

TWINLESS: A 9/11 TRIBUTE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT./EXT. WORLD TRADE CENTER - ENTRANCE - DAY

Exits TRACIE CONRAD, 22, a stylish Wall Street wannabe. Her hand leaves its mark as it presses against the clean clear glass of a revolving door.

SUPER: "The North Tower."

EXT. WORLD TRADE CENTER - ENTRANCE - SAME

GRACIE CONRAD, 22, an active duty reporter for the U.S. Military's newspaper, The Stars and Stripes, meets Tracie, her identical twin sister, as she leaves work.

SUPER: "September 10th, 2001."

GRACIE
Hey, little Sister.

TRACIE
You have me by two minutes.

The two lock arms and walk.

SUPER: "Inspired by true events."

Gracie eyes her sister's bright blue handbag.

GRACIE
Nice, purse. That new?

TRACIE
It ain't old.

GRACIE
So, what do you want to do tonight?

Tracie looks down at her work out bag.

TRACIE
Work out. Then, watch a movie.

GRACIE
Boring. I'm here until Friday. So, I'm expecting you to show me more of Manhattan than your apartment.

TRACIE
Okay. Okay. Let's head back up. I need to change then.

INT. NORTH TOWER - LOBBY - SAME

Tracie leads Gracie into her building.

Fellow Stock Broker JANE, early 30s, New Yorker, wears high stiletto heels and a broad smile as she sees Tracie.

JANE

You're going the wrong way, girl.

Hey...

(sees Gracie)

Hi. I knew you had a sister, but I didn't know you were identical.

TRACIE

Jane, this is my sister, Gracie.

JANE

Gracie and Tracie? G and T.
Seriously?

TRACIE

Yeah, our parents weren't expecting twins.

GRACIE

So, when they named us.

TRACIE

They were still in shock.

JANE

Whew. My girls came one at a time,
and that was hard enough. Your
Mother must me an angel.

Tracie and Gracie looks at one another.

GRACIE

What's the other option?

JANE

You're Tracie's sister alright. So,
you here for work or pleasure?

GRACIE

I'm on a three day pass.

JANE

A pass?

GRACIE

I'm a reporter for the Stars and
Stripes.

JANE
The what?

TRACIE
The military's New York Times.

JANE
Fuhgedaboudit. Really?

GRACIE
Yep.

Jane looks at watch.

JANE
Sorry, girls. I've gotta go to
catch my train.

TRACIE
Kiss those kiddos for me.

JANE
I will. Nice meeting you, Gracie.
See ya, in the A.M., Tracie.
(turns back)
And make sure she takes you to
Grimaldi's. It's the best pie in
town. Tracie and Gracie, hilarious.

TRACIE
Pizza. Good idea.

GRACIE
Fuhgedaboudit.

Tracie leads Gracie into the elevator bays.

TRACIE
New Yorkers have their own language
and customs.

GRACIE
She seems nice.

Elevator door opens.

TRACIE
She is.

Door closes.

INT. NORTH TOWER - EXPRESS ELEVATOR - SAME

Gracie and Tracie travel up to the Ninety-Fifth Floor.

GRACIE
Goodness.

Gracie looks up to the ceiling.

TRACIE
What?

GRACIE
Just feeling a little
claustrophobic.

TRACIE
So, you wouldn't like it if I
started doing this?

Tracie jumps up and down in the elevator.

Gracie's face turns white.

GRACIE
You're such a child.

TRACIE
By two minutes.

SOUND: DING!

The elevator reaches the Ninety-Five Floor.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
Ninety-Five-Floor. My windows to
the world.

The elevator's doors open, reveals sunshine and skyline.

GRACIE
Wow.

Tracie steps out.

INT. NORTH TOWER - 95TH FLOOR - SAME

Tracie heads to the bathroom to change as Gracie wanders to the windows.

TRACIE
Welcome. Look around a bit. The
view is breathtaking.

GRACIE
Heavenly.

Tracie leaves to change.

INT. NORTH TOWER - 95TH FLOOR - LATER

Gracie stares out. The city lays at her feet.

Tracie is now in her workout gear.

GRACIE
How do you get any work done with
such a view?

Tracie approaches from behind. Both their images reflect off
the clean clear glass.

TRACIE
No worries there. My cube's view is
of the break room.

GRACIE
Oh.

TRACIE
But check this out.

Tracie leans her head against the glass.

Gracie does the same thing.

GRACIE
Wow.

TRACIE
Yeah. Wow. Let's live tonight, like
there's no tomorrow, Sis. So, you
ready for some fun?

GRACIE
Yes.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - BIKE PATH - MONTAGE

Atop rental bikes, Gracie and Tracie travels south along the
Hudson River Greenway towards Battery Park.

The Twin Towers looms in the background.

1. G&T rides along FDR Drive.

2. G&T heads towards Brooklyn Bridge.
3. G&T passes Wall Street.
4. G&T crosses The Bridge.
5. G&T enters Brooklyn.
6. Stops at Grimaldi's Pizza.

EXT. GRIMALDI'S PIZZA - DAY

Gracie and Tracie locks their bikes outside the Italian restaurant that rests below the Brooklyn Bridge.

TRACIE
This place has the best pie.

GRACIE
I see why you love it here.

TRACIE
It's great. Yet, at times, it gets lonely.

GRACIE
Lonely? There's people everywhere.

TRACIE
Yeah. Strangers.

GRACIE
And Jane?

TRACIE
Jane's great but she's busy raising two small kids.

GRACIE
So you don't see her much out of work?

TRACIE
Nope.

GRACIE
There must be other people your age.

TRACIE
Yeah... but we're all a bunch of workaholics.

GRACIE

Oh.

TRACIE

Hey. Don't worry about me, Sis. I'm happy.

GRACIE

Good.

TRACIE

Let's get a table. You're in for a treat.

Tracie leads Gracie into the restaurant.

INT. GRIMALDI'S PIZZA - SAME

Gracie and Tracie sits at an available table.

A Dean Martin song plays as a young WAITER.

WAITER

Buongiorno! Ah, twins.

TRACIE

Two Stellas, please.

WAITER

Coming right up.

Gracie looks up from her menu to the waiter.

GRACIE

What's good here?

WAITER

Good? What's good? Everything!

Gracie smiles at Tracie.

WAITER (CONT'D)

We use fresh ingredients, handmade mozzarella, secret recipe dough, and our pizza sauce. *Fantastico!*

GRACIE

Fantastico, sounds good.

WAITER

I will grab those beers now.

TRACIE
How's Mom?

GRACIE
I was going to ask you the same thing.

The two sisters share a laugh together.

TRACIE
We're terrible.

Tracie shrugs her head.

GRACIE
I know.

TRACIE
So, how's work?

GRACIE
Boring. I'm told what to write. My editor hates me.

TRACIE
Well, that's what reporters do. Cover a beat, and report.

GRACIE
I know. I just want more...

TRACIE
Control in your stories?

GRACIE
I'm serious.

TRACIE
So am I. If you want total control, write a goddamn book.

GRACIE
Thanks.

The waiter arrives with their beers.

WAITER
Okay. Here you go. Have ya decided?

TRACIE
Yes. A large...

GRACIE
Large!?!

TRACIE
Look. I'm hungry.

GRACIE
Okay.

TRACIE
A large with...mushrooms, Italian
sausage, pepperoni, and extra
sauce.

Tracie looks to Gracie.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
Good?

GRACIE
No mushrooms.

Tracie hands the waiter back the menus and waves off her
sister's single request.

TRACIE
She can pick them off.

GRACIE
Bossy.

TRACIE
Bossy? Me? No... I just know what I
want.

GRACIE
Look at you.

TRACIE
What?

GRACIE
You're all grown up and all.

Gracie and Tracie look across the room to a mirror that
captures them. They raise their beers to their reflections.

TRACIE
You too. So, cheers.

SOUND: CLANGS the two Stellas.

INT. GRIMALDI'S PIZZA - LATER

Tracie and Gracie finishes up their dinner. Nothing is left
of the pizza.

GRACIE
Any men worth mentioning?

TRACIE
Maybe.

GRACIE
Maybe?

Tracie waves down the waiter.

TRACIE
Check please.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Gracie and Tracie stroll along a tree-lined street. The lit-up Twin Towers loom high and ghostly in the background.

GRACIE
So, who is this Mr. Maybe?

TRACIE
Someone who works in my building.

GRACIE
I need more details than that, Sis.

TRACIE
How about a night cap?

Tracie dances down the block.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
He's... hmm. Different.

Gracie follows her.

GRACIE
Different can be good. Ah! To be young, and in New York City!

TRACIE
It has its perks.

EXT./INT. TRENDY NIGHT SPOT - NIGHT

Tracie leads Gracie into the establishment filled with CORPORATE TYPES fresh from work.

INT. TRENDY NIGHT SPOT - SAME

Tracie continues to lead Gracie deeper into the bar.

TRACIE
This is my bar.

JOEY, late 20s, a jazzy-looking bartender heads over.

JOEY
Hey, Tracie. The usual?

The bartender sees Gracie.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Whoa. Tracie you never said you had
a twin. Congrats!

TRACIE
She's a real pain in the... oops.

Tracie smiles at Gracie.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
Joey, you should've told me she was
still there. This is my much older
Sister.

GRACIE
Hi, Joey. I have her by two
minutes.

JOEY
Two French-Seventy-Fives?

TRACIE
Perfect.

Tracie leads Gracie to a nearby table.

Gracie reads from the cocktail menu.

GRACIE
Fifteen dollars each?

TRACIE
Oh, you're worth it.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - LATER

Arm-in-arm, Gracie and Tracie strolls up the Avenue.

GRACIE
What do you want out of life?

TRACIE
Too be rich.

GRACIE
Seriously.

TRACIE
I am serious. I wish to be
financial secure, have a husband
who loves me dearly, and kids. A
whole van full of them.

GRACIE
That's what you mean about being
rich, being a soccer mom?

TRACIE
Yes.

Tracie hurries her pace.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
You're going to make a great,
Auntie.

GRACIE
Am I? I hope so.

TRACIE
What do you want?

GRACIE
This. Contentment.

Tracie sees an entrance to Central Park.

TRACIE
Hey, let's cut-through the Park.

GRACIE
Is that safe?

TRACIE
You're Army, aren't you? So use
that Kung Fu, sleeper hold shit
they taught ya in basic training.

GRACIE
Kung Fu shit? Really?

TRACIE
Pretty girl. Dirty mouth.

The two share a laugh as they walk together holding hands.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - CANOPY OF TREES - LATER

Tracie leads Gracie through the spectacle of Central Park at night. As they climb stone steps, they reach a wide path lined on both sides by benches and trees.

GRACIE
The City feels alive.

TRACIE
It is.

Tracie takes deep breaths as she fans her hands towards her sucking nostrils.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
Breathe it in, Sis. Smells like
endless possibilities. You feeling
what I'm feeling?

GRACIE
Not our cheer routine.

Tracie steps to her sister's side and hoists up her imaginative pompoms.

TRACIE
A little Firebirds pride, please.

A COUPLE #1 passes them and looks back in slight disbelief.

COUPLE #1
Cheerleaders.

Tracie sticks her tongue out at them.

GRACIE
Okay.

Gracie hoists up her imaginary pompoms too.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Try to keep up with me this time.

TRACIE
Oh, that's how its going to be.
Ready. Let's get fired up!!!

In unison, Tracie and Gracie does a big jump and goes right into a right lunge of their routine.

TRACIE AND GRACIE
Firebirds spirit... Let's hear it!

They step back and shake their imaginary pompoms.

GRACIE
Go, Firebirds! Let's get...

As they attempt the transition into their next move they tumble over each others feet into a batch of grass.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Oops.

The sisters giggle and laugh at one another's silliness as they lie flat on their backs.

They stare up into the starry sky.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
We're a wee bit rusty.

From the grass, Gracie reaches out for Tracie hand. For a brief moment they hold each other's hand.

TRACIE
What if. We still rock!

GRACIE
Tell me more about the man you met.

TRACIE
I can't stop thinking about him.
He's tall... dark and handsome.

GRACIE
I'm jealous already. So... what's
he like?

TRACIE
A true Renaissance man. You know.
Bash. Worldly. Opinionated. And,
he's a little crazy, just like us.

GRACIE
He sounds fascinating. So what does
this amazing man do?

TRACIE
Eat.

GRACIE

What?!?

TRACIE

He's a Sous Chef in my building
who's always hungry.

GRACIE

Food court Sous Chef?

Tracie bounces up. Then, she offers her sister a hand up.

TRACIE

No. Better. He works at the Windows
on the World.

Gracie gets up.

GRACIE

Where?

TRACIE

The restaurant atop my building.

GRACIE

Oh. Good for you, girl.

TRACIE

Yeah. Good for me.

GRACIE

Well?

TRACIE

Well, what?

GRACIE

Is he the one?

TRACIE

That's what scares me. He could be?

GRACIE

Does he have a name?

INT. TRACIE'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Tracie in her business attire makes herself a smoothie in her stainless steel blender. She hits a button and pulverizes the fruit as its engine WHINES. She pours the smoothie into a glass. BLOP! The glass fills with blueberry colored smoothie.

Her flip phone RINGS. It lies on the counter next to her big blue purse. It's her boyfriend OMAR'S phone number.

TRACIE

Omar!

She picks up her phone.

TRACIE (CONT'D)

Hey, dreamy.

OMAR (O.S.)

I missed you last night.

TRACIE

I missed you too, babe. Though, it was fun showing my Sis the City. Especially the Park.

OMAR (O.S.)

At night?!? Are you crazy?

TRACIE

Yep. I thought you knew that about me?

OMAR (O.S.)

Well, I can't wait to meet her.

TRACIE

Really? What about tonight?

OMAR (O.S.)

Done. Bring her up to The World tonight.

TRACIE

You're off.

OMAR (O.S.)

So. It will be fun. I will make something special.

TRACIE

Okay. Does Eight work?

OMAR (O.S.)

Perfect. I will reserve a table. What food does your Sister like?

TRACIE

Her palate is pretty plain.

OMAR (O.S.)
Then, we will need to expand that.

Tracie looks at the kitchen clock.

TRACIE
Shit!

OMAR (O.S.)
What?

TRACIE
I'm late. Gotta go.

OMAR (O.S.)
See ya tonight, girl. Top floor at
Eight.

TRACIE
Can't wait. Bye, babe.

Tracie grabs her purse and races out of her apartment.

WTC STOCK
FOOTAGE BEGINS:

EXT. WORLD TRADE CENTER - THE DAY

Against a clear blue sky, American Airlines Flight Eleven from Boston heads to its final destination, infamy. The plane accelerates as it closes in on the North Tower of The World Trade Center. Aboard are ninety-two SOULS.

SUPER: "September 11th, 2001. 8:45 a.m."

Closer and closer, the jet comes. Then, at high speed, it collides into the North Tower.

SOUND: IMPACT! CRASH!

INT. NORTH TOWER - 95TH FLOOR - SAME

The craft's fuselage plows through the North Tower intact.

Then, the hull slows as it grinds to a halt. Overhead, within it's wreckage, strobes fluorescent tubes, on and off. Each snapshot captures a horrific image of twisted metal, blown out furniture, knocked over file cabinets, and BODIES. Lots and lots of bodies. Here, among them, a single coffee mug lays on its side. Its steamy contents circle the cup. The cup reads, "I Love N.Y."

Beyond the cup, a pair of black designer stilettos stick out from an avalanche of white fallen ceiling tiles. The woman attached to the shoes appears dead. It is Jane.

SOUND: Insert a steady AIR SUCKING SOUND, as if the tall building inhales a deep dying breathe.

Instantly, from the far corners of the room a storm cloud of white fine dust begins to obstructs our view as jet fuel GURGLES out from the destroyed plane's tanks.

SOUND: GLUG. GLUG. GLUG.

Slowly, to the right of Jane a woman stirs. She struggles as she pushes aside the ceiling tiles. It's Tracie.

TRACIE
What happened?

Ominously, across the wide floor, an exposed wire BUZZES and SPARKS. Tracie sees it. Then, she sees Jane's feet.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
No. No. No.

On all fours, she backs away from live cord.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
This can't be happening.

The long electric wire dances before her as the aviation fuel ripples closer and closer.

Tracie tears up as she watches the wire spark.

TRACIE (CONT'D)
F-f-u-u.

SOUND: KA-BOOM!

The clear liquid ignites. A hellish firestorm of horizontal flames protrudes up and out of the building.

INT. NEW YORK COFFEE SHOP - SAME

Enters OMAR CHERIF, fit, Iranian-born foodie, 30s. Works as a Sous Chef at the restaurant atop the North Tower of the World Trade Center, The Windows on the World.

When Omar walks in, he glides.

EVERYONE around him watches a TV in the corner.

Omar asks a stranger.

OMAR
What's going on?

STRANGER
The Twin Towers just was bombed.

OMAR
What? Which one?

STRANGER
I don't know.

OMAR
What?!?

STRANGER
Sorry. It's all fucked up.

Omar rushes to the TV.

NEWS HELICOPTER
FOOTAGE BEGINS:

NEWS HELICOPTER FOOTAGE - FROM THE AIR - SAME

Air footage shows the destruction to the North Tower. Smoke pours out of a hole in the Ninety-Fifth Floor.

Copter-Five CAMERAMAN reports.

CAMERAMAN
Studio. You on with me, copy? This is Copter-Five. Studio, you copy? Studio... One World Trade has been struck...

Omar turns and flees the coffee shop.

As he does, he calls Tracie. When he reaches...

THE STREET

He listens to this automated message.

VOICE
Sorry, all lines are busy.

Over the buildings, he sees Tracie's building bellowing a thick cloud of white-grey smoke.

OMAR

Fuck!

A fire engine races down the street Omar is on with its SIRENS on and HONKS at the stopped traffic.

BYSTANGERS stand on the sidewalk in disbelief. Everyone's attention is on the Towers.

BYSTANDER

What just happened?

Omar sprints down the street.

INT. TRACIE'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - MINUTES LATER

An out of breath Omar reaches Tracie's apartment. He stops as he hears music beyond the closed door. Then, he BANGS hard on the steel door.

MUSIC: song like Train's Drops of Jupiter plays.

INT. TRACIE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Gracie sings as she dances around her sister's apartment.

GRACIE

*And did you finally get the chance
to dance along the light of day?*

SOUND: BANG. BANG. BANG.

This startles Gracie.

GRACIE

Oh!

She turns the music down and moves to answer the door. Before she does, she grabs a heavy nearby object.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Who is it?

She looks through the beep hole. See sees on the other side of the door a tall handsome man.

OMAR (O.S.)

Tracie, open up!

GRACIE

Who's there?

OMAR (O.S.)

It's Omar. I need to see your face.

Gracie opens up the door but leaves on the chain.

GRACIE

Omar?

She unchains the door.

Omar enters and embraces Gracie.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Hey!

OMAR

I thought you were gone.

Omar kisses Gracie's cheeks.

OMAR (CONT'D)

God is good.

(in Farsi)

I thought you were gone.

Gracie pushes Omar back.

GRACIE

I'm not Tracie.

OMAR

What?

(long pause)

Gracie?

GRACIE

So, you're Omar?

Omar races around the apartment in a panic.

OMAR

Where's your sister?

GRACIE

Work.

Omar rushes to a tall window that face where the Twin Towers once stood. He looks out at the smoke clouds.

OMAR

N-o-o-o-o-o.

Gracie joins him.

GRACIE
What's going on?!?

Omar moves to the door.

OMAR
I must find her.

Gracie presses her face to the glass.

GRACIE
Is that my sister's building?!?
Omar, I'm coming with you!

EXT. NORTH TOWER - DAY - SAME

As smoke pours out, panicking PEOPLE hang from the open windows of the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

One by one, they decide to jump free of the building, the smoke, and the burning flames.

WE see images of the fallen gliding down to their deaths.

The last one WE see wears Chef's Whites.

AMATEUR VIDEO
BEGINS:

EXT. STREET LEVEL - SAME

Grey smoke bellows out of the North Tower.

A CAMERA WOMAN captures the moment.

CAMERA WOMAN
Oh, my god. Oh, my god. Oh, my god.

Nearby BYSTANGERS look upwards.

WALLA
No.

CAMERA WOMAN
We're fuck'n under attack!

SOUND: SIRENS.

EXT. STREET LEVEL - SAME

With SIRENS on, FIRST RESPONDERS race down the street.

AMATEUR VIDEO
ENDS AND NEWS
FOOTAGE BEGINS:

INT. BREAKING NEWS STUDIO - SAME

Appears a frazzled, slightly disheveled NEWS ANCHOR. He reads the NEWS from behind his desk.

Live footage appears over his shoulder. The News stream scrolls across the bottom of the screen, "A plane has crashed into the World Trade Center's North Tower."

NEWS ANCHOR
A plane has...

Over his shoulder, in actual time, a passenger plane flies into the South Tower.

The Anchorman raises his hand to his earpiece in disbelief.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
Impossible.

NEWS FOOTAGE
ENDS:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - SAME

Omar and Gracie race to the World Trade Center. Hand and hand, they struggle through A SEA OF PEOPLE of all ages, ethnicities, and occupations running the opposite way.

In front of them, flame pours out of the South Tower.

Then, the tower collapses.

WALLA
No.

Disbelief covers Omar's face.

Then, a cloud of white smoke rushes down the street like an avalanche of ash.

OMAR
Run!!!

Omar and Gracie seek shelter behind a parked van. Together, they huddle up in a ball.

GRACIE

Tracie.

A white cloud WHOOSHES by.

MATCH CUT: WHITE
CLOUD

PLAY REAL-LIFE LAST CALLS FROM TWO VICTIMS OF THE WTC.

MELISSA DOI from the 83rd Floor calls 911.

SOUND: TOUCHTONES.

911 OPERATOR #1 answers.

911 OPERATOR #1

Nine-Nine-One.

MELISSA DOI

It's very hot, I see... I don't see, I don't see any air anymore! All I see is smoke.

911 OPERATOR #1

Okay dear, I'm so sorry, hold on for a sec, stay calm with me, stay calm, listen, listen, the call is in, I'm documenting, hold on one second please...

MELISSA DOI

I'm going to die, aren't I?

911 OPERATOR #1

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, say your prayers, ma'am, say your prayers.

MELISSA DOI

I'm going to die.

911 OPERATOR #1

You gotta think positive, because you gotta help each other get off the floor.

MELISSA DOI

I'm going to die.

911 OPERATOR #1
Now look, stay calm, stay calm,
stay calm, stay calm.

CHRISTOPHER HANLEY from the 106th Floor calls 911.

SOUND: TOUCHTONES.

911 OPERATOR #2 answers.

911 OPERATOR #2
Nine-Nine-One.

CHRISTOPHER HANLEY
I can see the smoke coming up from
outside the windows down...

911 OPERATOR #2
All right, we're on the way.

CHRISTOPHER HANLEY
Huh?

911 OPERATOR #2
We're on the way, sir.

CHRISTOPHER HANLEY
Okay, please hurry.

911 OPERATOR #2
Alright, just keep some windows
open if you can open up windows and
just sit tight. It's going to be a
while because there's a fire going
on downstairs.

CHRISTOPHER HANLEY
We can't open the windows unless we
break them.

911 OPERATOR #2
Okay, just sit tight.

CHRISTOPHER HANLEY
Okay.

911 OPERATOR #2
All right. Just sit tight. We're on
the way.

CHRISTOPHER HANLEY
Alright, please hurry.

THE SMOKE
PARTIAL CLEARS:

INT. NORTH TOWER BASE - SAME

The white cloud slowly disburses. This reveals the wreckage and remains of the Twin Towers.

SOUND: CHOKING ON DUST.

Before US, through the thickness of dust and ash, WE see burned out buses, cars, and lastly the ruins of LADDER-3.

A white cloud waffles over and covers the SCREEN.

MATCH CUT: WHITE
CLOUD

EXT. SKY ABOVE JFK AIRPORT - PRESENT DAY

A large passenger jet slices through the clouds. As it descends, it approaches a long runaway.

EXT. JOHN F. KENNEDY AIRPORT - SAME

The jet lands gently on the tarmac.

SOUND: AIR BRAKES.

SUPER: "John F. Kennedy International Airport."

SUPER: "Present Day."

INT. PASSENGER JET - PRESENT DAY

GRACIE CONRAD, now 42, sleeps at a window seat. She's comfortably dressed in a navy Dover Blazer, stripe sailor shirt, and blue jeans.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT speaks over the intercom.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Ladies and gentlemen, American
Flight 774 welcomes you to New
York. The City that never sleeps.
The local time is Eight-Forty-Five.

Gracie stirs. She gathers her things.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
For your safety and the safety of
those around you, please remain
seated with your seat belt fastened
and keep the aisle clear until we
are parked at the gate.

Gracie looks out her window. She sees the New York skyline
and closes the blind.

GRACIE
I hate planes.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
The Captain will then turn off the
Fasten Seat Belt sign, indicating
it is safe to stand.

INT. JOHN F. KENNEDY AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - SAME

In steady streams, travelers rush through the terminal.

IMAGE: a digital clock reads, 9:11.

SOUND: CHATTER of overlaying conversations.

A prerecorded VOICE cuts through this chatter.

Gracie crosses the SCREEN towing her tote.

LOUDSPEAKER
Never leave your bags unattended.
Keep your bags with you at all
times! If you see a bag unattended,
please alert security using the
courtesy phone.

Gracie pushes forward, humanity encircles her.

In mid-conversation with her mother, a BUSINESSMAN pushes
rudely passed her.

GRACIE
Nice! What?!? Not you, Mother. I
was speaking to the herd.

Gracie half-listens as she passes an airport bookstore.

Displayed in the shop's window is a life size cut out of her
holding up her new book, Twinless: Coping with 9/11.

Copies of the book are stack up high and form twin towers.

Gracie walks on by.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Cute.

Now, she heads down a escalator. Signage in front of her reads, Welcome to the Big Apple.

Gracie exits the airport through large sliding doors.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Yes. Yes. I will be careful. This
isn't my first time here. I know.
Bad things happen here. So do good.

The doors lead out and to the...

TAXI STAND

Gracie approaches a cab.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I will be home after my book
signing. Yes... I promise. Bye,
Mom.

She hangs up.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

And I thought I was a worry-wart.

INT. TAXI CAB - SAME

Gracie looks up to the DRIVER of Middle-Eastern heritage.

GRACIE

Manhattan, please.

The driver nods his acknowledgement as he glances down at the back cover of Gracie's book that rests on the passenger seat.

He looks to the cover image of Gracie. Then, via the rear view mirror, he stares at her hard.

DRIVER

I like your book.

GRACIE

Thank you.

Gracie breaks eye contact and looks out her window.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
The Public Hotel, please.

The driver cuts into traffic.

SOUND: HONK.

EXT./INT. QUEENS MIDTOWN TUNNEL - DAY

In heavy traffic, Gracie's Taxi enters...

THE TUNNEL

Her world has become small and tight as her Taxi drives bumper to bumper, deeper into the darkening earth.

DRIVER
You okay?

GRACIE
Feeling a little claustrophobic.

The driver smiles back via the rearview mirror.

DRIVER
New York can make you feel small.

GRACIE
Yeah.

She peers out her face to the window as the daylight fades.

INT. CAB - MOVING - LATER

Gracie passes Tracie's old building. She looks all the way up to her sister's floor. The window captures her face.

On the radio...

MUSIC: Everything But the Girl, Missing like song plays.

GRACIE'S
FLASHBACK
BEGINS:

INT. TRACIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gracie stands at the exact spot and looks out at the emptiness where the Twin Towers once stood. Her face reflects off the shiny glass.

SUPER: "Late September. 2001."

On the stereo, Everything But the Girl, Missing like song plays as Gracie begins a conversation with herself.

GRACIE

Hi, Sis. Where have you been? *Oh, you know... around. Yeah. I know.*

Gracie turns away from the window. Cardboard boxes of various sizes fill the apartment.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Well, I better get back to packing.

Gracie sits before her Sister's stereo, grabs the thin remote and starts the song over. She sings partially along.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Past your door but you don't live there anymore. It's years since you've been there. And now you've disappeared somewhere. Like outer space you've found some better place. And I miss you. Yeah.

As the MUSIC plays, she curls up and cries.

INT. TRACIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

With her eyes all swollen from crying, Gracie opens up a dresser drawer. Once again, she stands before a mirror.

GRACIE

Look at these clothes.

Gracie pulls out a sweater.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Cute.

Gracie brings the sweater to her nose and inhales deeply.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

It still smells of you.

She gently places it in the box marked, "Keep."

This is when Gracie sees a business card in the drawer. She picks it up with the very tips of her fingers.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

What's this?

IMAGE: crisp, new Saffron Restaurant business card.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Saffron's. A taste of Persia. Hmm.

Gracie flips over the card. Omar name and phone number are written on it.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
O-m-a-r.

Gracie eyes herself in the mirror. She tilts her head left then right.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
We miss you, girl. I haven't felt
whole since you left.

Gracie pulls herself from the mirror with a head jerk.

GRACIE'S
FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. CAB - PRESENT DAY

The driver hits a big pothole.

SOUND: BAM!

The driver looks back via the rearview mirror and frowns apologetically.

DRIVER
Sorry about that.

GRACIE
I'm fine. It's comforting to know
that some things about the City
never change.

The driver smiles at this acknowledgement.

EXT. PUBLIC HOTEL - LATER

Gracie's cab illegally parks in front of the Hotel.

DRIVER
The Public. Would you mind signing
my book?

GRACIE
Of course I can.

She reads his name of the license facing her.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Sahir.

DRIVER
My name means...

GRACIE
Friend. I know.

Gracie signs the book and hands it back.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(in Farsi)
Thank you for reading my book.

DRIVER
(in Farsi)
Thank you for writing it.

The Driver pops out to grab her bag after Gracie pays.

The VALET approaches Gracie with a broad smile.

VALET
Welcome to the Public. May I take
your bags?

GRACIE
Thank you. Just one bag. I can
manage.

The valet nods and leads her into...

THE HOTEL'S ENTRANCE

Gracie walks down a short corridor lined with plants and lush green vegetation.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
You can almost forget you're in the
city.

VALET
It's a sanctuary of sorts.

INT. PUBLIC HOTEL - ESCALATOR - SAME

Gracie climbs the LED-lit steps of the hotel's jazzy escalator and looks around.

GRACIE
Ian, you never fail me.

INT. PUBLIC HOTEL - LOBBY - SAME

Gracie crosses the smooth marble floors of the small lobby of this upscale, boutique hotel. She approaches the CLERK who stands behind the front desk.

CLERK
Welcome. Checking in?

GRACIE
Conrad. Grace.

CLERK
Ah, yes. Two nights. The Penthouse Suite.

The clerk hands over her key for the door.

GRACIE
Thank you.

CLERK
Enjoy, your stay with us, Ms. Conrad.

INT. PUBLIC HOTEL CORRIDOR - 5TH FLOOR - SAME

Gracie drags her tote down a long corridor of closed doors.

GRACIE
Five-Twelve. Five-Fourteen. Five-Sixteen. Oh, here I am. The Penthouse Suite.

Gracie sweeps her key in the door.

SOUND: CLICK.

The door opens.

INT. PUBLIC HOTEL - GRACIE'S ROOM - SAME

Gracie's room is ultra-modern with clean cut lines harnessing the room's splendid view.

She finds her bed by the window.

GRACIE
This will do.

Gracie unpacks her tote. One freshly pressed suit folded in plastic, some workout clothes, a pair of bright colored running shoes, and a small clear bag of her toiletries. She places everything in drawers.

Then, Gracie plops down on the edge of bed.

Her iPhone RINGS. A picture of her mother pops.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Great.

Gracie answers it.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Hi, Mom.

She listens.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
No. I don't know what happened to
your remote control. Use the one
upstairs.

Gracie listens again.

MOTHER CONRAD (O.S.)
Okay. Okay. I'm glad you haven't
been mugged yet.

GRACIE
Me too, Mom.

Gracie hangs up.

Heavy silence follows. HOLD. She looks around the room uncertain of what next to do. Think, Lost in Translation.

The passage of time becomes awkward, uncomfortable to Gracie. So, she jumps up from her bed.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Time for a run.

EXT. HIGH LINE - DAY

Gracie runs south down the High Line. She wears ear buds.

Her iPhone plays, Train's Drops of Jupiter like song.

WE follow her until she becomes small.

Gracie sings as she runs from US.

GRACIE

*Now that she's back in the
atmosphere. With drops of Jupiter
in her hair, hey, hey. She acts
like summer and walks like rain.
Reminds me that there's time to
change, hey, hey. Since the return
of her stay on the moon. She
listens like spring and she talks
like June, hey, hey. Hey, hey. But
tell me did you sail across the
sun. Did you make it to the Milky
Way to see the lights all faded.
And that heaven is overrated?*

EXT. CHURCH STREET - LATER

Gracie heads down the block zigzagging through people until she sees One World Trade Center, looming overhead.

She crosses the street to a broad Plaza of stone and water.

She is surprised at what she sees.

Cautiously, she approaches these Holy Grounds.

VISITORS and TOURISTS walk about.

EXT. 9/11 MEMORIAL - DAY

Within the square waterfall fountains, rippling water cascades down and down.

SOUND: RUNNING WATER.

Gracie stands quietly before her Sister's engraved name in the Nine-Eleven Monument. She touches it. She traces her finger along her Sister's name.

GRACIE

Hi, Sis.

An old WOMAN approaches with fresh flowers in her hands.

WOMAN

Hi.

GRACIE

Hi.

The woman looks at Gracie then Tracie's name.

Gracie points.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

My Sister.

The woman places the fresh bouquet of flowers at the base near Gracie's feet. Gently, she pats another engraved name. It reads, SAUL BELLOWS.

WOMAN

My Brother.

The two strangers embrace and console one another.

Gracie buckles a bit into the older woman's chest.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

There, there, dear. I gotchu.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - TILE WALL - DAY

Gracie stands by a massive blue and teal checkered wall which reads in big bold lettering, "No Day Shall Erase You From the Memory of Time, Vigil."

GRACIE

No day shall erase you from the
memory of time. Perfect.

Gracie continues her visit.

EXT. 9/11 MUSEUM - DISPLAY HALL - LATER

Gracie wanders through a darken room full of damaged goods.

Within glass display boxes, she passes the personal items found within the wreckage of the Twin Towers.

Gracie buckles when she sees her sister's blue purse within the a lit display box. She touches the glass.

ALICE approaches her from a corner. Her nameplate states, she's the Museum's Director.

ALICE

Can I help you?

GRACIE
This was my Sister's purse.

Alice steps closer.

ALICE
Ms. Conrad?

GRACIE
Yes.

ALICE
Welcome to the museum. The entire staff is excited about your visit.

GRACIE
Thank you, Alice. I've been here a dozen times, never have I noticed her purse before.

ALICE
Well, many of our objects appear surreal. Come. May I show you where we have you set up for tomorrow?

GRACIE
Of course.

Gracie looks back at Tracie's blue purse.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Lead the way.

INT. 9/11 MEMORIAL - LOBBY - SAME

Alice passes a life-sized promotional poster of Gracie, holding her book out, high and wide, in both hands.

ALICE
So far, we have had over three hundred people RSVP.

GRACIE
Is that good?

Alice turns and smiles back.

ALICE
Yes. Very.

GRACIE
Great.

ALICE

This morning, boxes of your books arrived via your publisher. Normally, it's best to get those signed before the event.

GRACIE

Okay. Is there a good place to do that?

ALICE

I have you all set up in my office.

GRACIE

Thank you, Alice.

ALICE

If you need anything, let me know... I'll be around.

Alice walks on. Then, she stops and turns.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I enjoyed your book and its theme of healing.

GRACIE

I covered twenty-years of terror. I think it's time for some love and compassion.

ALICE

I wholeheartedly agree. My office is at the top of the stairs.

Alice moves on.

Gracie heads to Alice's office.

GRACIE

Thank you.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - ALICE'S OFFICE - LATER

Gracie signs book after book. In the background are pictures of Alice with her family and noteworthy celebrities.

Gracie reaches the end of a box of books. She gets up and stretches. When she turns she sees a photograph of Alice with President Obama.

GRACIE
You get around Alice. Obama.
Bloomberg. Kate and William. Even
Bourdain.

IMAGE: Alice and Anthony Bourdain in his Chef's Whites at a
celebrity charity event.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Chef. Hmm.

Gracie looks out the window.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Windows on the World. Omar.

Gracie grabs her purse and digs through it until she removes
a worn-out business card. On it, reads Saffron's Restaurant.

EXT. 9/11 MEMORIAL - STREET SIDE - LATER

Gracie hails a cab.

A cab stops to a quick halt.

Gracie pops in.

GRACIE
Hell's Kitchen.

EXT. SAFFRON'S RESTAURANT - HELL'S KITCHEN - DAY

Gracie's cab stops before Omar's family's restaurant. She
gets out. Painted on the window, "A Taste of Persian Food."

INT. SAFFRON'S RESTAURANT - SAME

Gracie enters. She sees...

MASIH, the hostess' back as she folds napkins. She wears
fashionable clothes and a silk headscarf, early 20s.

GRACIE
Hi.

MASIH
Sorry, we're closed.

GRACIE
I know. Is Omar around?

MASIH
Omar? Hmmm. Sure.

Masih eyes Gracie hard. Then, she looks here up and down.

MASIH (CONT'D)
Follow me.

Masih stops in mid-stride and turns back quickly.

MASHI
Wait a minute! You're Omar's pin-up girl.

GRACIE
What?!?

MASIH
He has an eight by ten of you two.
Taken in Central Park, over the
stove. It's been there for years.

GRACIE
Oh. That. No. That was my sister.

MASIH
Sorry. The two of you could have
been twins.

GRACIE
We were... until Nine-Eleven.

MASIH
Got it. Sorry. Follow me. He's in
the back.

Masih leads Gracie through swinging metal doors.

INT. SUFFRON'S RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - SAME

The kitchen bustles with cooks, cleaners. Pots of stews and soups simmer atop the commercial sized stove.

Omar wears his Chef's Whites.

MASIH
Hey, Uncle Omar.

GRACIE
Uncle?

Omar stands before the large stainless sink. He washes up some whole carrots with their green tops attached.

SOUND: SHHHHHH of fast flowing water.

MASIH

Omar!

Omar notices Masih.

OMAR

What!?!

MASIH

Someone is here to see you.

OMAR

What are you talking about Masih?

Omar turns sees Gracie.

Gracie smiles.

GRACIE

What's up, Chef?

Omar stumbles back a bit... The familiarity of Gracie's voice startles him.

OMAR

Tr..Gracie?

GRACIE

Yep. Right choice.

Omar moves through some people to reach Gracie.

The two embrace.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Quite an enterprise you have here.

OMAR

My family started it in the
Seventies. Now, my Mom runs it.

AMIR, Omar's older brother appears from another room.

AMIR

With an iron fist. The rest of us
just get in her way.

Omar laughs.

OMAR

Amir speaks the truth.

AMIR
Introductions are in order.

AMIR, in his Chef's Whites offers Gracie his hand.

OMAR
Gracie, this is my dear brother,
Amir.

Gracie accepts it.

GRACIE
Charmed.

The COOKS, CLEANERS, and Mashi eavesdrops on their conversation.

MASHI
No introductions for me, Uncle.

OMAR
Of course. Of course. Everyone else
this is Gracie. Gracie, this is
everyone us.

MASHI
Rude.

Omar pats Amir's shoulder.

OMAR
Mashi is Amir's eldest daughter.
She gets her good looks from her
Grandmother, and our mother.

MASHI
Hey!

AMIR
More like her mother. Thankfully.

Omar laughs from the depths of his soul. It is contagious.

The others join in.

MASHI
Poor Na-Na.

Omar looks at Gracie.

OMAR
Introductions are over. Now,
everyone clear out!

AMIR
Omar, we open in two hours.

OMAR
I know, brother. Twenty minutes
tops. It's Tracie's sister.

Amir nods and places his righthand fatherly on his younger
brother's shoulder.

AMIR
Okay. Nice meeting you Gracie.

Amir returns back to the small room he came out of.

GRACIE
You too, Amir.

The rest of the staff lingers out of the kitchen.

OMAR
Sit. You hungry?

GRACIE
Starving.

OMAR
Good. I've read your book. Twice
now.

GRACIE
And?

OMAR
I wept both times.

GRACIE
Is that a good thing or bad?

OMAR
I haven't figured that out. Come.

Gracie sits on a stool before a stainless island.

Omar opens and walks into his fridge.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Ahh! What do we have here? Hmm.

Gracie looks around the kitchen. On a bulletin board is a
well-worn and grease spotted eight by ten photo that Masih
spoke earlier of.

IMAGE: Omar and Tracie in Central Park.

Gracie stands to inspect the photos of family, friends, catering events pinned to the board.

GRACIE

Ohh, cute.

One portrait is of a stern-looking head scarfed woman in her late sixties. She stands in the center of the kitchen with the rest of the family and staff behind her at attention.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

You must be Na-Na.

Omar rumbles in the fridge.

OMAR (O.S.)

This. This, and this.

Omar emerges from the fridge and loudly dumps ingredients down atop the island. He sees Gracie admiring the photos.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Central Park. Taken on the best day of my life, for sure.

GRACIE

Do you ever think what might have been?

OMAR

Too goddamn often.

GRACIE

Me too.

OMAR

So, how does breakfast sound with an Iranian twist?

GRACIE

Great.

OMAR

Good.

Omar claps his hands twice and looks to his Amazon Echo on a nearby shelf.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Music Maestro. Alexa! Play, Persian Bazaar.

Omar smiles at Gracie.

OMAR (CONT'D)
I prefer music when I cook.

ALEXA
Playing Persian Bazaar station.

MUSIC: PB Station starts.

GRACIE
Nice touch.

OMAR
Home.

Omar HUMS along with the song. Then, he grabs a pot as the gas stove ignites.

IMAGE: the combustion of the gas.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Some good ole' comfort food. Heals all.

Omar expertly breaks an egg and the yolk from high above the pan falls into the pan.

SOUND: SIZZLE.

Omar repeats this action with another egg.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Add some pepper. And some salt.

Omar grabs the pan with the eggs and pours its contains onto a Sangak, rectangular flatbread.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Now, some cheese.

He grades the cheese by hand.

GRACIE
Smells great.

OMAR
Almost there. Now, a drizzling of my sauce. Just a drizzling.

GRACIE
Looks like you enjoy what you're doing?

OMAR

I do. A recipe has no soul. So, I must offer up mine... and saffron. Viola! Here. Enjoy.

Gracie bites into the flatbread sandwich. This causes golden yolk oozes out down between her fingers.

GRACIE

Wow. Unbelievably good. I haven't had Sangak forever.

OMAR

How long where you in Iraq?

GRACIE

Almost five years. The Middle-East, over ten.

Omar grabs a metal coffee pot from the stove.

OMAR

Wow, that long.

GRACIE

Yep.

OMAR

What were your impressions?

GRACIE

Good people. Bad governments.

OMAR

Seems to be a theme in the region. The War on Terror has defined the last twenty years.

GRACIE

I'm done looking back. I want to live in the now.

OMAR

Your book?

GRACIE

Tells the stories of those who lived.

OMAR

And those who never really recovered.

GRACIE
Yeah. Sorry about that.

OMAR
You wrote the truth. For a long time, I wanted to be dead, so I could be with your sister. Hmm. Coffee?

GRACIE
Sure.

Omar pours steaming black richness into her cup.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Thanks. Now, you must try a bite of this superb sandwich.

OMAR
I know it's good.

Gracie feeds him a piece of her sandwich.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Oh, that's good.

The two stare at one another of a moment.

OMAR (CONT'D)
What's your plans for today?

GRACIE
Putter around a bit. Explore. My agent arranged an interview on NPR for later today.

OMAR
Wow. NPR. When?

GRACIE
Midtown. At Five.

OMAR
Ah. I see. And tomorrow you've a book signing.

GRACIE
Yes, at the Memorial Museum.

OMAR
Hmm. I've never gone.

GRACIE

Why? It's architecture is beautiful. Calming.

OMAR

Calming. You forget, I should've been in that building.

GRACIE

I haven't forgotten. If you died, I wouldn't be enjoying this wonderful creation of yours today. The now, Omar.

OMAR

Most of my friends didn't make it out. Some of them jumped to their deaths from the top floor. Hmm, life. It's an interesting journey.

GRACIE

So... You feel guilty about being alive?

Omar nods.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

It's called survivor's guilt. I'm riddled with it too. You still don't have conversation with her do you?

Omar oddly stares hard at Gracie.

OMAR

What?

GRACIE

Oh, nothing. Great sandwich, by the way. Thank you.

OMAR

Gracie, for twenty years now, I have lived with a huge whole in my heart.

Gracie gets up and gives him a big hug.

GRACIE

Me too, Omar. Me too.

OMAR

I knew her such a short period of time. You...

Gracie pulls back a bit.

GRACIE
My entire life until that point.

OMAR
Yeah.

GRACIE
Omar. Be my tour guide today. Show
me why you love this City so.

Omar takes off his apron and Chef's Whites.

OMAR
That's an easy task, girl.

Amir returns to the kitchen.

AMIR
Omar, we need the kitchen to prep.

OMAR
No worries, brother. The kitchen is
yours.

Omar grabs Gracie's hand and leads her out.

AMIR
Where are you going?

OMAR
Out.

Amir looks to the other cooks and cleaners.

AMIR
Okay.

OMAR
Gracie, the city of cities awaits.

EXT. HELL'S KITCHEN - STREET SIDE - DAY

Omar and Gracie are atop a red 1965 Vespa moped with a woven picnic basket strapped to the back.

Gracie has her arms wrapped around him.

Omar hits the horn.

SOUND: WEAK HORN (2x).

GRACIE
This safe?

OMAR
Depends on your definition of
safety.

Omar squeezes the throttle, and the scooter takes off.

The traffic light turns yellow.

OMAR (CONT'D)
We can make it!

Gracie SCREAMS as they travel through the yellow light as it
changes quickly to red.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Gracie! Yellow means go! Welcome to
New York!

GRACIE
Yee-ah! Glad to be here.

EXT. MANHATTAN - MOPED MONTAGE

1. Omar takes Gracie sightseeing.
2. They leave Hell's Kitchen.
3. Moped turns onto West 46th Street and heads west.
4. It passes Hamilton and Scientology signage.
5. Then, they cross Times Square.
6. Their moped heads north of Park Avenue.
7. Passes versus glamorous storefronts.
8. They turn west on 57th Street.
9. They stop at light at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street.
10. Tiffany's window frames them and their moped. Gracie
gives Omar a big hug.
11. Trump Tower looms behind them. Omar gives the building
the bird.

GRACIE
What's that for?

OMAR

Trump. And his Immigration Policy.

Turns down an alleyway to the loading docks of...

THE PLAZA HOTEL

Their moped comes to a halt.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Best place to park.

Gracie looks around.

GRACIE

Is this allowed?

OMAR

I do it all the time.

EXT. 59TH STREET - SAME

Omar leads Gracie across the street into...

CENTRAL PARK

The Plaza looms in the background.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NEAR GAPSTOW BRIDGE - SAME

Omar tosses down a light blanket from the basket.

OMAR

Here.

Omar turns and twirls and does a Three-Sixty.

The Pond glisters in the afternoon sun.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Perfect.

GRACIE

You know how to impress a girl.

Omar unpacks two bottles of wine from the basket.

OMAR

Red or white?

GRACIE

You expecting more people?

OMAR
One for me. One for you.

GRACIE
Okay. White.

OMAR
Good choice.

Omar expertly opens the bottle.

SOUND: POP!

Omar pours. Then, he hands a glass to Gracie.

GRACIE
Cheers.

OMAR
Cheers.

Omar tosses down his wine.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Ahh!

Omar pours Gracie more wine.

GRACIE
Any food in that basket of yours? I
have to speak intelligently at
Five.

Omar peers in.

OMAR
Nope. Yikes. I forgot about your
interview.

GRACIE
It's radio. I should be okay. But I
need to eat more if I'm going to be
drinking like this.

Omar bounces up.

OMAR
Let's get you a dog.

GRACIE
Lead away, oh gracious host.

EXT. NATHAN'S HOT DOG STAND - SAME

Omar leads Gracie through "I Love New York" infused souvenir booths until they reach Nathan's Hot Dog stand on the corner of 59th Street and Grand Army Plaza.

Omar turns to Gracie.

OMAR
How do you take your dog?

GRACIE
Loaded with chili and onions.

OMAR
Smart girl.

Omar turns to the VENDOR.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Four dogs loaded, please.

The vendor gets to work. Then, he hands them their food.

VENDOR
Best dogs in town.

Gracie takes a big bite.

GRACIE
Hmm.

OMAR
Food binds us together.

INT. CENTRAL PARK - BLANKET - SAME

Omar takes a big bite of his dog. As he does...

GRACIE
So, what line did you use on my
sister to get her here?

Omar speaks with a full mouth.

OMAR
Pass the mustard.

GRACIE
Clever. Did you do that with a full
mouth too.

Omar thinks about it.

OMAR
I think I did. So... Any men in
your life?

GRACIE
There was in Baghdad. A fellow
reporter.

OMAR
And?

GRACIE
IED got him.

Gracie takes a drink of her wine.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Any women in your life?

OMAR
No. But my Mother keeps having
women from our church randomly show
up to dinner.

Gracie spits out her wine.

GRACIE
Mine too! She wants me married more
than I do.

OMAR
Yeah. I guess when the time is
right. It is right.

GRACIE
I'm just waiting for the right
person.

OMAR
Yeah. Well... We better get moving
toward Midtown soon.

Gracie looks hard at Omar and smiles big.

OMAR (CONT'D)
What?!?

GRACIE
I can see why my sister loved you.

OMAR
That is very kind of you to say.

GRACIE
No. True.

Omar nods his appreciation.

OMAR
Let's cut across the Park. Enjoy
more of this glorious day.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - TUNNEL - DAY

Omar walks with Gracie through the tunnel that leads to Bethesda Fountain.

Pedestrians pace about.

Omar is attention is drawn to the lake.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - BETHESDA FOUNTAIN - DAY

Omar stops by the lake. Gracie is behind him.

COUPLES in row boats dot the lake.

A gondolier in his gondola APPEARS. The gondolier uses his long oar to guide the boat.

GRACIE
Look! They have gondolas.

OMAR
Yeah. I love this Park. Every visit
restores me.

Gracie's phone starts to ring.

GRACIE
Ugh!

Gracie looks at the screen.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
It's my Mother.

OMAR
Answer it.

GRACIE
Why? She just seeing if I've been
mugged yet.

OMAR
Gracie, answer it.

Gracie does.

GRACIE
Hi, Mom. What's up?

MOTHER CONRAD (O.S.)
Are you okay?

GRACIE
Mother, I've just finished
picnicking in Central Park.

MOTHER CONRAD (O.S.)
Oh, I saw on the news a jogger was
killed there.

GRACIE
That was thirty years ago.

Omar smiles at Gracie. He enjoys the pain he put her in.

MOTHER CONRAD (O.S.)
Still.

GRACIE
Mom, remember Tracie's old
boyfriend.

MOTHER CONRAD (O.S.)
The Italian?

GRACIE
No. The Iranian-American.

MOTHER CONRAD (O.S.)
The what?!?

GRACIE
Here.

Gracie gives the phone over to Omar.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Impress her with your wit and
charm.

Omar grabs the phone and without missing a beat.

OMAR
Mrs. Conrad... what a pleasure it
is for me to finally hear your
voice.

GRACIE
Oh, brother. I'm in trouble now.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - CANOPY OF TREES - LATER DAY

Omar and Gracie stroll arm in arm.

OMAR
Your Mother was... nice.

GRACIE
Twenty minutes nice?!?

OMAR
What? She was feeling chatty. So I
let her talk.

GRACIE
Chatty?

OMAR
Someday you will wish to have the
chance to call her.

GRACIE
What do you know of Mommy guilt?
You still have yours.

OMAR
Yes... but it was my Grandmother
that raised me. My Mother was
always at the restaurant.

GRACIE
Oh.

OMAR
That's who I wish I could call this
very second.

GRACIE
What would you ask her?

OMAR
What am I doing wrong with her
stew?

GRACIE

Funny.

Gracie stops. Then, she races to the grass.

Omar follows.

OMAR

What are you up to now?

GRACIE

This is the exact spot of our
Central Park cheer routine.

OMAR

Your what?!?

GRACIE

Let's get Fired Up, Firebirds!

Gracie preforms a trust fall onto the patch of grass. She
looks up at Omar and the clouds above.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

We still rock it, girl.

Omar joins her.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Where do you think my sister
vanished off to?

OMAR

I imagine, the same place as my
Grandmother.

GRACIE

Yeah. She's been gone from us for
so long.

OMAR

I know. Twenty years now. When I
saw you today. My heart dropped.

GRACIE

Why?

OMAR

For a split second, I thought you
were her, or a ghost.

GRACIE

I understand. There's times when I'm in large crowds and I think I see her. I race to her. Cut people off. Push into others. Turn them about.

OMAR

And?

GRACIE

And... I scare people who look nothing like her.

OMAR

Is that why you wrote your book?

GRACIE

Sort of. I guess, I needed to say my good-bye to her in a weird way.

OMAR

I get it. There's certain dishes I prepare that remind me...

Gracie breaks a smile.

OMAR (CONT'D)

What?

GRACIE

I spend years in the Middle-East and men rarely find there way into the kitchen. And if they did, they could not cook.

OMAR

I know! It's amazing. Women control the kitchen there. But here, it is different.

GRACIE

How?

OMAR

My Grandma embraced what was good from the past and what was good for the future. America. She opened up a new world to me. She taught me how to cook: Baghali Polo, Fesenjan, Bademjan, Gormeh, Sabzi.

GRACIE

That's rare for Middle-Eastern women to share their kitchens with men. Even more, their secrets.

OMAR

I know. And I am eternally grateful for her.

GRACIE

Thank you.

OMAR

For what?

GRACIE

Today.

OMAR

We better go.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - BOW BRIDGE - DAY

Omar and Gracie cross the Bow Bridge. Their hands linger by their sides, dangerously close to touching one another.

INT. RADIO STATION - LATER

Omar stands beyond the room's glass barrier.

IMAGE: lit On-Air Sign.

Gracie sits before a big microphone. She has headphones on and listens to an eyewitness account on Nine-Eleven.

EYEWITNESS (V.O.)

I had just gotten in to New York that morning from JFK. And I took a cab ride to the World Trade Center. To my offices on the Eighty-Eighth floor. All of a sudden, there was this rumble. A sound, and a lot of commotion. Just out the window, you look and you see, papers tumbling through the air. Paper, smoke, and fire. Lots of fire.

TERRY GROSS, is across from her and interviews Gracie.

TERRY

That must be difficult to hear.
Knowing what your identical sister
went through before her building
collapsed.

GRACIE

My sister worked on the North
Tower's Ninety-Fifth Floor.
American Airlines' Flight Eleven
from Boston final destination. The
plane flew through her floor... and
her.

TERRY

Wow. So, why write this book? Why
put the time and effort into
reliving your sister's death?

GRACIE

As a reporter for the Stars and
Stripes I have spent ten years in
the Middle-East covering our War on
Terror. I have seen lots of death
on both sides.

TERRY

And? What have you learned?

GRACIE

Placing a loaded gun to a man's
head isn't going to make him love
you... Or want to change.

TERRY

Yeah.

GRACIE

That's what I attempted to describe
in my book. Not the horrific event
on Nine-Eleven, but the reaction.
The kindness... the courage of
complete strangers. This morning I
visited the Memorial. Saw my
sister's name engraved in stone. An
old woman who lost her brother came
up to me, as I buckled a bit. She
consoled me. Told me, in a way only
a true New Yorker can... I *gotchu*.

TERRY

Hmm. When America was attacked twenty years ago, brave first responders came to Ground Zero to rescue people buried in the rubble and to retrieve the remains of those no longer alive. Could you read from your book one account?

GRACIE

Sure.

Gracie picks up her book and reads.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Okay. Lieutenant Antonio Bellini, firefighter assigned to Engine Company Forty of the Fire Department, City of New York. I happened to be looking up and saw the explosion or the building fail with the ensuing fireball and cloud. It didn't appear to me at that moment the building was coming down. But when the noise level began to pick up, it was obvious that something wrong was going on. Big time. We all proceeded to run southwesterly towards Liberty and West. At that point there was chunks of debris coming down on us. I dove under a nearby car for safety. That's when the white cloud appeared. It totally surrounded me. Darkness came. Dust was everywhere.

Gracie stops and clears her throat.

TERRY

Lieutenant Antonio Bellini who recently died from lung cancer?

GRACIE

Correct. Many of the first responders are dealing with health problems due to the toxic Nine-Eleven dust. Three times the number we lost on Nine-Eleven have died.

TERRY

Thank you for writing this book.

GRACIE

Well, thank you for having me.

TERRY

This is Fresh Air. I'm Terry Gross.
And my guest today is Gracie
Conrad, the author of...

EXT. TIME SQUARE - LATER

Gracie and Omar walk north, under the bright lights of Time Square. Various theater advertisements Hoover over their heads and shoulders during their stroll.

Around them, an international group of SIGHTSEERS taking photos with selfie sticks.

SOUND: SNAP!

IMAGE: of a young group of multi-ethnic people. In the background Omar and Gracie walk.

EXT. NEW YORK - STREET - DAY

Omar and Gracie walk continues away from the tourist and cut down a narrow side street.

GRACIE

Do you ever get used to this?

OMAR

What?

GRACIE

The people? The traffic?

OMAR

Times Square is not a good
representation of New York City.

GRACIE

Why?

OMAR

Hey, that's new.

Omar points.

OMAR (CONT'D)

That's New York.

GRACIE

What?

OMAR
A spice shop!

Omar looks at Gracie like a boy about to enter a candy store.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Let's pop in.

GRACIE
Why?

OMAR
The sign says that they have ten
different kinds of curry powder.

GRACIE
Is that good?

OMAR
It ain't bad.

EXT. SPICE SHOP - SAME

Omar hurries to the door. Gracie follows. The shop looks like
its been there for two hundred years.

INT. SPICE SHOP - SAME

Omar rushes to the back of the store. Spices, herbs, and
seasonings lines his path.

Gracie catches up.

GRACIE
Who would have thought there would
be so many options.

OMAR
Here.

An Indian CLERK stands behind the counter.

CLERK
Welcome.

Omar inhales.

OMAR
Wonder. Color. Smells.

He inhales deeply again.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Along with texture. Coarse. Fine.
Blended.

He sees a large glass container of red fine saffron powder.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Ahh. Saffron.

He uses a big scoop to transfer the saffron into a plastic bag very carefully.

OMAR (CONT'D)
A mystical spice with religious
connotations. Rich and healing.

The clerk inspects him closely.

Then, she looks to Gracie.

CLERK
Need any help?

GRACIE
Me? No. The man with the spice
fetish. Maybe.

The lady laughs hard and smiles now.

Gracie goes to Omar.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
What does it smell like?

Omar twists the bag closed.

OMAR
Home.

Then, he uses a small wire to secure it.

OMAR (CONT'D)
I better be getting back to the
restaurant. It's a Saturday night.

GRACIE
Okay. Thanks for today.

OMAR
It was fun. You need anything? A
spice souvenir.

GRACIE
No. I'm more a salt and pepper
girl.

Omar pays for the bag of spices he poured.

OMAR
Utter blasphemy.

The clerk behind the counter weighs the bag.

CLERK
That will be three-hundred and
seventy-five dollars.

GRACIE
What?!?

Omar pays and as he does he turns to Gracie.

OMAR
Saffron. Ounce for ounce, more
expensive than gold.

GRACIE
Wow. Really?

OMAR
Really. You hungry for dinner?

GRACIE
Is all you ever think about is
food?

Omar smiles broad and wide.

OMAR
Occupational hazard.

Gracie nods, yes.

The clerk behind the counter nods her head too.

LADY
Wise man.

EXT. SAFFRON'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The dinner CROWD fills the place, as OTHERS wait patiently
for their table. Meanwhile, WE follow the back of a SERVER as
he moves through the swinging doors into...

THE KITCHEN

Where Persian music plays.

Omar is doing his thing over the stove. He stands in his Chef's Whites with a long handled pan in his hand, twelve inches above the gas flame.

Omar grabs a bottle of oil and drizzles it into the pan.

IMAGE: BALL OF FLAME!

Omar pours the contents of the over some white fluffy rice. Then, he picks some tiny leaves off a nearby plant.

OMAR
Something for decoration.

Omar grabs a clear bottle of yellowish red liquid.

OMAR (CONT'D)
And saffron sauce.

Omar puts a dab of sauce on his finger and licks it.

OMAR (CONT'D)
(in Farsi)
Perfection.

Omar plates from another pan the Tamarind-Stuffed Trout with its head still attached. Gently, he sets the fish atop a bed of greens. Omar hits a silver call bell, DING!

OMAR (CONT'D)
Order ready, for the VIP with a
winning smile at the bar.

A SERVER grabs the order, looks at a few of his coworkers and smiles big. Then, he takes the order to Gracie.

ZAHRA, Omar's Mom appears from the rear. Sneaking out from her head scarf, is salt and pepper hair, petite, earthy, her Chef's Whites are spotless. She is a woman who appreciates order, discipline, and surprises.

ZAHRA
VIP? Winning smile? Someone I know?

OMAR
Tracie's Sister is in town.

ZAHRA
T-r-a-c-i-e? Ahh, so that's why you
left us a cook short tonight?

OMAR
Yes... I was overdue on some time
off.

ZAHRA
True. O-m-a-r?

OMAR
Yes, Mother.

ZAHRA
Be careful.

Zahra pats her son the arm.

OMAR
I will.

Zahra stops by the door.

ZAHRA
Does Tracie's Sister have a name?

OMAR
Gracie.

ZAHRA
Seriously?

Omar nods yes.

Zahra looks to the ceiling.

ZAHRA (CONT'D)
Oh, sometimes I wish I was still in
Tehran.

Zahra leaves the kitchen.

Omar through the window in the door sees his Mother head
directly to the bar and Gracie.

OMAR
Uh-oh.

INT. SAFFRON - BAR - SAME

Gracie sits at a stool before the bar. The meal Omar prepared
for her is in front of her.

Masih is behind the bar.

MASIH
Another French-Seventy-Five?

GRACIE
No. I'm good.

Gracie takes a bite of her Trout.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
This is divine.

MASIH
Tamarind Stuffed Trout, Omar's
signature dish.

GRACIE
Yum.

MASIH
Be warned... When my Uncle makes a
girl Great-Grandma's stew...
that is when he loves you.

Masih takes her drink.

GRACIE
Thanks for the tip.

Gracie looks at Omar in the kitchen. As she does, Zahra
approaches from the kitchen.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Uh-oh. Here comes Na-Na.

Gracie turns and attempts to hide her face.

Zahra greets her.

ZAHRA
I hope everything is to your...

Zahra acts like she's seen a ghost.

GRACIE
Ah, yes. Delicious. You okay?

ZAHRA
You're twins?

GRACIE
Yes. Identical.

ZAHRA
I see. I met your Sister once.
Here.

Zahra points at a nearby table where a family is finishing up their dinner.

ZAHRA (CONT'D)
At that very table.

GRACIE
What was your impression of her?

ZAHRA
She wasn't Iranian.

GRACIE
(laughs)
True. Would you like to join me?

ZAHRA
Perhaps, Gracie, after I work the room a bit.

Zahra moves to a table full of people.

ZAHRA (CONT'D)
Oh, Farhad. It's been far too long.

Gracie watches as she finishes her meal.

GRACIE
Time for theater.

Gracie gets up and wanders to the kitchen.

INT. SAFFRON - KITCHEN - SAME

Gracie enters the kitchen.

Omar takes off his Chef's Whites and asks.

OMAR
How was your dinner?

Gracie shrugs her shoulders and says.

GRACIE
Okay.

Omar stops dead in his tracks.

OMAR
Just okay?

Gracie shrugs her shoulders again.

OMAR (CONT'D)
You're a hard one to please.

GRACIE
I'm kidding. It was delicious.
Thank you.

OMAR
Good. I'm glad. You in for a night
cap?

GRACIE
Sure.

Omar and Gracie leave Saffron's.

Masih and Zahra watches them go with great interest.

MASIH
Uncle seems to have fallen fast.

ZAHRA
Hmm. Too fast. The loss of the
first one nearly killed him.

Masih looks at her Grandma.

ZAHRA (CONT'D)
Come. Those dinner dishes aren't
going to wash themselves.

EXT. BOWERY STREET - NIGHT

Gracie leads Omar to her hotel. As they pass a street VENDOR
selling Hot Mini Cakes, Omar stops cold.

OMAR
Wait. These things are delicious.

GRACIE
How many times a day do you eat?

OMAR
Not enough.

Omar walks up to the vendor.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Two bags please.

The vendor hands over to bags of steamy cakes.

GRACIE
You love food.

OMAR
I'm a street-cart connoisseur who
appreciates food but loves the
people who spend their lives making
this.

Omar pops a hot mini cake into Gracie's mouth.

Gracie chews it slowly.

GRACIE
One day with you and I feel like I
gained five pounds.

Omar peers into the brown bag.

OMAR
Want another one?

Gracie falls into Omar a bit.

GRACIE
Yes. Feed me.

Omar does.

EXT. BOWERY STREET - LATER NIGHT

A hand-holding, Omar and Gracie stroll down the street.

GRACIE
That's when our Humvee hit an IED.
Boom! Darkness. I wake up in a
hospital bed two days later and I'm
told Bill died. I fought depression
for years over that one. Hell, I
still fight it.

Gracie face turns away from Omar.

OMAR
Yeah. After your Sister's death.
Others moved on with their lives. I
could not. I tried drugs. Slept
with strange women. Nothing worked.

GRACIE

Why?

OMAR

There's a deep emptiness in me, the
void your Sister so easily filled
with her smile. Your smile.

Omar draws closer.

GRACIE

I'm not Tracie.

Omar moves to kiss Gracie.

OMAR

I know.

INT. PUBLIC HOTEL - ARTS BAR - LATER

Gracie and Omar sit and chat among cushioned blue velvet
walls. In a tiny enclave of blue satin and bench, small
candle lit table, and one leather chair, they talk.

OMAR

Take a look at Iran's place on the
map. It's a Silk Road crossroad for
the world's cuisine. Far East.
Europe. Africa and the Arab states.
We assimilated the best and made it
our own.

GRACIE

Like Saffron?

OMAR

Exactly! Influenced by the spice
trade with India.

GRACIE

Tomorrow.

OMAR

Y-e-s.

GRACIE

I want you to come to the museum
with me.

OMAR

Why?

GRACIE
I think it will do you some good.

OMAR
I doubt it.

GRACIE
Please.

OMAR
Okay.

Omar uses the back of his hand to caress Gracie's cheek.

OMAR (CONT'D)
So often I wondered what you would
look like... older.

GRACIE
Omar. You must stop looking back.
I'm Gracie. Not my Sister.

OMAR
I know.

Gracie moves closer. Her lips nearly touches.

This action startles Omar.

OMAR (CONT'D)
What?!?

GRACIE
Shh. Too much talk.

Gracie kisses him.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
I heard there's live music playing
on the rooftop.

INT. ROOFTOP BAR - LATER

The Rooftop Bar is a mixologist's playground. Ultra-modern in look and lighting. Different color lights focus on the bar's well-stocked shelves. The place screams style and sheer ambiance. Where people in well-cut blazers and jeans quench their thirsts.

Gracie bellies herself up to the bar and tells the BARTENDER.

GRACIE
One French-Seventy-Five. Please,
and a?

Gracie looks to Omar who stands behind her.

OMAR
Mac Twelve on the rocks.

GRACIE
And a Mac Twelve on the rocks.

BARTENDER
Certainly.

The bartender gets to work.

Loud MUSIC comes from outside near the pool.

Gracie and Omar observe their surroundings.

GRACIE
There used to be a Public in
Chicago.

The bartender arrives with their drinks.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Please charge it to my room.

The bartender nods.

Gracie hands Omar his scotch.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Here. Cheers!

OMAR
Cheers. What were you saying?

GRACIE
Ian Schrager is a genius when it
comes to space.

Gracie and Omar wander out into the night.

EXT. ROOFTOP BAR - OUTSIDE - NIGHT

Outside the city's skyline is lit up to perfection.

GRACIE
It's so beautiful.

OMAR

It is.

(points at each)

There's the Chrysler Building. The
Empire State. The Woolworth
Building. And...

Gracie points up to One World Trade Center.

GRACIE

One World Trade Center.

OMAR

Yep.

GRACIE

Let's find a seat.

EXT. ROOFTOP BAR - CORNER SEATS - LATER

As the wind plays with Gracie's hair, Omar helps her out.

OMAR

Here.

GRACIE

Thanks.

Gracie eyes Omar.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I've been thinking.

OMAR

And?

GRACIE

I'm not ready to go home yet.

OMAR

And why is that?

GRACIE

You.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Omar and Gracie walk down a long corridor. As they reach the
Penthouse Suite, Omar stops.

OMAR

This is a mistake.

Gracie moves closer and kisses him hard.

GRACIE
Hmmm. Maybe.

She then turns and opens the door to her room. From the doorway, she curls her index finger to signal him to come in.

Omar smiles and enters her room.

INT. GRACIE'S SUITE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Omar and Gracie are naked with covers sprawled out on the floor. They are both sweaty.

GRACIE
Omar?

OMAR
Yeah.

GRACIE
How often do you get to Chicago?

OMAR
Almost never.

Gracie moves closer.

GRACIE
Let's change all that.

Gracie kisses Omar passionately.

Omar returns her kiss.

PAN RIGHT TO THE
DARKEN WINDOW:

INT. GRACIE'S ROOM - SAME WINDOW - NEXT DAY

Light shines in as Gracie walks around in Omar's shirt.

Omar is still rests in bed.

Gracie pours herself a fresh cup of steaming hot coffee from a silver urn.

From the mound of blankets piled high, Omar moans.

OMAR
Hmmm. Thank you.

GRACIE

For what?

Omar raises and uses a pillow to help him sit up.

OMAR

Reminding me what it feels like to
be alive.

GRACIE

It was fun for me too. Coffee?

OMAR

I would love some.

Gracie pours Omar a cup and serves him. As she hands it to him, Omar fingertips touches her wrist.

OMAR (CONT'D)

What time is your signing?

Gracie giggles.

GRACIE

We have time.

Gracie dives under the covers.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE - LATER

Both Omar and Gracie are flat on the floor, each on their bellies.

OMAR

I'm starving.

Gracie gets up and gives him a peek on the cheek.

GRACIE

I need to shower.

OMAR

After you signing, you must come to
my restaurant. I will make you some
of my Grandma's stew.

Gracie turns back and smiles nice and big.

GRACIE

I would like that.

INT. PUBLIC HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Gracie and Omar hold one another hands as they cut across the hotel's lobby full of GUESTS.

INT. PUBLIC HOTEL - ESCALATORS - SAME

Gracie and Omar stand side-by-side.

GRACIE

What do you want to do today?

OMAR

The Yankees are playing.

GRACIE

Sorry, I'm a Cubs fan.

OMAR

(teases)

You should be sorry, Cubby.

GRACIE

When was your last Series win?

OMAR

Don't even go there. We won more titles than any other franchise...

Gracie cuts him off and she swings and faces him.

GRACIE

Live in the now!

OMAR

Ouch! We have more titles in the last century than... one.

GRACIE

Oww. You're evil.

EXT. PUBLIC HOTEL - ENTRANCE - SAME

Gracie and Omar appears from the hotel. Together they walk down the corridor of green to the street.

Omar looks at his watch.

OMAR

We have time.

GRACIE

Let's walk a bit before we grab a cab.

OMAR

Sure thing. I better grab my moped, if it's still there.

GRACIE

Okay. So we will meet at the museum.

OMAR

Yeah.

GRACIE

Promise?

OMAR

Promise. I will be there.

A valet approaches them.

VALET

Need a cab?

GRACIE

No, we're good.

VALET

Enjoy this fine day.

EXT. ELIZABETH STREET GARDENS - SAME

Gracie and Omar cuts through English style gardens.

Gracie stops on the path lined with two crouched lions of medium height on either side.

GRACIE

Omar?

OMAR

Yes.

GRACIE

How hard will it be to win over your Mother?

OMAR

Oh, I don't know. She's a good woman at heart.

GRACIE
So what happened?

OMAR
She's had a hard childhood. She
doesn't trust strangers.

GRACIE
Really? Why?

OMAR
We left Tehran when my Grandfather
was murdered by the Savak. The
Shah's secret police.

GRACIE
Murdered? Why?

OMAR
I don't know. He was on a walk in
the park with my Mom, and a
complete stranger.

Omar acts this out.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Placed a big gun underneath my
Grandfather's chin and pulled the
trigger. Bang.

GRACIE
And your Mother?

OMAR
My Mother never speaks of it.
Though, my Grandma told me they
found her in the park. Covered in
my Grandpa's blood. Begging him to
please get up.

GRACIE
How terrible.

OMAR
There was no investigation. It
appeared the authorities knew who
had authorized it.

GRACIE
Why?

OMAR
He opposed the powers that be.
That's why I love the idea of
America. Give me your tired, your
poor, your huddled masses yearning
to breathe free.

GRACIE
Freedom. It hasn't seemed that way
of late.

OMAR
No. But we can hope.

EXT. 9/11 MEMORIAL - THE FOUNTAINS - LATER

Gracie looks at her watch and speaks to herself.

GRACIE
He should have been here by now.

Right then, Gracie sees Omar heading toward her on his moped.
He buzzes down the street.

Omar stops before her.

SOUND: WEAK HONK. HONK.

Omar takes off his helmet.

OMAR
Sorry, babe. I had to grab a quick
bite to eat.

GRACIE
Of course you did.

Gracie embraces him.

EXT. 9/11 MEMORIAL - THE FOUNTAINS - LATER

Omar and Gracie wander around the fountain and the cascading
waterfalls in silence.

Then, they begin to talk.

OMAR
It's beautiful.

GRACIE
I told you.

OMAR
Where is she?

GRACIE
Over there.

Gracie leads Omar to Tracie's name. She grabs his fingertips and guides them to her Sister's name. Slowly, she traces the engraved letters.

OMAR
Thank you.

GRACIE
I'm going to give you a moment. But
you're not off the hook yet. See
you in the lobby.

OMAR
Okay.

Gracie leaves.

Omar's hand still rests atop Tracie's name.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Hey, babe. I hope you're not mad.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - BEFORE 9/11 - LATER

Gracie stands with Alice as Omar enters.

ALICE
Mr. Cherif, welcome.

Omar nods his acknowledgement.

Gracie gently interlocks his arm with hers.

GRACIE
Come on.

ALICE
Please follow me.

Alice leads them down the steps deeper inside the museum under the huge steel Tridents.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - BASEMENT WALL - SAME

On the wall reads, "September 11, 2001."

Alice wanders ahead.

Over the loudspeaker, are SURVIVOR's stories.

EYEWITNESS (V.O.)

We got down to the Thirty-First floor, that's when the second plane hits the building. The building gives a rock. Shifts to the left. Then to the right. Everyone grabbed on to the stairwell. And then, we knew we were in danger.

Omar and Gracie look around.

OMAR

This is amazing.

GRACIE

I was here yesterday for two hours.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - MEMORIAL HALL - SAME

Alice takes them to the Last Column. The steel structure is covered with signatures of those who helped.

OMAR

I remember seeing this.

ALICE

Anchored into bedrock this thirty-six-foot-tall piece of steel. Uncovered by workers during the nine-month recovery period... First responders last reported to have been near here, near the lobby before the tower's collapse.

GRACIE

Due to its proximity to this last known location of first responders, the column became a marker of loss.

IMAGE: Last Column's signatures.

ALICE

True. In March, two-thousand-and-two, after the remains of some missing members of FDNY Squad Forty-One were found in the area, a squad member painted SQ 41 on the column to denote the recovery.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)
Other agencies including the NYPD
and FDNY left similar markings.

OMAR
Every inch of her is covered.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - ARTIFACTS - SAME

Gracie and Omar wander through the glass enclosed artifacts.

Omar stops as he reaches a glass box enclosed with a bright
blue leather purse nearly destroyed.

OMAR
Oh, my god.

Gracie grabs Omar's hand.

GRACIE
I know.

Omar inches closer.

OMAR
Tracie's. I remember when she
bought this.

Omar tears up.

GRACIE
She loved it.

Omar stands back from the display. Then, he stares at the sad
reminders of that clear day so long ago.

OMAR
Why?

GRACIE
Come.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - NOTES OF HOPE - SAME

Alice ends her tour.

ALICE
I will be upstairs. Take your time.

OMAR
Thank you, Alice. You don't
understand what this means to me.

ALICE

Yes, Chef. I think I do. See you upstairs.

GRACIE

Look at the map of the world.

An entire wall is covered by a interactive map of the world. Heartfelt notes appear and disappear off of it.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

You can write notes here.

Gracie writes.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Miss ya, Sis.

Gracie hands Omar the pen.

Omar writes the Arabic symbol for, "Love."

OMAR

For us, love is all about the pain.

Gracie hugs Omar.

GRACIE

My signing is about to begin.

OMAR

Okay.

GRACIE

I saved you a chair.

OMAR

Okay.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - FIRETRUCK LADDER 3 - LATER

Gracie stands at a clear podium with a destroyed ladder firetruck as her backdrop. Before her, sitting in chairs are hundreds of PEOPLE.

GRACIE

Context and memory play powerful roles in all the truly great moments in one's life.

INT. 9/11 MUSEUM - FIRETRUCK LADDER 3 - LATER

Behind a podium, Gracie finishes her lecture.

GRACIE

Mark Twain once said, nothing kills
joy quicker than comparison. Me
being a twin, I believe him. My
Sister came to this City to feel
what it means to be alive... and
she did just that. Every given
moment. She lived in the now.

IMAGE: Gracie closes her book.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

An enduring AUDIENCE claps their hands.

Omar pops up from his chair. He touches his heart and then
raises his hand to the heavens.

OMAR

(mouths)

She would be proud.

GRACIE

(mouths)

Thank you.

Omar gives Gracie the universal "call me" sign.

Gracie nods.

Then, Omar waves bye and leaves.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Thank you all for coming. Any
questions?

A twenty-something WOMAN raises her hand from the back.

One of Alice's ASSISTANTS hands her a mic.

WOMAN

Thank you, Ms. Conrad for sharing
your story. But I was born in
Ninety-Nine. So I don't remember a
Pre-Nine-Eleven World. Could you
describe it for me?

GRACIE
I could try. But you are going to
have to trust me.

The woman looks a little scared.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
You up for it?

WOMAN
Sure. Okay.

GRACIE
Close your eyes.

WOMAN
What?

GRACIE
Close them. It takes some trust.

WOMAN
Okay.

The young woman closes her eyes.

GRACIE
*Now that she's back in the
atmosphere. With drops of Jupiter
in her hair.*

The CROWD chuckles.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Young woman, twenty-years ago was
our time. Your time is now. The War
on Terror is over. All sides must
heal. But, I can leave you with
this, from an amazing woman a few
years younger than you. *Since our
leaders are behaving like children,
we will have to take the
responsibility they should have
taken long ago.*

ALICE
Greta Thunberg.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH STREET - DAY

Omar's moped zooms north, he looks around at the city he loves. He appears to be at peace. He sings Train's Drops of Jupiter like song.

OMAR

*Can you imagine no love, pride,
deep-fried chicken. Your best
friend always sticking up for you.
Even when I know you're wrong.*

As Omar approaches light, it turns YELLOW.

OMAR (CONT'D)

*Can you imagine no first dance,
freeze-dried romance. Five-hour
phone conversation. I can make it.*

Omar squeezes the throttle and the moped increases her speed.

OMAR (CONT'D)

*The best soy latte that you ever
had...*

Halfway through the intersection, a car zero ins on Omar and his moped, IMPACT!

Omar flies through the air. His moped is CRUSHED as it rolls underneath the car.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Gracie wanders in through the big sliding doors.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - SAME

Gracie approaches the Information Desk. A white-haired VOLUNTEER sits behind it.

VOLUNTEER

Can I help you?

GRACIE

Yes, Omar Cherif's room number?

VOLUNTEER

The actor?

GRACIE

No. The Chef.

VOLUNTEER

Oh, I see.

The volunteer looks up the name on the computer.

VOLUNTEER (CONT'D)

He was just released from the ICU.
Fifth floor. Room Five-Thirteen.

GRACIE

Thank you. The elevators?

VOLUNTEER

Down the hall to your right.

GRACIE

Got it. Thanks.

Gracie wanders to the elevator bay. She hits the up button and it IGNITES.

SOUND: DING!

She slowly enters the elevator. Her body language shows her discomfort. She kicks the Five button.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I hate these things.

INT. HOSPITAL - FIFTH FLOOR - SAME

Gracie wanders down the long corridor. Some doors are closed. Others are not. From the open ones, scared PATIENTS and worried looking FAMILY MEMBERS gaze out.

Gracie reaches room Five-Thirteen. The door is closed. She knocks softly upon the door.

Abruptly, the door OPENS.

APPEARS Zahra in a head scarf.

ZAHRA

What!?!

GRACIE

May I see...

Zahra abruptly CLOSES the door.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Your son.

ZAHRA (O.S)
Only family!

Gracie KNOCKS again.

Masih OPENS the door a crack. She wears a colorful head scarf with bits of her dark hair showing.

Inside the room is full of dark-colored PEOPLE.

MISIH
Hi, Gracie.

GRACIE
Hi.

Misha looks back.

Amir smiles a bit.

MISIH
Na-Na is not in the most hospitable
of moods.

GRACIE
I noticed. How is he?

MISIH
He's in bad shape. But...

Misha starts to tear up.

MISIH (CONT'D)
It doesn't look good.

GRACIE
I see.

MISIH
I would love to invite you in...

GRACIE
But?

MISIH
Na-Na won't allow it.

GRACIE
Why? She doesn't even know me.

From within the room.

ZAHRA (O.S)
Masih. Close the door!

MISIH
I...

GRACIE
Okay.

Masih closes the door a pinch.

Gracie with her head down moves away from the room.

MISIH
(whispers)
Meet me in the chapel, in five
minutes.

Gracie turns.

GRACIE
Okay.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHAPEL - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Masih wanders in and sees Gracie kneeling at the Altar.

Masih respectfully sits and waits until Gracie is finished.

Gracie gets up.

GRACIE
Oh, I'm sorry, Masih. I didn't know
you were already here.

MASIH
No worries.

Gracie sits next to Masih.

GRACIE
So, why does your Grandmother
despise me?

MASIH
It's not fair. But she blames your
Sister for Omar's troubles.

GRACIE
My Sister has been dead for twenty
years.

MASIH
Not to Omar.

GRACIE

Ah! I see. Anything I can do to change all that?

MASIH

No, she's old and stubborn. And you aren't Iranian. But...

GRACIE

But what?

MASIH

If you really love my Uncle, you must show her.

GRACIE

Why?

MASIH

Because right now, you're part of the reason Omar is all alone in this world.

GRACIE

Hmm.

Masih gets up.

MASIH

I'll be rooting for you.

Masih leaves.

Gracie returns to the Altar.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - LATER

Gracie strolls back to Omar's room. She looks determined.

Gracie grabs the door handle and doesn't bother to knock.

As she ENTERS...

INT. HOSPITAL - OMAR'S ROOM - SAME

Everyone turns to the open door.

Gracie is being eyed by all.

Zahra rushes to confront her.

ZAHRA
(in Farsi)
Doesn't this white woman have any
manners?

Gracie confronts Omar's mother in the middle of the room.

Family and friends surround the two women.

GRACIE
(in Farsi)
No. This white woman doesn't. So,
step aside, please.

The FRIENDS and FAMILY members heads go back and forth with
the verbal exchanges.

ZAHRA
Please?!? Go away.

GRACIE
No.

The room reactions with a buckling-over CRINGE.

ZAHRA
No? I'm his Mother! Who are you?

Gracie steps closer. Zahra and her are face to face, eye to
eye. Then, Gracie shares.

GRACIE
Someone who loves your son.

ZAHRA
Love?!?

GRACIE
Love.

ZUHRA
No. No. No! This is madness.

Zahra looks around the room.

ZUHRA (CONT'D)
I had to live through one of you
already.

GRACIE
Sorry, not many people have second
chances.

Zahra steps before Masih.

ZUHRA
What do you think of this?

MASIH
Uncle Omar likes her.

ZUHRA
She's white.

Amir steps up.

AMIR
Omar has always been color blind.

ZUHRA
True.

Zuhra's body language changes. Then, she steps aside.

APPEARS Omar in a hospital bed. He is hooked up to machines that keep him alive.

ZAHRA
If you do love my son... pray for him. For he's fighting for his very life.

GRACIE
Oh, Omar. What happened?

Gracie walks past Zahra and places her hand on her shoulder.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(in Farsi)
Thank you.

ZAHRA
(in Farsi)
He's in God's hands.

Gracie sits on the edge of the bed.

GRACIE
Hi, Omar. What did you think of my signing?

Gracie caresses his hand.

SOUNDS: monitor BEEPS, ventilator SUCKS.

Zahra prods people to move out of the room.

ZAHRA

Let's leave these two alone for a time.

Omar's family and friends file out of his room.

ZAHRA (CONT'D)

Who's hungry?

Gracie smiles as they leave.

Masih stops at the door and gets Gracie a thumbs up.

Gracie returns the gesture.

The room door CLOSES, and Omar and Gracie are finally alone.

GRACIE

Omar. Sometimes yellow lights mean stop.

DREAM SEQUENCE
BEGINS:

EXT. BOATHOUSE - OUTSIDE CAFE - DAY

Omar leads Tracie through the Boathouse's outside café to its main entrance.

SUPER: "Central Park. August, 2001."

INT. BOATHOUSE - SAME

Omar leads Tracie through restaurant.

TRACIE

You still hungry?

OMAR

Only for a view.

Omar cuts through the restaurant through the kitchen.

CHEF

Hey, Omar. Hungry?

OMAR

Maybe later, Chef.

TRACIE

Where are we going?

OMAR
Where's Andres?

DISHWASHER
Outside. He got your message.

OMAR
Great.

Omar takes the door that leads to the boats.

EXT. BOATHOUSE - SAME

Omar with Tracie in tow approaches ANDRES, a tall lanky Italian in a white sailor's shirt, red handkerchief tied around his neck, with a straw boater hat with matching band stands beside his Gondola.

ANDRES
Omar!

Omar and Andres embrace.

OMAR
Andres. This is Tracie.

ANDRES
My pleasure.

OMAR
Ready?

ANDRES
I already grabbed the wine.

OMAR
Then, let's shove off.

TRACIE
Remember, the movie?

OMAR
We have plenty of time.

EXT. ON THE WATER - DAY

Omar and Tracie's Gondola glides toward the Bow Bridge.

They pass under the bridge and a kissing couple in row boat.

Omar and Tracie cuddle up in the boat.

TRACIE
This is romantic.

OMAR
Is it?

Tracie gently hits Omar.

The cityscape looms in the background.

TRACIE
You know it is my tall dark lover.

OMAR
It is.

Omar and Tracie kiss.

Andres grabs his camera from a nearby bag.

ANDRES
Hey you two. Turn around.

Omar and Tracie do.

Andrea focuses the camera's lens. His long oar rests against his lean, lengthy body.

ANDRES (CONT'D)
Smile.

Omar and Tracie do.

SOUND: SNAP!

The film's negative captures Omar and Tracie at that exact moment. The two appear to be falling for one another.

Andres lowers the camera. Smacks his lips with his fingers.

ANDRES (CONT'D)
Fanastico!

The gondola boat nears Bethesda Fountain, the gorgeous focal point of the Bethesda Terrace.

OMAR
If we want to make that movie, we better get off here.

Tracie melts more into Omar.

TRACIE
F-u-c-k the movie. This is perfect.

OMAR
Yes, it is.

Omar gives Tracie a hard look.

TRACIE
What?

OMAR
Potty mouth.

TRACIE
Hey, women have been told to be
quiet for so many years that...

Omar interrupts.

OMAR
Bullshit. You just like saying the
word, fuck.

Tracie gives Omar a broad smile.

TRACIE
I do. F-u-c-k feels good.

OMAR
I think you're going to give my
Mother a heart attack.

TRACIE
Maybe that's exactly what she
needs... me.

OMAR
Hmm. Maybe.

TRACIE
What?

OMAR
Tracie.

TRACIE
Yea.

OMAR
Am I dying?

Tracie turns away and nods.

TRACIE

Yes.

DREAM SEQUENCE
ENDS:

EXT. CHURCH STREET - DAY

Omar's moped zooms north, he looks around at the city he loves. He appears to be at peace.

The approaching light turns YELLOW.

Omar squeezes the throttle and the moped speeds. Halfway through the intersection, IMPACT!

Omar's moped is CRUSHED.

FADE TO BLACK:

THEN A QUICK
BURST OF BRIGHT
BLINDING LIGHT:

INT. WORLD TRADE CENTER ELEVATOR - DAY

A younger version of Omar stands in his Windows on the World Sous Chef's Whites.

The elevator heads up. Illuminates the top floor button.

SOUND: DING!

The express elevator stops on...

THE 95th FLOOR

Enters Tracie.

TRACIE

Hi.

OMAR

Hi, Tracie.

The two passionately embrace.

Tracie jumps up and wraps her legs around Omar's waist.

TRACIE

Where have you been?

OMAR

The Park.

Tracie kisses Omar's face.

Omar kisses Tracie's neck.

The elevator starts back up. The top floor button is lit.

It reads, "Windows on the World."

Omar sees his reflection off the door.

OMAR (CONT'D)

I'm young again.

TRACIE

As if you never left.

OMAR

Where is this place?

TRACIE

Where do you think it is?

OMAR

I don't...

The elevator reaches the top floor with a DING!

The elevator doors open.

Outside of the restaurant's lobby is packed full of FAMILIAR FACES of those who perished on Nine-Eleven. This multi-national assemble of business rich, working poor, and first responders covers every aspect of race and ethnicity.

They smile and wave at Omar as he attempts to enter.

Tracie gently holds him back with her hand on his chest. With the other hand, she pushes him away.

OMAR (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

TRACIE

Not your time.

Tracie reaches in and hit's the down button.

OMAR

What?!?

TRACIE
Bye, Omar... for now.

As the elevator door slowly closes, Omar sees the last glimpse of Tracie. She smiles.

TRACIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tell my Sister, she fuck'n owes me.

Omar smiles back at the closed elevator door as the elevator begins to free fall.

Omar grabs the railing and braces himself for IMPACT.

OMAR
What's going on?!?

INT. HOSPITAL - OMAR'S ROOM - SAME

DOCTORS and NURSES surround Omar.

Omar is flat-lined. His heart is now stopped.

LEAD DOCTOR, George Clooney-like, smooth, good-looking.

LEAD DOCTOR
Charge the Paddles.

LEAD NURSE, Julianna Margulies-like, does so.

Doctor grabs the paddles carefully.

LEAD DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Okay. Clear!

The paddles JOLTS Omar.

LEAD NURSE
Nothing. The heart monitor is still flatlined.

The doctor does not stop.

SOUND: paddles SURGING charge.

LEAD DOCTOR
Clear!

The paddles JOLTS Omar again.

The nurse looks at the monitor.

The line spikes then it drops down.

LEAD NURSE
Nothing.

LEAD DOCTOR
Again!

SOUND: paddles SURGING charge.

LEAD DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Clear!

The nurse looks at the monitor again. The flatline spikes up then it holds.

SOUND: BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

LEAD NURSE
We have a pulse.

LEAD DOCTOR
Good.

The Lead Doctor drops the paddles on a nearby table as he looks down at Omar.

LEAD DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You're one lucky son of a bitch.

EXT. HOSPITAL GARDENS - LATER DAY

Gracie wheels Omar through a green garden until they reach a wooden park bench.

OMAR
Sit.

GRACIE
Okay. What do you want to tell me?

OMAR
When I was near death, I had a weird dream about your Sister.

GRACIE
You and her on an express elevator?

OMAR
Yes! We were headed up to Windows on the World.

GRACIE
And she said I owe her?

OMAR
How do you know all this?

Gracie grabs each side of Omar's cheek with her hands.

GRACIE
You talk in your sleep.

Omar's body movement tells it all.

OMAR
Oooh.

Gracie kisses Omar on the lips.

GRACIE
I know she's up there, Omar.
Looking out for us. I don't need
any proof.

EXT. SAFFRON'S RESTAURANT - FUTURE DAY

The restaurant is jammed pack with people: FRIENDS, FAMILY
MEMBERS, CITIZENS of the world.

INT. SAFFRON'S RESTAURANT - SAME

Deep into the restaurant Omar and his family sit.

On the table is every imaginable Persian dish.

Besides Omar, is a pregnant, well-showing Gracie. Before
Gracie is a big bowl of Omar's Grandma's Stew.

Next to Gracie, is her MOTHER, a big-haired lifer from the
Midwest, 70s. She sits next to Zahra.

Zahra passes MOTHER CONRAD a bowl of big fluffy rice.

Mother Conrad nods and accepts it.

MOTHER CONRAD
Thank you.

ZAHRA
You're welcome.

Omar raises his glass for a toast.

THE TABLE
Cheers!

OMAR
To good food. Family. Friends.
Togetherness... can heal the world.

SOUND: CLANGING of glasses.

Gracie's Mother whispers in her daughter's ear.

MOTHER CONRAD
Where's the good food?

GRACIE
Mother!!!

The table erupts with laughter.

Even Zahra laughs.

Gracie's Mother laughs too.

MOTHER CONRAD
Oops.

Omar squeezes Gracie's hand affectionately.

IMAGE: Wedding Rings.

OMAR
Hungry?

Gracie grabs his hand and rubs it over her belly.

IMAGE: Omar rubs Gracie's big belly.

GRACIE
Yes, I'm eating for two.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END