

CONSEQUENTIAL

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

Efficiency with a bathroom sink outside its shower-toilet.

A dormitory refrigerator sits on a plastic egg crate with a small microwave on top. A British telephone-booth piggybank toy sets on top of both.

A card table has a laptop with a folding chair, a tiny television is on another egg-crate, and a twin bed with no frame sits on the floor. A trashcan with a toy basketball-backboard has a hand-written sign taped across it, "I wish."

ABAYOMI BALBER, British-African, 20s, tall, athletic, wakes in too-short bed and stretches too hard almost falling out.

BALBER
Gobsmacked!

Balber catches himself as there is knocking on his door.

BALBER
Yeah, yeah.

Balber sits up wearing boxers and slips on a thin robe.

More knocking.

BALBER
Shag me!

Barefoot, he crosses the floor daydreaming.

BALBER
I wish.

A shadow slides across the floor behind Balber as his robe billows open by an unseen wind.

Balber spins. No one is there. He looks at his only window.

The window is closed.

Balber ties his robe and answers the door with chain-lock on.

JA "JOHNNIE" CHEN, 20s, Asian-American, mid 20s, his nextdoor neighbor, jams her face in the door's opening like *Jack Nicholson* from "The Shining."

JOHNNIE
"Here's, Johnny!"

Balber jumps back scared-surprised.

BALBER
Jesus, Johnnie!

Johnnie presses her face inside more distorting her cheeks.

JOHNNIE
Just --Johnnie. You afraid a'
somethin'? Take the god damn chain
off, wanker.

Balber half closes the door to slide its chain off and lets it drop swinging, then steps away.

Johnnie enters as Balber goes to the refrigerator, opens it to retrieve two protein shakes, and tosses one to Johnnie.

Johnnie is closing the front door so the drink hits her in a shoulder making her drop a manilla folder under that arm.

BALBER
Nice catch, dickless.

Johnnie picks up her folder, then the drink and opens it.

JOHNNIE
Nice throw, dickhead.

Balber opens his shake. They toast each other, then drink.

BALBER
Well --?

JOHNNIE
Barmy.

Balber chokes on his drink.

BALBER
You're shitein' me?!

Balber pulls the folding chair back from the card table, its feet squeal. He sits hard on it, then looks up hopeful.

BALBER
Needs a roomie?

Johnnie glares at him.

Balber tries to make a joke.

BALBER
Equal Opportunity.

JOHNNIE

Ain't my equal, and you sure ain't
my opportune.

BALBER

(foxes)

Could try switching teams?

JOHNNIE

No Y-chromosomes in my mates --
mate.

BALBER

X marks the spot, old girl.

JOHNNIE

Literally --so?

BALBER

"So" --I cain't afford to move.

JOHNNIE

Brush off then.

BALBER

You -- you don't believe me?

JOHNNIE

Believe what --the unbelievable?

Johnnie finishes her drink and throws it at the trashcan.

Her container swishes through backboard's net, *dunk*.

BALBER

I'm beginning to throw a wobbly.

Balber finishes his drink and arcs it towards same trashcan.

His container bounces off the trashcan's backboard to miss.

Earlier shadow moves across hitting it and his drink now goes
in trashcan.

BALBER

See that?!

JOHNNIE

See what, a rim shot?

BALBER

I wish.

JOHNNIE

Look, Kevin Durant-Durant, I have
to get to my shift at the
chophouse. Here's my --
(now in British accent)
ree-serch.

Johnnie drops her manilla folder on the table in front of
Balber, then turns to exit.

JOHNNIE

Doggie-bag?

Balber opens to look through her folder grunting.

BALBER

Woof-woof.

Johnnie closes the door from outside.

Shadow moves across the door and chain-lock's end raises by
itself to slide silent into its slot.

Balber doesn't notice as he pulls out three old newsclippings
from her folder and lays the yellowed articles side by side
on table. "HELL'S HOME COMES HOME, APARTMENT APPARITION
ATTACKS, and DEVIL'S DOMICILE DELUSIONS" stare up at him.

Balber sits up ramrod straight, then spins in his chair.

Nothing is behind him.

Balber turns back to read the first article aloud.

BALBER

"Tenant kept claiming to neighbors
he felt there was someone or some
thing always behind him."

Balber spins the other way in his chair.

Nothing is behind him.

Balber breathes hard like a bull, calms down, then turns back
flipping the first article over. He leans over the second
clipping to read it aloud.

BALBER

"Residents said this new occupant
would scream for hours inside his
apartment at no one."

Hair on the back of his head moves like someone blew on it.

Balber spins in his chair grabbing at the back of his head as he scans the room. Balber sees his window is now open.

BALBER

Who the --?

Balber gets up to close the window and turns its sash-lock, then spins around staring at the table.

The folder is now closed with three clippings back inside it.

BALBER

How the --?

Balber rushes to the folder and opens it looking around.

BALBER

What the --?!

Balber slap-covers his mouth with both hands embarrassed, then pulls them down to read aloud third article now on top.

BALBER

"Police say when they broke down
the latest inhabitant's door --"

Balber snap-looks up to front door.

His door shows signs of repair that it was kicked-in, glued and nailed back together, then repainted.

BALBER

When the --?

Balber goes back to reading the third article out loud.

BALBER

"they found him sitting naked in
the middle of the room soaked in
his own excrement. He was taken to
an asylum in a straight jacket and
never spoke again."

Balber hears the unmistakable sound of a British telephone double-ring; *da-ling da-ling, da-ling da-ling*.

Balber jumps up spinning 180° to the piggybank phone-booth.

It double-rings again; *da-ling da-ling, da-ling da-ling*.

Balber drops his article, then his head vibrates in anger.

BALBER

SOD OFF!

Article he was reading floats to the floor at his feet.
Ringing stops as only his eyes look down at article.

A red line under one sentence reads, "It should be noted all three victims were male."

A breeze floats same article out the now re-opened window which then slams shut as its sash-lock self-turns.

Balber spins 360° repeatedly, stops, then loses it. He runs to the front door and tries, but its chain won't come off.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BALBER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Barber can be heard beating on the door inside, then yanking it open repeatedly with it being held back by its chain.

His fingertips fight to keep the door open as his face tries to squeeze through the small opening, then one arm juts out clawing. His fingernails scratch the outside paint as his arm is yanked back inside.

Door slams shut with his cries for help followed by eerie silence, then sound of breaking window glass and his scream fading.

BARBER (O.S.)
Help me, please! --Somebody let me
out! -- Help Meeeeee!
(crash sound)
AIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE ...!

INT. BALBER'S APARTMENT - IMMEDIATELY

The piggybank vibrates across the microwave from his scream, then falls off the edge onto the floor.

Sound of a thud out in the street, then a PASSERBY screams.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BALBER'S APARTMENT DOOR - A MONTH LATER

Hard knocking on door. A slender dark hand with long nails painted red slides its chain-lock off, then steps back.

Door opens and Johnnie enters smiling.

JOHNNIE
Hey you --sleep well?

A protein shake flies at Johnnie and she catches it one-handed while looking around.

Room has been decorated with pink pillows and frills. The bed is now up on a frame having new bedspread with matching sham.

AADYA AHUJA, early 20s, Indian, model-attractive with long straight dark hair, stands by the refrigerator with microwave still on top but both are now on a small table. A *Jolly Chimp* with cymbals wind-up toy sits on top of all.

AADYA
Hard days night.

Aadya opens her protein drink and holds it up for a silent toast, then drinks.

Johnnie sashays towards Aadya drinking her own.

JOHNNIE
Conundrum?

AADYA
Man of the Match.

JOHNNIE
Leasing does appear to get cheaper
and cheaper.

AADYA
Almost like the bloody place is
haunted or something.

Both step-in closer.

JOHNNIE
Been waiting long?

AADYA
Long, enough.

JOHNNIE
Have been a lot of blokes in here.

Aadya strokes Johnnie's silky black hair.

AADYA
How --many?

Johnnie smiles playfully, her eyes actually star-twinkle.

JOHNNIE
Guess.

Aadya holds up same hand now with all five fingers spread, then closes them to finger-tip wave sexy at Johnnie.

Their heads move closer and tilt as if to kiss.

AADYA

Am I --close?

All the lights go out.

Johnnie's eyes glow red in the blackness.

JOHNNIE

Close, enough.

The *Jolly Chimp* begins banging his cymbals in the dark.

CAPTION: *There are always ...*

FADE CAPTION: *secondary effects.*

FADE OUT.