

POP THERAPY

AUTEURE

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INT. CEMETERY PARKING LOT / CAR - DAY

Out of focus: everything seems green. Sunrays pierce through the passenger window. LISANE (53 yrs) short and scrappy woman, opens the door and sits in the car. She's holding a humid and wrinkled handkerchief up to her face.

DENIS (55 yrs) a tall, graying man, is seated at the wheel.

DENIS

Can we go ?

LISANE

You should at least say hello.

DENIS

Please...

Lisane nods. Denis starts the car.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

Denis, a whistle on a string around his neck, is looking down at the floor as he paces through the gymnasium. The sound of HEAVY BREATHING and RUNNING STEPS of a wide group of people invades the space slowly.

BIP.

About 20 young women (16-18 yrs), dressed in basketball attire, are doing suicides, running from one end of the gym to the other. VALERIE (17 yrs) stops suddenly in the middle of the space. She stares straight ahead, without moving.

Denis sees her and whistles.

Surprised, Valerie turns to Denis, like a deer in headlights, then shakes her head and rushes to catch up with the others.

BIP.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Denis is seated behind a computer. He stares at the screen which is covered in code. In Denis's POV, in the right top corner, a message pops up. "Fred Cachan published : One year already... Dude... Why did you do that?"

Slowly, the silence is covered by the SOUND of three dozen sets of fingers on three dozen keyboards. The message disappears.

(CONTINUED)

Denis stands up from his seat and goes around the laboratory.
36 students are seated in front of computers, typing away
code on their keyboards.

DENIS

I-- I'll be right back.

He rushes out of the laboratory, visibly overwhelmed.

The students keep typing as if they hadn't even heard him.

INT. DENIS' CAR - DAY

Denis is driving in silence.

VICTORIA (O.S.)

You were fucking intense during
practice today.

DENIS

...

VICTORIA

And Steven said you just skipped
fourth period.

DENIS

...

Victoria (16 yrs) red headed girl with freckles and braces,
is gazing straight ahead, in the passenger's seat.

VICTORIA

Anyway... you're not helping my
reputation.

DENIS

I couldn't care less about your
reputation, Victoria.

VICTORIA

Hey! We all hurt, okay?! What the
fuck is the point to make other
people pay for your shit?!

The road stretches out in front of the car. In Victoria's
POV, top left corner, a animated GIF of a drowning man
appears. She laughs.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Fuck! Jasper is so stupid!

Denis looks at her with a mix of anger and despair.

INT. ART WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Denis is wearing a VR helmet. In front of him, in the virtual reality, a sculpture takes shape without any human interaction. The sculpture slowly shows a dark face, tortured, then becomes a shapeless mass again.

INAUDIBLE VOICES emerge from the silence. They transform into an unrecognizable chant.

BLACK.

A circle of 6 individuals appears around the sculpture. They are all wearing VR helmets. The sculpture disappears.

JEAN (45 yrs) elegant woman with serious features, is seated in front of Denis. She smiles and mouths the words "I love you."

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Jean and Denis are walking down a vividly bright street. The building walls around them are covered in animated, very bright commercial ads for all sorts of products.

Denis is holding a couple of pictures. The first one shows a framed painting which displays a calm sea and sand dunes. He looks at the picture right behind it. It shows the sculptures with dark features.

INT. STUDENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

A messy student apartment. Denis is seated on the floor in front of the only window.

The curtain rod is broken, half of it lays on the floor with half the curtain, the other half holds a piece of torn curtain to the window.

Jean comes out of a room, buttoning her shirt.

JEAN

You should let go of this place.

Denis bursts into tears. Jean throws a cold glance his way.

DENIS

(sobbing)

How do you do it?

(CONTINUED)

JEAN

Don't. Don't do this again. I told you to ask for the coroner's report. I told you to go to the cemetery. I told you to bring your wife here. You don't listen, so stop pretending you want any advice!

She grabs her handbag and storms out. Denis, confused, looks at the curtain on the floor. It is covered in blood.

INT. DENIS' HOUSE / DINING ROOM - MORNING

Denis looks straight into his oatmeal. Afar, WATER DRIPPING for the sink.

In the left corner of Denis' POV, a message bubble pops up "REMEMBERING LOUIS #1YEAR - EVENT". In the top-right corner, another bubble : "Fernand wrote : Hey buddy, give us some news. I hope you're okay."

Lisane turns off the tap in the kitchen. She watches Denis. He doesn't notice her.

Denis pushes his bowl away, stands up and leaves.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

The girls are running back and forth again. Denis is standing still at one end of the gym.

In his POV, 3 conversation bubbles come into focus.

"Harvey posted on Louis Valdor's page : SO sorry my man! You know me... always running behind. I miss you."

"In the news this morning : Colleges nation-wide are launching a suicide prevention campaign with a special focus on teens and young adults' mental health."

"Peter Newton sent you a message : Hi Denis, Astrid and I are looking forward to seeing you this..."

The girls get back into focus, lined up in front of Denis.

DENIS

And what do you think you are all doing?!

JULIA

We're done, Coach.

(CONTINUED)

DENIS

Did you hear the whistle?! I didn't hear the whistle! The whistle tells you when you are done! Drop and give me twenty.

The girls sigh. Denis whistles. They plank down and start pushing up and down.

DENIS (CONT'D)

No slack! Come on!

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Denis's desk is empty. The students are seated, talking amongst themselves. The commotion grows. FERNAND (62 yrs) a tall, thin man in a sweater vest walks in the room.

FERNAND

What's going on in here? We can hear you from the main hall! Where is Mr. Valdor?

POV FERNAND : "Denis?! It's 2:45PM and your classroom is a complete circus! Where are you?!"

INT. DENIS' CAR - DAY

Denis drives on the highway. Skies are grey.

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)

I'm afraid we don't have this document, Mr. Valdor. You should have gotten it in the mail a few weeks after your son passed away.

DENIS

I didn't get anything.

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)

I see in your file that it has been sent to your home address on October 15.

Simultaneously, a conversational bubble appears in Denis' POV. "Did we receive a letter from the coroner's office?"

DENIS

Well, you must have a copy in your records somewhere.

(CONTINUED)

A bubble appears : "Lisane wrote: I don't know. Doesn't ring a bell. Maybe... Why?"

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)

Of course, but you would need to make an official request for a copy.

DENIS

A second ago, you didn't have it? And now, I have to make a request?

MAN'S VOICE

We don't have the original copy, that's what I meant.

DENIS

It's a document that your print on a piece of paper and stamp, no?

MAN'S VOICE

You just have to make an official request.

DENIS

Well this is what I'm doing right now, isn't it?!

Another bubble : "Fernand wrote : Denis?! It's 2:45PM and your classroom is a complete circus! Where are you?!"

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)

The procedure may take a couple of weeks, so I recommend you go through your records at home. Perhaps you've put it with the death certificate?

DENIS

I look at that death certificate everyday, Sir! I think I would remember seeing a coroner's report stappled to it!

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)

It can take 4 to 6 business weeks.

DENIS

What the hell are business weeks?!

Denis' sculpture pops up in his POV.

(CONTINUED)

DENIS (CONT'D)
(through his teeth)
I was told by Detective Laurendeau
that your offices would...

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)
(light laughter)
Oh I see! We have that problem all
the time. Detective Laurendeau is
very nice, but he has no clue how
it works in our service.

DENIS
Can you just-- manage my request.

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)
It'll take 4 to---

DENIS
---6 business weeks. I got that.
Just-- Just--

Denis sighs as a new bubble pops up : "Lisane wrote: I wish
you would let go of all this, honey."

INT. DINGY TAVERN - DAY

Denis is seated at the counter of a dark, underground tavern.
He sips a beer. Jean comes out of a door behind the bar. A
man points her in Denis' direction. She comes up to him.

JEAN
You know you can't come here.

DENIS
They say they lost the report.

JEAN
What?

DENIS
I spent a freaking hour on the
phone for them to tell me that as
they were restructuring their
archives, they lost a few files.

JEAN
That's impossible.

DENIS
They say I should have requested it
earlier.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN

This makes no sense.

Denis nervously scratches the label off his beer bottle.

DENIS

I know. I'm telling you! That
report doesn't exist because my son
didn't commit suicide!

He bursts into tears. Jean looks at him, distraught.

JEAN

That's not-- Denis---

She tries to hug him, but he pushes her away.

DENIS

That's exactly what it is! They
have no records because they know
it's their fault! With their
fucking chip and their fucking
system!

JEAN

Ok. Wait. Just give me a second.

She turns her back to Denis. In her POV, 2 conversation
bubbles pop up :

"Philip wrote : Tonight, 8PM, my place?"

"Philip wrote : I miss your ass... please!"

"Jean is writing: I'm sorry, I can't. Rain check ?"

She turns around. Denis is gone.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Denis is standing in front of a service booth. CAROLINE (30
yrs) skinny woman with fatigue circles under her eyes, is
behind the booth, looking at her computer, chewing gum. Denis
looks at her mouth, her lip piercing, her inappropriate way
of chewing.

CAROLINE

I got nothin', Sir.

Around Caroline's mouth, in Denis' POV, a bubble appears:

"Lisane wrote: Can you call me PLZ! Why would you do this
today?"

(CONTINUED)

Another bubble pops up with a picture of LOUIS (19 yrs) with the caption : "God took you from me but you'll always be in my heart."

DENIS

That's impossible! Stop saying that! I know you are hiding something! Detective Laurendeau said---

CAROLINE

Hmm-K. There's no detective Laurendeau here, Sir.

DENIS

It doesn't matter! I need that piece of paper! Can you understand that?

CAROLINE

Well, for starters, we don't do "paper" anymore...

DENIS

I don't give a shit! Paper, file, code, sim card! I just want to now what the fuck happened to my son! I need to know!

CAROLINE

Ok, Sir, we are going to calm down now... I'll see what I can do.

She stands up from her booth and walks a couple of meters towards the offices in the back. She stops midway, freezes and starts laughing at a message she received.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Fucking idiot.

She carries on. Denis stretches over the counter and turns Caroline's computer towards him. The screen is completely blue with white letters going from one side to the other in incomprehensive codes. On the bottom of the screen, the letters spell out :

LOUIS_VALDOR_DECEASED_2027/10/01_CLASSIFIED.

Caroline comes back.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

So, as I have told you, Sir... What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

Denis stares straight at her. 3 conversation bubbles pop up:

"Denis, I'm worried about you. We know what happened. Let it go now. You're freaking me out!"

"Tomorrow morning, 8AM, in my office."

"I'll be there at 8PM. Did anyone invite his parents?"

DENIS

What does this mean?

CAROLINE

You are not supposed to see this.

DENIS

Why is it classified?! Who can access my son's file?!

Caroline presses a button underneath her desk.

DENIS (CONT'D)

Why can't I see this record?!

CAROLINE

Sir, this information is reserved for the administration. The system won't allow me to...

Denis grabs Caroline by her collar.

DENIS

I'm the fucking administration! I'm your fucking system!

Two security agent grab Denis by the shoulders.

AGENT 1

That's enough now!

DENIS

Tell me what it means, you fucking cunt!

The agents pull Denis away from Caroline as he tears off her name tag from her shirt. Caroline stands confounded.

DENIS (CONT'D)

I'll make you understand what it's like to lose someone, you useless piece of shit! You idiot clerk!

EXT. OFFICE TOWER - DAY

Denis is thrown out from the building into the street.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Denis is kneeling in front of a tombstone. His head is tilted down. He sobs.

DENIS

It's the system...

Denis opens up his hand in which he is still carrying Caroline's name tag.

His POV is blurry from his tears, but a few conversation bubbles pop up, bright and focused:

"Lisane wrote: ..."

"Your friends are attending the event : REMEMBERING LOUIS #1YEAR - EVENT. Tell them you're coming."

"A new TV show made just for you, Denis."

The pop-ups are multiplying rapidly. Ads, messages, GIFs.

DENIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The fucking system...

THE END.