

THE TRAUMA INITIATIVE

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INT. WHITE BOX - DAY

An elderly woman, JUNE, paces back and forth in a stark, white space with no corners or walls.

Finally, a seam in the whiteness cracks open, and through it falls another elderly woman named STELLA, who collapses with a bleeding gunshot wound in her stomach.

June rushes to her and kneels to cradle her.

JUNE

Release her. You've got to let go.

Stella gasps for air, and the wound slowly heals as the blood disappears.

STELLA

No! That can't be how this goes.  
Send me back!

JUNE

We have to get you into the chamber  
to see how much of the trauma has  
penetrated your spirit. Then we can  
De-brief while you heal.

STELLA

I've seen us go back -- to change --

JUNE

You knew what we were chosen to do.  
We are here to study why the  
effects of life on Earth stay with  
us after we die. Your life force  
cannot take a resubmission without  
being cleansed.

STELLA

There was so much potential in her.

JUNE

Which is why we look for answers.

STELLA

Her death will leave nothing but  
more anguish -- show me how --

JUNE

This is all information we need to  
understand. Now, come with me.

Stella gets up off the ground and feels at her side. She remembers how it is done.

STELLA

Of course -- I'll see you when her  
life is over -- another way.

JUNE

There's something you don't  
understand --

Stella punches at her side until the blood starts to appear  
again through her white robe.

STELLA

I can fix this!

Her body is dragged back through the crack in time that has  
reopened.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The year is 1986. A sixteen-year-old version of Stella walks  
down a quiet highway with a large art portfolio hanging from  
one shoulder.

A yellow Boss 302 Mustang approaches from the opposite  
direction at an unusually high speed. Stella fights her  
instinct to look at the driver.

As the car gets close enough, Stella is unable to override  
the urge and looks the driver directly in her eyes. The  
driver looks back at her and then looks forward.

Momentarily, Stella believes she has made it through this  
incident to be left alone. After a beat, the sound of  
squealing brakes is heard.

STELLA

Shit. I'm just trying to make it  
home.

The car wheels around as the tires spit gravel in all  
directions before stopping next to her. The passenger,  
JOCELYN, 17, nothing to lose, rolls down the window.

JOCELYN

Nice night for a walk, baby. Why  
don't you get in?

STELLA

Actually, I don't get much time to  
myself so I kind of enjoy --

JOCELYN  
Amber here wanted to keep going,  
but I could have sworn you  
recognized her.

AMBER, 18, her eyes teetering on the edge of destiny.

AMBER  
Hey, Stella.

STELLA  
Amber.

AMBER  
You're wondering why we have Mr.  
Baker's car?

STELLA  
Hadn't thought twice about it.

AMBER  
You can trust me. You're brother  
and I go way back.

STELLA  
Honestly, it's okay.

Jocelyn opens the door.

JOCELYN  
I'm not asking. Get in the car.

Stella looks down at her portfolio.

AMBER  
There's room in the trunk for that.

Amber gets out and moves to the back of the car. She opens the trunk and Stella notices a small safe and a few tools -- (sledge hammer etc...) Stella closes her eyes and sets the portfolio on top of the safe.

JOCELYN  
I think she should drive.

AMBER  
It's fine. She's cool.

Jocelyn takes a handgun out of the glove compartment.

JOCELYN  
Bitch is driving.

She loads six bullets into a revolver.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Stella drives slower than the speed limit. Amber and Jocelyn pass a joint back and forth with a bottle of whiskey. Jocelyn forces Stella to put the joint in her mouth.

Amber takes a Polaroid photo of Stella from the back seat. Tries to make light conversation -

AMBER  
How is your brother these days?  
Last I heard, he was trying to go  
to college? I'd like to know  
because if that dumb cock sucker  
can go -- maybe there is hope for  
me.

JOCELYN (TO STELLA)  
She still loves your brother. She  
just couldn't be seen with him in  
public, so that puts a damper on  
things. I told her I got other  
plans for the two of us to get out  
of this town. Pull off at the next  
junction and take a right.

STELLA  
I won't say anything.

Jocelyn turns up an eighties rock ballad on the radio as the car rolls into the night.

EXT. REMOTE POND - NIGHT

The headlights from the car shine on the safe and past it into the reeds of a secluded pond.

AMBER  
As soon as we get this open, we'll  
take you home, Stella.

JOCELYN  
But you do look strong. I say you  
get the first shift.

Jocelyn hands the hammer to Stella and takes another drink.

Amber tries to take the hammer from Stella, but Jocelyn flashes the gun again and raises her voice.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
I said she looks strong! Not very  
smart -- but strong.

Jocelyn rubs the gun along Stella's shoulder in a sadistic/seductive manner. Stella feels the hammer in her hands and considers her options.

STELLA  
I'll get it open.

Stella begins to take some futile swings at the safe with the sledgehammer. Jocelyn backs Amber against the hood of the car.

JOCELYN  
I told you I would make your life  
exciting.

AMBER  
How long do you think this is gonna  
take? I still have to get home  
tonight. If my mother finds out I'm  
gone -- forget about the police.

Stella feels a strange surge of energy in her body. She leans over and dry heaves.

JOCELYN  
Looks like we got a lightweight  
over here.

STELLA  
What else was in the house?

JOCELYN  
Excuse me?

STELLA  
Do you even know what's in this  
safe? It could be documents that  
are worthless to you. And quite  
honestly, I think you might need  
dynamite to get this open.

AMBER  
I know the wife has jewelry. She's  
always flaunting it around town.

STELLA

We should go back to the house.  
Make this worth it for you.

Jocelyn smashes the bottle down on a rock.

JOCELYN

We stick to my shit!

Jocelyn fires five bullets at the safe -- which does zero damage.

STELLA

Can I at least ask why you didn't  
Take anything else?

AMBER

She wanted to buy me something nice  
to wear and not have it be stolen.

STELLA

So buying the jewelry from money  
out of the stolen safe was okay?

JOCELYN

Interesting that you have assessed  
the situation and think it's a good  
idea to be funny.

Jocelyn raises the gun and moves toward Stella. She stumbles on a rock and falls forward, hitting her head on the ground. Stella takes a step toward her, but Jocelyn wheels around in time to point the gun at Stella.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

Like I said -- we go back to the  
house.

INT. BAKER HOUSE - NIGHT

All three girls are in the bedroom searching for jewelry. Stella surveys the roof line of the house. She could get down to the ground -- but, bitch still has a bullet left -

Amber rifles through the nightstand -- her eyes go big. She's seen something but keeps the discovery to herself.

STELLA (TO AMBER)

My brother still talks about you.

AMBER

I don't believe you.

STELLA  
You kind of fucked him up.

Amber is devastated.

AMBER  
I never -- my mother forced --

JOCELYN  
I found some.

Jocelyn turns around with some over-the-top costume jewelry on.

Stella slides a paperweight off the desk into her fist.

STELLA  
That ought to do it. I see you guys making it to Mexico with the money from that.

Amber laugh/cries.

AMBER  
I know there are diamonds. I've seen her wear them.

JOCELYN  
Don't you think she took them with her on vacation? Fuck this! This was a terrible idea.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)  
We drive the car to the border and sell it. People love those monster cars.

AMBER  
I think it's muscle cars, and I don't think we should do that.

STELLA  
I agree. You can just walk away. Forget this ever happened.

JOCELYN  
I won't stay another day in this rat-infested town.

Jocelyn points the gun at Stella.

AMBER (TO STELLA)  
You think he would still talk to me?



STELLA  
I could call him right now.

Jocelyn fires a bullet into the ceiling and howls -- yep -- the sixth bullet. Clearly intoxicated now.

JOCELYN  
Nobody is calling anybody! This is what happens. Cinnamon here drives us to her house and gets her mom's purse.

Amber is rattling with rage now.

AMBER  
I can't believe how stupid I am to go along with you.

STELLA  
Actually, I can do that. As long as you let me go afterward.

Stella walks toward Jocelyn -

STELLA (CONT'D)  
I just need the keys.

Jocelyn reaches into her pocket, and Stella unleashes a right cross with the paperweight, striking Jocelyn in the nose -- knocking her out cold. Blood runs from Jocelyn's face onto the carpet.

STELLA (CONT'D)  
Ouch. Should have just walked away because it's going to be hard to prove she wasn't at the scene, now.

AMBER  
Do you think if we called your brother, he would help us?

STELLA  
God no, you dumb cock sucker. He never wants to see your face again. Now, I'm going home. I won't say a thing, but I suggest you start figuring out a way to clean up this mess.

Stella gets the car keys from Jocelyn's pocket and walks away. Amber freezes for a moment with dread.

She lets out a deafening scream before moving back to the nightstand for what she had seen earlier.

A goddamned gun.

She pulls it out and walks after Stella before pulling the trigger. Stella's side explodes, and she falls down the staircase toward the front door. Amber is steady here for once.

AMBER

I told him I just needed some time  
to figure things out.

Stella's light slips from her eyes -

INT. WHITE BOX - DAY

Similarly to before -- an elderly version of Stella falls through a crack in the whiteness. This time, June stands above her, less eager to help.

JUNE

First day on the job? Not exactly  
instilling confidence in your  
abilities.

Stella is not recovering as she did the first time.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I told you, things are off around  
here, and the dead don't get a free  
pass anymore. I'd say it takes  
twenty four hours for that to heal  
this time.

Stella -- suffering.

STELLA

How?

JUNE

If you had let me finish, I would  
have told you that there is no  
scenario by which you go back into  
that body and remember anything  
about what has happened before.  
There is no such thing as a second  
chance. Not in that way.

STELLA

I swear she felt something.

JUNE

Not enough to change. Like I said,  
we're here to study why you feel  
the way you do even after you're  
here.

STELLA

I know you've sent others back.

JUNE

Only for punishment. They could  
actually remember what happened,  
but couldn't do anything about it.  
They had to count the minutes  
knowing exactly when they were  
going to die. That's heavy shit.

STELLA

Why were they punished?

June reaches down to help Stella up.

JUNE

You don't want to become obsessed  
with saving the life of one person.  
You'll go mad.

Stella stands -- still bleeding. She reaches back and  
delivers another devastating right cross -- this time June is  
the recipient. June catches her balance and takes Stella down  
to the ground and puts her in a choke hold.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I can see this is a problem and a  
decision I regret. If you want to  
experience life inside a person  
knowing you exactly when and how  
you die then be -- my -- fucking --  
guest.

A smile crosses Stella's mouth.

JUNE (CONT'D)

And we'll see how shattered you are  
when you get back.

June picks Stella off the ground and shoves her back through  
the rip in whiteness.

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