

The Scene: I am in Palolem, Goa. It's **the** beach town in South Goa that attracts hordes of tourists who are not necessarily interested in the party scene up North. Alas, the thump of electronic music is still heard as clearly here as in the party capital of Goa--Anjuna. But on the eve of lockdown due to the Coronavirus, the streets are mostly empty, aside from a few stragglers of which I am among.

As I walk back to my room, an Englishman with a bright red face and oily shoulder-length hair stumbles towards me.

AM: Hey, look at that feather in the scooter's headlight.

(A tiny white feather is in fact falling in front of the light.)

AK: Thank you for that.

AM: Andrew. Nice to meet you, squire.

AK: My pleasure, Alex.

AM: Want a drink?

(Takes out a coca-cola which definitely has more than Coke in it.)

AK: Sure, why not.

AM: Good man! What's your name again?

AK: Alex.

AM: Right. You got some time, Alex? Well, as far as anyone can actually *have* time.

AK: Sure, I'll borrow some for this conversation.

(Both proceed to laugh.)

AM: Listen, I've been traveling for over 20 years. I've had a bar—we had a bar, my partners and I; and the community, really—I hate saying my bar. It's on one of the islands in Cambodia. I met some of the seediest and disgusting human beings—the 2% as I call them.

AK: The 2%?

AM: Yeah. I'm talking about the vilest people on Earth. The people who don't deserve to live amongst other people. You know what I'm saying? They do stuff to kids man. The burns on some of these kids arms. Fuck. The bikers would put out their cigarettes on them. Fuckin' Australian biker gang. Fuckin ex-pats. The Cambodian government labeled them a terrorist organization, but I know there's still one left. And he was the worst.

AK: Well, you clearly hate the environment, so why do you choose to be around it?

AM: It's a part of the job, man. The bar scene, the nightclub scene, it's been my life.

AK: But don't you want to get away from that?

AM: Why would I want to get away? This is the job the world gave me. I have to observe these people. Build a profile. Study their psychology. *Punish* them.

AK: Do you think your Batman or something?

(AM proceeds to put his hands under the street light to reveal scars all along his knuckles and hands.)

AM: Wolverine, actually.

AK: But how is it your responsibility to punish people? Who are you to play judge, jury, and executioner?

(AM looks at me in disbelief.)

AM: That's the problem right there! No one is responsible. The 2%, they get away with this shit and nothing happens to them. So who's responsibility is it to protect the powerless? The government isn't fuckin' doing it. Society is wanking off to porn. So am I just supposed to sit back and watch and pretend like everything is not fucked up? Michelle Obama is an American treasure. Bring back our girls! Fuckin' Boko Haram, man.

AK: Yeah, I get that. But don't you believe, at some point, these people will get what they deserve?

AM: Karma? I believe in Karma, but I also believe in instant karma. I am these people's Karma and I make sure they get what's coming to them... *in this life*. Being reborn a rat is too nice a life for these people.

(I take out a half-smoked joint)

AK: Smoke?

AM: Is that weed?

AK: Yeah.

AM: I can't smoke anymore. I get psychotic.

AK: Fair enough.

AM: During my time on the island I got addicted to meth. Smoked 3 grams at a time. I would be up for days on end just getting completely smashed. I'm talking Charlie Sheen post-Apocalypse Now fucked up. That was a great movie, wasn't it?

AK: A classic. The opening scene on the bridge.

AM: Well we're kinda on a bridge right now aren't we?

AK: What do you mean?

AM: You like Johnny Cash?

AK: Ye...

(AM proceeds to burst out into a rendition of Johnny Cash's, "I Walk the Line.")

AM: I walk in the shadows Alex. That's where you find them...the 2%. It's going to kill me man but it's my job.