIE

School? Why?

Warren crosses into the kitchen. A tattoo covers the
greater portion of his back: a rose wrapped tightly in
barbed wire and chains.

WARREN

I don't know, catch up, see how
everybody's doing, reading,
writing, arithmetic, why not?

He shoves a few large textbooks into a worn bag on the
kitchen card table. Connie collapses back into the bed.

CONNIE

Do we have to?

Warren opens the refrigerator, and looks around, as if to
make sure that the milk carton it contains really is the
only item there.

WARREN

C'mon you were begging me to
keep going two weeks ago, and
now you don't want to?

He grabs the milk carton, takes a swig, gulps audibly, and
deposits it in the trash. Connie sighs.

CONNIE

Alright.

WARREN

Good girl. Have some breakfast.

He comes back in, and tosses a few Slim Jims onto the bed. Connie sits up part way and examines one of them as Warren sits down next to her in his former position. Somewhat sullen from her examination, she turns to see a cockroach approach and eat a slice of mushroom on the nightstand.

Warren notices she isn't eating.

WARREN

What?

CONNIE

How come we never have Chinese food for breakfast anymore?

WARREN

It costs money.

CONNIE

Yeah.

There is a long silence.

WARREN

The studio took one of our tapes yesterday.

CONNIE

I know.

WARREN

. . .I'm going to do something for you.

CONNIE

I know.

She smiles, and nods. He puts a hand on her shoulder.

Warren clicks on a battered 80s-era radio alarm on the nightstand. A faint treble shadow of an industrial tune (God Lives Underwater: Nothing) wafts into the room.

INT. A CLASSROOM - DAY

Ian's headphones play the same tune over the teacher's lecture.

TEACHER

Good. Step functions are non-continuous.

The teacher draws a broken graph on the board.

TEACHER

I can't draw it without picking
up my pen.

Ian's head nods gently to the music.

TEACHER

See if you can come up with a
rule to describe a continuous
function.

Students shift in their seats to work together. Pens and
paper appear from all sides as calculus spills over desks.

Ian remains in his relaxed position, bobbing to the music,
but his eyes are fixed on the three graphs on the board.
There it is. He looks around, and seeing that nobody else
is ready to offer an answer, he raises his hand.

TEACHER

Ian.

IAN

F of X is continuous if the
limit as X approaches A of F of
 X is equal to F of A .

TEACHER

. . . very good.

IAN

Thanks, I was impressed.

INT. A HALLWAY - DAY

Business as usual until Warren and Connie come strolling
in. Instantly every head is filled with fist fights,
vandalism, knifings. Warren's reputation comes to him in
the eyes of every student, and he challenges every stare as
he walks. Only Connie seems ashamed of his history.

Ian rounds the corner behind him.

IAN

Warren!

Warren and Connie turn around.

IAN

The prodigal children have
returned.

Warren smiles as Ian approaches and shakes his hand.

IAN

And why are we graced with your presence on such a fine Friday afternoon?

WARREN

Just checking up on you people.

IAN

Well aren't you the benevolent dictator. Connie! How are you?

CONNIE

I'm good thanks.

IAN

Excellent . . . aren't you turning eighteen soon?

CONNIE

Oh! Yeah.

IAN

Adulthood at last.

He turns to Warren.

IAN

Will I be invited to the wedding?

Anxiety blinks into Connie's face, but she swallows it quickly.

WARREN

Ehh, small ceremony.

IAN

Oh, well, now you're hurting my feelings.

WARREN

Yeah, well, tough.

They share a smirk.

IAN

Oh look, there's Ed.

Another boy comes walking up the hall. He stops several yards away when he spots Warren, freezing into a deer-in-the-headlights stance.

ED

Warren!

Warren seems more pleased to see him.

WARREN

Eddie! Hey man! Long time, no see! You know I haven't seen you since you were palming my girlfriend's ass.

Warren draws a gun and kills Ed. The hall fills with screaming and clattering notebooks as students claw over each other for cover.

A security guard runs around the corner, and draws his gun at Warren.

GUARD

Drop the weapon now!

Warren grabs Ian, taking him as a hostage.

WARREN

Fuck you!

He backs Ian toward Connie, who no longer appears to know where she is, and slips her another gun.

WARREN

Take this.

She recoils from the weapon.

WARREN

Take it!

He thrusts it into her chest. She grabs it, and holds it awkwardly. He takes her by the wrist and pulls the three of them into a nearby classroom, slamming the door and locking it.

With the guard out of sight for the moment, Warren releases Ian.

WARREN

Sorry.

The three turn around. Students are poking their heads tentatively out from their hiding places. Warren levels the gun.

WARREN

Sit down!

Warren moves into the classroom, Connie slumps into a chair.

CONNIE

Oh my God.

Connie stares blankly into the floor. Ian begins laughing.

IAN

For someone who makes his own rules, you certainly chose a difficult game.

WARREN

What?

Ian begins walking as he speaks.

IAN

A room full of liabilities, a murder conviction, no way out, and no reward. I at least hope you're enjoying yourself.

Sirens begin in the distance. Warren level's the gun again.

WARREN

Shut up.

IAN

Don't blame the messenger. Someone would have told you eventually, and in a less agreeable manner I trust.

He nods toward the window. The sirens pull up outside, and megaphones are taking over the chorus.

WARREN

Fuck you!

IAN

That's unnecessary.

WARREN

Sit the fuck down!

Ian takes a seat on the floor, eying Warren on the way down, an impudent smirk on his face.

Connie steps forward.

CONNIE

Warren, you didn't need to do that.

He moves toward her.

WARREN

I . . . I'm sorry, I . . . I had to. I couldn't just let . . . I had to do something for you.

IAN

So that really is the reason for all of this? I thought you could be rash, I didn't think you could be uninteresting.

He turns around.

WARREN

I thought I told you to shut up.

IAN

You weren't so crass a few minutes ago.

WARREN

Maybe you weren't so full of shit a few minutes ago.

IAN

Or was I?

Long silence.

IAN

You're afraid of me, because I'm right. I've always been right, I'm probably right now, and there is nothing you can do to change that.

Warren walks toward him, and levels the gun directly at his head.

IAN

Again with that damn gun? Haven't you made enough mistakes with that today?

Warren moves out of the way so Ian can see Connie, who is looking on in horror.

WARREN

Look at her.

IAN

I see her.

WARREN

Look at her, damnit! That's it!
That's what I've got left!
You go fuck yourself, or I'll
give you what I gave Ed.

He cocks the hammer.

WARREN

Bang.

IAN

Yes sir! Say no more.
Personally I'd be more worried
about them, but hey! Your gun,
your rules.

He nods toward the window again. Warren looks out, the Swat team is making final preparations.

IAN

It's over Warren. It only gets
worse from here. If they come
in, you'll never see her or
anyone else ever again.

Warren throws a desk against the wall, and once more levels the gun at Ian.

WARREN

You can stop them! You've got
all the answers, don't you?

Warren walks back over to Ian, and digs the gun into his skull.

WARREN

Talk damn it!

Connie has moved to the opposite side of Ian. She raises her gun at Warren.

CONNIE

Stop.

Warren looks up, trembling, eyes wide in shock. His mouth works for a moment as he searches for his voice.

WARREN

He can tell us! He can get us
out of here!

CONNIE

Stop it! . . . I want to go
home.

WARREN

Its ok, I'm going to get us out
of here, we're going to go
home.

CONNIE

No! I don't want to go back
with you. I don't want to be
cold, and have no food and
sleep on a cot. I want to go
home.

Warren is clutching for his breath. The gun begins to move
away from Ian's head.

IAN

Well, Warren? You told us what
you would do if someone took
her away. I wonder if you'll
keep your word.

He raises two finger's to Connie's head.

IAN

Bang.

The door swings open. Warren points his gun, Connie only
looks. A burst of automatic weapons fire breaks out, and
two bodies hit the floor.