

# The Neighborhood

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A barebones version of a script for a Black Mirroresque episode, inspired by MAS.S67 explorations

## Characters:

**Jennie** (28 year old woman, working in a blue collar job)

**Diana** (27 year old foreign friend of Jennie, visiting the city for the first time)

**Bad Guy 1**

**Bad Guy 2**

**Milos** (35 year old man, shop or bar owner, lives in 'unsafe' area)

**Shaniqua** (40 year old mother who lives in 'unsafe' area)

**Party Guests**

**(Multiple) Residents of 'Unsafe' Area**

## Scene 1

**Setting:** Jennie's house, bright and cheerful, is filled with guests who are there to celebrate a birthday or some big celebration. Jennie lives in the 'good' area. Modern day house. Nothing out of the ordinary. People are drinking and socializing and making small talk. Many of the guests are Caucasian or Asian. Jennie, the host, is having fun with everyone when her phone rings.

Jennie: (Answers cell phone call) Hello?

{Split screen to show the other person calling}

Diana: Hola chica!

Jennie: Dianaaaa! Where are you? Are you in the city?

Diana: Yup! Just got out the Metro and was planning on walking to your house. Should I just follow Maps or is there a better way to get to your place?

Jennie: No, no, don't use Maps. I'm sending you a link to an app. Download it, and you can see the best way to get here. One sec.... (Jennie fiddles with phone).... Sent!

Diana: (phone buzzes) Thanks, chica, just got it. See you soon!

Jennie: See you!

{Split screen goes away and we see Diana looking at her phone. Close up of app (which is basically the system we create). The app's main page is a map of the neighborhood and the crime predictions and marking of danger zones and good areas. Diana types in an address and sees clearly that Jennie lives in a safe area. The map shows her how to best walk to Jennie's house while avoiding the danger zones. Perhaps we also have Diana exploring how the app works in terms of showing what it can predict?}

(We see Diane walking out of frame, nose in app (basically, looking carefully at the app and following its instructions))

## Scene 2

**Setting:** Diane has arrived in front of a house. She rings doorbell and Jennie opens the door. The two squeal and hug and Jennie pulls her friend into the house. We see a few more seconds of them enjoying the party (assume that these few seconds equal a few hours in fantasy time)

(Party is ending, we see people leaving)

Jennie: Thanks for coming guys (as she hugs everyone)

Party Guests: This was awesome, thanks Jennie! (Something of the sort as they exit)

(Now only Jennie and Diane are left)

Diane: Mm this was awesome. Your friends are so nice!

Jennie: I know right! And they loved you!

Diane: Haha awesome.

Jennie: So what do you want to do now? It's your first time in the city! Are you tired? Do you want to sleep? Take a shower?

Diane: Actually, I'm feeling like exploring. I was thinking of going to Brooklyn Bridge.

Jennie: No. No, no. You can't go there.

Diane: Why not? Is it not as beautiful as the pictures?

Jennie: No, you just can't go there. It's one of *those* places.

Diane: One of *those* places?

Jennie: You know, one of those places on the map. The red area. You just can't go there. Nobody goes there anymore. At least, not people who want to live.

Diane: Oh my gosh, why? Did something really bad happen there?

Jennie: Well, nothing's happened in a while. But something's going to happen. You just know it. Something's going to happen soon. Very soon. The map says it, right? So you can trust it. Something's going to happen there, and so, don't go there.

Diane: But nothing's happened yet?

Jennie: Weeeellll, I don't know. But, you know, the map doesn't lie.

Diane: I still kind of want to check out the place. I had my heart set on getting a picture there...

Jennie: I know, I know, but, believe me. Nobody goes there anymore. It's probably all destroyed anyways.

Diane: So where do I go then?

Jennie: (Takes out her phone and shows Diane a feature on the visualization that shows safe tourist spots). Go here (pointing at screen at some random location)

Diane: (Not that enthused) Oh, a local salon...fun.... You gonna come with?

Jennie: I want to, but I've got to drop something off at a friend's house first. I'll meet you later tonight? Text if you need something!

Diane: (Grabbing purse and jacket) Sure.

(Jennie and Diane walk out together and they hug and then depart ways)

Diane: (Watches as Jennie disappears from view) I'm just gonna go to the Bridge anyways. How bad can it be?

### Scene 3

**Setting:** Random street that Jennie is walking on. She's looking at her phone trying to figure out how to get to her friend's place. She's never been to this particular friend's house so she is following the directions carefully.

Jennie: (Talking to herself... or to the app) Okay, so right here... in 200ft... on Wexner St. Wait no, this isn't Wexner. This is Walker St. Wait, where's Wexner then? Ughh. And why the hell is Cassie's house sandwiched between *those* areas? I can't even go a slightly different path. Okay, where am I? (Basically, Jennie, even with the map, is slightly lost)

(While Jennie is absorbed in her phone, on the middle of the sidewalk, a car pulls up with two guys. The window rolls down)

Bad Guy 1: (Whistles or catcalls at Jennie) Whatcha doing here by yourself, babe?

(Jennie looks up in disgust and then looks away)

Bad Guy 2: Wanna ride with us, hot stuff?

Jennie: (ignores and frantically tries to figure out where she is because she doesn't want to walk randomly and get into a bad zone)

Bad Guy 1: We know you can hear us, babe. You must want us, eh? You're just too shy?

Bad Guy 2: Let's go help her out. She seems a little lost. (Not said in a friendly or helpful way)

(Bad Guys get out of car and Jennie looks up in alarm. She is not that close to them so she just starts to back away and when they keep advancing she squeals in fright and starts to run away.)

Bad Guy 1: Ehhh where you going? Don't you wanna ride with us? (They call after her loudly. They are too lazy to follow so just continue to call after her).

(Jennie, scared, keeps running in some random direction. Her phone starts to ring in alarm, reminding her that she's in a dangerous zone. The alarm gets louder and louder, but she's too panicked to notice. Also, as the alarm rings louder, the composition of the video turns into a darker color as well, to mark that she has gone from a safe zone to a dangerous zone. The alarm starts to list off crimes that are occurring or will occur in a few seconds but she is still too panicked. We eventually hear the alarm drone off and fade away and be replaced with the sound of her heartbeat. She finally stops and we see her on another random street, surrounded by normal looking establishments. She checks her surroundings, getting even more panicked. Then, she checks her phone and sees the red alarm. She squeals in fear. She starts to freak out)

Jennie: Omg. Ohmygod. Ohmygod. Where am I? What the hell? Oh shit. Ohmygod. Ahh, don't freak out. Think, think. I can just get a cab. Yeah, I can just call an Uber to get to my friend's house. (Fumbles with phone)

(We hear voice of Siri or something on the phone: "I'm sorry, Uber does not serve this area. Please walk to a safe area and call an Uber from there". Jennie tries a few more times and gets the same results.)

Jennie: Shit! It's a 15 minute walk to get out of here! Five crimes are happening right now in this area according to the app! I can't move out of here. Shit.

(A few people come out of the supermarket nearby and see this stranger freaking out. Jennie starts to notice more people coming to fill the street. They look at her curiously, having not seen strangers in a while)

(Jennie's phone beeps to alarm her that a crime will occur in her spot. Jennie whips her head around in fear. She grabs her keys and brandishes them at the people moving around her)

Jennie: (Somewhat crazily) Nobody dare touch me! I'm trained in Martial Arts. Don't you dare try and hurt me!

(Neighborhood people still look at her with curious expressions. Some stay for a while and then continue on their way. There are a few kids with their parents. The kids looked wide eyed at this stranger who clearly seems out of place. They whisper questions to their parents who hush them and pull them along)

Jennie: (Continues to move around warily, scared out of her wits as her phone is still beeping)

One resident of neighborhood: Honey, are you okay? You look a little lost, do you need some help? (Very kindly)

Jennie: (Shrilly) Stay back!

One resident of neighborhood: (Still very kindly) It's okay. It's okay. Do you want some help with directions?

Jennie: (Shrilly) I mean it! Stay away!

(The residents shift a bit in her direction and she freaks out and starts to run away again. She runs a bit more and then trips slightly (doesn't fall on the ground but loses her balance slightly). She realizes her heel has broken and stops running)

(Jennie is once again in an unfamiliar part of the city. She is desperate to get out so she continues walking with her broken heel. Here, we see more of the area surrounding her. Jennie is still wary as she walks, but she is going a little slower so even the viewers have time to let the area around them sink in. She walks by a few people. Many of them are African Americans. There are a few Latinos/Hispanics as well. The area is clearly racially segregated. Jennie noticed as she walks that there are no public transport stops nearby. No cabs or busses want to serve the area. Jennie sees many bikes on racks. Surprisingly, none of them are locked. She sees people coming out of their buildings and respectfully taking their own bikes. She continues walking and comes across an apartment complex with a huge, flashy sign: "Cheapest Prices, Best Location: Only 10 mins away from Zone 5, 15 mins away from Zone 3". Jennie scoffs (she lives in Zone 1, which is the "safest" area). She continues walking and notices regular signs of life. People are walking home or to work. Some kids run by. But there's still a level of darkness or emptiness to the area. Eventually, Jennie is tired and stops walking. She is next to a local small market or bar. We see someone faintly in the window)

Jennie: (Talking to herself) What do I do? I can't get out of here.

(She collapses on the sidewalk in frustration and fear. She slips out of her heels and cradles them, very unsure what to do. She tries to call Uber again but same problem. No Uber wants to come to the area)

(By now the person in the window has noticed Jennie and comes out of his shop)

Milos: You look a little lost, Miss.

Jennie: (Shrieeks slightly in surprise)

Milos: Haha, sorry, didn't mean to frighten you. Are you okay?

Jennie: (Stands up in fight or flight mode) Don't you dare try and touch me....

Milos: Haha don't worry. That's not my intention. You okay? You don't look like you're from around this part of the neighborhood?

Jennie: (Still wary but now just tired) No. No, I'm not okay. And no, I'm not from here! Why the hell don't you guys have Ubers here?

Milos: (Shrugs) Nobody wants to come. Just like you don't want to be here.

Jennie: You're right! I don't want to be here. How the hell do I get out?

Milos: Well, for starters, you might want to get some new shoes.

Jennie: (Looks at her heels and sighs)

Milos: Want to come in for a bit? I probably have some extra shoes lying around the shop.

Jennie: (Wary) You're going to try and do something, aren't you?

Milos: I told you, I'm not that type of person. But whatever. You can come in or you can stay outside. Lost, and shoeless. (Starts to walk inside)

Jennie: (Exasperated) Screw it, I'll come. (Walks after Milos who we see smile to himself)

#### Scene 4

**Setting:** Drugstore or small market. Very empty. One noticeable thing is that the prices are extremely cheap. There's a chair or two and Milos gestures to them. Jennie sits and Milos looks around his shop for spare shoes.

Milos: Should be around here somewhere.

Jennie: (Looking around). Your shop is very... empty.

Milos: (Laughs). Yeah, not many people come here. You want some soda or something?

Jennie: Sure.

Milos: Feel free to grab anything.

Jennie: How much does your soda cost? I don't know how much cash I have on me.

Milos: \$0.50.

Jennie: \$0.50? That's so freaking cheap! In my supermarket it costs like, \$3.00.

Milos: (Shrugs, still looking for shoes) Perks... or I guess negatives for me... of living in this place.

Jennie: (Takes soda from fridge). How do you survive?

Milos: We get by. That's what all life is, isn't it? Getting by.

Jennie: Are all the establishments like that? This cheap?

Milos: Some shut down. Their owners have to commute quite a bit to work in the 'good zones'. That's why you see a lot of empty property around here.

Jennie: Why don't you move to one of the good areas?

Milos: This is my parent's place. My grandparent's shop. It's been with us for generations. I'm not just going to leave it. I love it.

Jennie: But it must be terrible. There's some great and affordable housing and stores in my area.

Milos: It's not about the affordability. I'm just, you know, attached to this damn place. People here are nice, unlike what you think.

Jennie: Maybe there are some nice people, but there's also lots of crimes. See (shows phone that is still showing red zone). It must be hell living here.

Milos: (Scoffs). You've been in this area for a couple of minutes now. Has anything happened?

Jennie: Well. No. But it will.

Milos: Keep telling yourself that and living in fear that's manufactured by some system that thinks it knows everything.

Jennie: The system does know everything. Maybe you don't understand. But it's not wrong.

Milos: Let me let you in on a little secret. The system's not always right. This is a nice place. People here value kindness. Kindness is all we've got. It's actually a haven living here. Everyone cares about each other, since we're ostracized by the zones around us.

Jennie: (doesn't know how to respond) We're nice too!

Milos: (Shrugs) Everyone's nice. (Finds shoes and comes back with them) Here. Women's shoes. I think they'll fit.

Jennie: (Tries them on) Thanks.

Milos: No problem.

(The door opens and a black woman walks in with a huge basket of food and drinks. Jennie's phone, in response to this new person (and perhaps because it is biased in relation to African Americans because of hidden feedback loops), turns a darker shade of alarm.)

Shaniqua: Hullo, Milos!

Milos: (Smiling) Hiya. Whatcha got there?

Shaniqua: (Setting the food on the countertop) Brought some food for you.

Milos: Aw you didn't have to.

Shaniqua: Nonsense, you live in my neighborhood. We all gotta support each other, don't we?

(Shaniqua looks around and notices Jennie. Shaniqua smiles)

Shaniqua: You new here, sweetie?

Jennie: (Nods)

Shaniqua: I wish I had known someone else would be here. I would've brought more food. Actually, how late will you stay? I can try and grab some more food for you?

Jennie: Oh no, I'm fine. Thank you so much.

Shaniqua: Next time I'll bring a bit extra, in case you're around. Anyways, I gotta go pick up the boys from school. Have a nice day!

Milos: Thanks, Shaniqua. Say hi to the boys for me.

Shaniqua: (Looking at Jennie) Bye sweetie!

Jennie: Bye!

(Shaniqua leaves)

Milos: Nicest person I know. She knows I'm in the shop all day so she stops by once in a while with food for me. That's what we do here, you know. Share. Share with each other. Care about each other. Fend for each other. Protect each other.

Jennie: (Genuinely) She's really very sweet.

(Jennie and Milos speak a bit longer and she starts to realize that Milos is actually a nice person, and that the area isn't as bad as she thought it was)

(Jennie's phone buzzes and she answers)

Diane: You've got to check the Bridge out! It's awesome! The view is amazing. And I made some nice friends here.

Jennie: (Looking at Milos). Yeah, yeah, I think I'll come. See you soon.

Diane: Great! Texting you directions. See you soon.

(Jennie looks at Milos)



Jennie: I've got to go meet a friend. Thanks for the shoes and the soda. (Starts to take out purse)

Milos: It's on me and my neighborhood.

Jennie: Oh no, that's too much.

Milos: No really. Just come again sometime.

Jennie: (Smiles) Yeah, maybe I will...It's not such a bad place...

(We zoom out and see the drug store and the neighborhood (in blue or somber tone)  
surrounded directly by the 'happy, safe area')

**End**