

Targeted Individual

by

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A lone woman walks slowly down the aisle, lifelessly staring ahead, but not at anything specific. Her dark and dreary appearance heavily contrasts the brightly-colored items on the shelves.

SIMONE (30s-40s) looks run down. Her hair hangs down in a loose pony tail over her modest, dark clothing that has been worn several days in a row. Her oily face is wrinkled, not from age, but from the seemingly endless stress of the past few weeks.

The daily sounds of the grocery store are barely audible over the endless bassy drone in her head.

Unbeknownst to her, a bag of potato chips falls out of her cart.

DAVID (20s) a man in an absurdly large, red coat enters the aisle. Immediately, he notices the bag of chips on the ground. He greets SIMONE with a friendly ear to ear smile.

DAVID
(Inaudible)
Hey! I think you dropped something.

SIMONE keeps walking, giving him no attention.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Excuse me?

SIMONE
Huh?

DAVID
I said, I think you dropped something.

He starts walking to the bag of chips a few steps behind her.

SIMONE
Oh, thanks.

She grabs the chips before DAVID has a chance to. She throws them deeper into the cart.

DAVID
How are you doing today?

SIMONE continues avoiding eye contact. She starts stepping backwards until she reaches her cart, then quickly retreats.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Oh... uh.... have a nice day!

She doesn't even glance back, he continues to the next aisle. After a few moments, DAVID catches her eye again. She is genuinely upset by this.

He waves to her, she gives an unemphatic smile and moves to the next aisle.

Again, DAVID follows on the other side. SIMONE storms away.

As she does, people start noticing her, and watch her exit.

Her pace increases, step by step.

An OLDER WOMAN, wearing bright red lipstick stops her.

OLDER WOMAN

Are you alright sweetie?

In complete terror, SIMONE shoves past the her, tears streaming from her already puffy eyes.

CUT TO TITLE:

"T.I."

2 INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

2

A different day, SIMONE sits across from her therapist, DR. BENNET(40s-50s) a gentle woman who has been a long-time mentor for SIMONE.

SIMONE is visibly shaken by the retelling of this story.

DR. BENNET

This happens every time you go out?

SIMONE

Yeah. Not always that bad, but there's always someone.

DR. BENNET

What about Julie?

SIMONE
What about her?

DR. BENNET
...did you talk to her about this?

CUT TO:

3 INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

3

In a bright, well maintained apartment, SIMONE sits at the kitchen table, eating the bag of potato chips.

She is in a clearly depraved state. She eats the chips one after the other, with almost no break in between. Hardly enough time to chew. Only pausing to take a stiff drink of the Jack Daniel's sitting on the table next to her.

Her eyes, still puffy from earlier, maintain the same distant stare.

JULIE (30s) an energetic young school teacher and SIMONE's best friend, dressed in bright colors with curly hair, walks through the door.

When she sees SIMONE, she lets out a quiet sigh.

JULIE
Simone?

SIMONE
Oh, hey Julie.

JULIE
I thought you were going back to your place.

SIMONE
Why would I go back there.

JULIE
Well that's what we talked about.

SIMONE
We talked about me leaving the apartment, and I did.

JULIE
Simone...

SIMONE

What?

JULIE

We have to get you out of this.

SIMONE

We have to do that *right now*? Besides, what do you know? You can't read my mind.

JULIE

People can notice more than you think. Yeah, I haven't been in your position, but I know that what you're doing isn't working.

SIMONE

Seriously!?! You can't *make* me go back.

JULIE

You're in denial. It can't get better until you go back there, pack up your things, and move out.

SIMONE

Ok, so can I move in here?

JULIE

That's not what I mean.

(Overlapping)

SIMONE

Then what do you mean? If I pack up my things, and move out of that house, I'll be accepting it and moving on. So why can't I move in here?

What's your deal? I'm your friend, you're supposed to help me.

JULIE

Simone...come on. I can help you find a place but we can't-

This is not healthy. Ok? It's not healthy! You need to find your own way to move on rather than dragging me down with you.

You are my friend and I want to help you. But this is something you need to deal with.

JULIE(CONT'D)

I just can't anymore. I can't. Please,
I need you to go.

They both pause. SIMONE starts gathering up her things; a bag here, a pair of shoes there.

SIMONE

Fine. Fine.

JULIE

I'm sorry. You've been through a lot-

SIMONE

Yeah...and who's fault is that?

JULIE

You couldn't have known. None of this
is your fault. He would've done all of
that either way.

SIMONE

Six people, Julie. Six. What if I had
noticed sooner? Maybe, it could've
been less.

JULIE

He tried to keep it hidden. You
couldn't have known, until he messed
up. And he did, and you figured it
out.

SIMONE, with her things now gathered, walks out of the
apartment.

4 INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

4

SIMONE avoids eye contact with DR. BENNET.

DR. BENNET

And you haven't talked since?

SIMONE just shakes her head.

DR. BENNET (CONT'D)

Do you wish you had?

SIMONE

I don't know.

DR. BENNET

Do you want to work through that?

SIMONE

Can we move on to something else?

DR. BENNET

Sure. Um... How was the visit to the house? Any better?

CUT TO:

5 EXT. SIMONE'S HOUSE - DAY

5

SIMONE sits silently in her car. She is obsessively wiping her hands against her legs, compulsively drying the sweat from her already dry hands. Her eyes are locked on the house.

It is a seemingly normal house, nothing seems weird or out of place. It stands in the middle of what looks to be a perfectly normal neighborhood.

Despite this, SIMONE is unable to exit her vehicle.

Her eyes are drawn away to an approaching **red** car. The car pulls onto her street but almost immediately makes a U-turn.

Defensively, SIMONE grabs one of the nearby bottles and exits the car.

She chases after the **red** car to no avail, and hurls the bottle at it, which only flies a pitiful 20-30 feet before shattering on the asphalt.

SIMONE

PISS OFF!

Using her rage as strength, she enters the house.

6 INT. SIMONE'S HOUSE - DAY

6

The house is in shambles. Furniture moved out of place, pictures broken, lamps tipped over, and various household items scattered all over.

She can still hear the sounds of that night, the cops wrestling with JULIAN, the house being destroyed in the process, the yelling and profanities, and finally, a single sentence from JULIAN.

JULIAN (V.O.)
 You can get rid of me, but they'll
 still find you.

START MONTAGE

SIMONE's distant stare returns. She shakes it off, sets down her keys, ***slams the door***, and confronts the house.

She cleans up all of the trash and broken glass. She wraps it all in plastic garbage bags and sets them in the front yard, in a perfectly straight line.

She resets the furniture to it's original position.

She pauses, and looks at the furniture, but can't leave it like that. She rearranges it all entirely.

She moves to the bathroom, and sees herself at the mirror. She looks down at a picture frame of herself and JULIAN. She looks much different. More colored clothing, a brighter disposition, and a genuine smile.

She throws the the picture into the trash, grabs a blanket, and covers the mirror.

She moves to the bedroom and packs up all of JULIAN's things: clothes, pictures, personal belongings into an increasingly ***red*** pile. She loads everything in the pile into trash bags and sets them out with the rest.

END MONTAGE

7 INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

7

DR. BENNET
 Did that help?

SIMONE
 I think so.

DR. BENNET
 I think it did too. But it must have
 been hard.

SIMONE
 (A little too quickly)
 No.

DR. BENNET
 It wasn't hard at all? There wasn't
 (MORE)

DR. BENNET (CONT'D)
 anything that stuck out, even a
 little.

SIMONE pauses and thinks for a moment.

SIMONE
 There was one thing that I... There
 was a note. A letter.

CUT TO:

8 INT. SIMONE'S CLOSET - DAY

8

As she moves through the closet, collecting things into a
 plastic trash bag, she finds a letter.

SIMONE (V.O.)
 ...from Julian.

The letter is written in red ink.

Her momentum stops. She drops down the trash bag, sits right
 where she is, and with tear-filled eyes, reads the letter.

SIMONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It wasn't anything crazy, I think he
 wrote it before I found out. Just said
 things like "I love you", "my life is
 better because of you", "I can't wait
 to grow old with you".

CUT TO:

9 INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

9

SIMONE blankly stares down at the floor like a gargoyle.

SIMONE
 I just sat there. Reading that note
 over and over again, looking
 for...anything.

DR. BENNET
 Is that why you were reading it? You
 were looking for...hints? Or,
 indicators?

SIMONE
 Why else would I read it?

DR. BENNET
 Maybe you missed him. This felt like
 he was talking to you again.

SIMONE's body tightens at this sentence. She recoils from her
 own surprise.

SIMONE
 Seriously? No. That's not it.

DR. BENNET
 (Unbelieving)
 Ok. Let's go with that then. Why were
 you looking for "clues".

SIMONE
 Because of all of the people following
 me.

DR. BENNET
 ...you were trying to figure out...
 why?

SIMONE
 I thought he might have left clues. Or
 a hidden code. Something. I don't know
 what exactly but I know he left
 something. I would know it when I saw
 it.

DR. BENNET
 Why?

SIMONE thinks again about the red ink.

SIMONE
 He just did.

DR. BENNET
 I mean this in all sincerity, what
 makes you think these people, as you
 say, are after you? Let's break this
 down and do some grounding work here.
 Do you have actual evidence that all
 of this is connected?

CUT TO:

10 INT. SIMONE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

10

The house looks entirely different than before. It is

clean and organized, mainly because there's hardly anything left.

The house still has the basics, tables, chairs, couches; but it looks entirely sterile. All of the lights are off, but the room is illuminated by a bright light coming from the entryway.

SIMONE walks out of bathroom, drying her hair with a towel. Out of the corner of her eye, she sees that the living room is brighter than it should be.

As she walks over, she sees the front door wide open. The room is illuminated by a bright street lamp.

Her face is filled with utter terror.

11 INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

11

SIMONE

(Insisting)

I closed the door. I know I did.

DR. BENNET

Is it possible you didn't close it all the way?

SIMONE

No.

DR. BENNET

Did you see it closed earlier? Before you got out of the shower?

SIMONE

Well... no. When I got home, I went straight to the shower. But I know-

DR. BENNET notices SIMONE start to spiral and shuts it down.

DR. BENNET

Simone, I'm sorry, but I think this conclusion is too far to jump to. You're grasping at straws. We need to look at this realistically. Just think of the scale you're describing. How would he convince so many others. And what would he gain?

SIMONE is unable to answer.

DR. BENNET (CONT'D)

We can sit here and try attacking this from every angle, but I don't think that will be helpful for you. You said you want answers, and that's why I'm here. Now I can't give you them, but I *can* help you find them yourself.

SIMONE

I can't see any other explanation. Why have I had the same experience over and over again?

DR. BENNET

Yeah... it is hard.

SIMONE

No, seriously, why? What other explanation is there?

DR. BENNET

Well, there is confirmation bias. That's something often discussed in cases like yours.

SIMONE

Seriously...

DR. BENNET

Yes, we see the things we expect to see.

It's an extremely easy trap to fall into, and-

The trick is that your brain does it almost entirely without your knowledge-

SIMONE

No. No, it's not that.

I think I know the difference between something in my head and actual people doing things to-

SIMONE (CONT'D)

But all of *that*?

DR. BENNET

Yes! All of it! Like the grocery store. What did that man say to you?

SIMONE

...it's not what he *said*-

DR. BENNET

You can't make assumptions. Based on the facts, what did he do that would suggest he was watching you.

SIMONE pauses for a moment, she thinks again on the red jacket.

SIMONE

(Submitting)

Nothing. He was... nice.

In frustration, SIMONE compulsively dries her hands on her pants.

DR. BENNET

Exactly. He didn't do anything that a person following you would do. Right?

SIMONE

Like?

DR. BENNET

Stay in the shadows, peek around corners, physically following you but avoiding interaction, et cetera. Did he do any of those?

SIMONE

Well...no.

DR. BENNET

Then he's probably just minding his own business.

SIMONE

(Sincerely)

How can I tell?

DR. BENNET

...if someone isn't following you?

SIMONE

Yeah.

DR. BENNET

Well, why don't we make a list.

SIMONE

Ok.

DR. BENNET leans over and rustles through a nearby bag, pulling out a bright **red** notebook. SIMONE gasps in horror, and frantically jumps for the door.

DR. BENNET
What? Simone, what's wrong?

SIMONE
No. Stop talking to me, I can't believe I trusted you.

DR. BENNET
No, what happened? I just don't understand.

SIMONE barges out of the office.

12 EXT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY 12

SIMONE makes a beeline for her car. DR. BENNET is still persuading her to come back. The bassy drone returns to SIMONE's head, drowning out any other sound.

DR. BENNET
Simone, please help me understand. I just want to help you. Just come back inside and lets talk this through...

13 EXT. SIMONE'S HOUSE - DAY 13

SIMONE pulls around the corner to see a car parked in front of her house.

SIMONE
That's it.

CUT TO:

14 INT. SIMONE'S HOUSE - DAY 14

She barges into the house and **slams the door** behind her.

SIMONE
Who the hell is in here?!

JULIE (O.S.)
Oh, Simone! It's just me!

All she sees is the dining table set up with two plates, silverware, glasses, and a bottle of red wine.

SIMONE

What the...

JULIE enters the room carrying a freshly tossed strawberry spinach salad.

JULIE

I didn't mean to freak you out.

She sets down the salad.

SIMONE

What's going on?

JULIE

(Unemphatically)

Surprise. I guess. I wanted to celebrate you moving back in. I don't know. I thought it would've been fun to surprise you but, I guess I really should've asked.

SIMONE

No, it's fine. How did you get in?

JULIE

I have a key-

SIMONE

How?

JULIE

Um... Julian gave me one.

(Changing the topic)

But I made salad and that really good tomato pasta.

SIMONE

You mean spaghetti?

JULIE

No, the one I made for your birthday a few years ago, remember?

SIMONE

When we were camping?

JULIE

Yeah! But since I had an actual kitchen this time, it should be even better. I'm trying a new thing where

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)
you like... broil the top with cheese.
It's in the oven now but...

JULIE checks a timer she set on her phone.

JULIE (CONT'D)
...it won't be done for 7 minutes.

SIMONE
(Forced)
Well can I help?

JULIE
Nah, it just needs to cook now. That's
the last thing. We can open the wine
if you want.

SIMONE
Oh, sure. Ok.

SIMONE pulls out a chair from the table and its while JULIE
grabs a corkscrew and starts opening the wine. Her eyes are
drawn to the front door.

JULIE
I think your front door is broken.
Like the latch or something.

SIMONE now notices the door too, and goes to close it.

SIMONE
What do you mean?

JULIE
The same thing happened when I got
here. You have to jiggle the handle to
get it to latch.

SIMONE
Oh...

SIMONE walks up to the door, push it closed, but doesn't hear
it latch.

She jiggles the handle.

CLICK.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END