

"THE SCHEME"

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FADE IN:

**1A) EXT. CAFÉ - EVENING**

A MAN (35), elegant but casual in his suit, walks into a café, brief-bag in hand.

**1B) INT. CAFÉ - EVENING**

It's noisy. There are a few people, not a full house but far from empty. Enough to recognize a few faces in the crowd. Few scattered groups, couples around.

The MAN gets a glimpse of the place before he heads to his spot. He takes off his suit jacket and places a newspaper on the table with a home loan ad on it. Then takes a seat while a drink is placed on his table.

He responds with a light smile and skims over the menu taking a sip of his drink. He puts the drink down, menu still in hand and looks around, a scan of his surroundings.

Unamused, his eyes turn to the menu again. The door CHIMES open as someone leaves the café and he looks subtly over his shoulder. His eyes trace their way to the table they are leaving from.

A group of friends, casual goodbye CHATTER, hugging and waving goodbye, making their way to the door.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

There's a certain art to finding them.

He makes eye contact with a WOMAN (22).

MAN [VOICEOVER]

You see, people just aren't as naïve anymore.

The rest of the group leaves the café and the WOMAN sits back down, picking up a phone call.

The MAN notices that she is still at the table. She leans forward on the table, visibly tense, speaking on the phone.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

You have to look out for certain things.  
Things that make the effort worth your  
time- early 20s, stressful job, no partner  
in sight.

(CHUCKLES)

Perfect.

The WOMAN gets up and leaves the café while she's still on  
the call.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

They usually make their way out alone.

The MAN takes a quick sip of his drink, looks down,  
deliberates for a moment, purses his mouth into a smug  
smirk and a quick retraction to his previous expression as  
he looks up and around, to the table he had seen the WOMAN  
at.

He gets up, gathers all his things- the suit jacket and a  
bag- briefcase like, professional.

A garage rock song playing in the café background gets  
louder. He puts on the suit jacket quickly making his way  
for the exit and leaves the café.

# **1C) EXT. CAFÉ - EVENING**

THE SKY IS A FADED EVENING BLUE WITH TINGES OF THE  
DARKENING NIGHT.

FADE TO;

FADE IN:

2) EXT, PARKING LOT - EVENING

The woman walks in the parking lot. While still on call, she looks behind.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

They know something's not right, but they can't tell for sure.

The woman makes eye contact with the man.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

It's the parking lot that's the hardest to get past.

The woman continues to walk, and passes a parked car with a driver inside.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

Will they get into a car with someone waiting for them?

The woman walks like before, towards a seemingly empty car. Only to end the call she was on. She leans on the car, with one hand on it for support and adjusts her slippers. She looks to the side.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

Will they get into their own car?

As the woman turns, she makes eye contact with the man again. She turns forward and starts to walk again. She is just about to reach the road when a cab starts to move on the road.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

Will they call a cab?

The cab passes in front of the woman.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

Or will they...

The woman crosses the road, and is now on the curb. She continues to walk.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

....just keep walking?

CUT TO;

CUT IN:

### **3) EXT. CURB-1, EVENING**

While crossing the street, as she looks on either sides, the WOMAN low-key accidentally notices the MAN from the café walking not too far behind her, looking at her. She reaches the other side of the road and continues to walk.

She turns back ever so subtly, a little wary, but ultimately chalks his presence off as a coincidence. Meanwhile, the MAN continues to follow her.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

That... is when it really starts. They think I'm following them—but they don't know for sure, and they definitely don't know why. I like to keep it that way for a while.

The WOMAN, looking around, turns back and makes eye contact with the MAN, who is focused on her and steadily following her.

She is visibly tense now; she clutches her belongings even tighter and brings them close to her. Her pace quickens a little.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)  
(PROUDLY)

You see, the fear in them, it only grows.  
You become important to them. You're no  
longer a random insignificant face in the  
crowd.

He continues to follow her. He clears his throat audibly.  
The WOMAN hears this and flinches slightly— she curls into  
herself. Her steps and pace get wavering and shaky; she  
almost trips. He smirks slightly. The stark contrast  
between his calm demeanor and her anxious one is seen.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)  
(SMUGLY)

It's a feeling of power; that complete  
control over someone you don't even know,  
someone you have nothing to do with. Yet.

The WOMAN's face grows more and more stricken by the  
second. She turns her head in either direction, looking for  
someone familiar. She doesn't stop walking.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

The fact that you know they feel  
vulnerable because of you.

The MAN continues to follow her, not taking his eyes  
off her for even a moment.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

You know they're only thinking of one  
thing, and that's you. That's special, and  
that's rare. That... that is a moment you  
relish. That is a moment you draw out for  
as long as you possibly can.

CUT TO;

CUT IN;

**4) EXT. CURB-2, LATE EVENING**

The WOMAN turns her head side to side and continues to walk ahead. She is visibly alarmed as her movements are becoming frantic.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

Their eyes dart around in search of  
someone, anyone.

It's a honed art really, knowing just when  
to reach them; to get them when everyone  
else is out of reach.

(drenched in pride)

The fear has reached her feet, they no longer move smoothly  
at a comfortable pace. Her steps are quick and short, but  
meek and shaky, a walk akin to a waddle.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

Their gait is quick to turn more  
deliberate yet flustered.

MAN takes longer, confident strides.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

They think twice before every step, yet  
their walk is like that of a new-born.

They pick up their pace, yet it feels like  
they're stuck.

WOMAN approaches a crossing and crosses the road.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

It is then that you decide to close in on them, shortening the distance with every step.

MAN walks faster now. He picks up his pace, his walk a mirror to his intent. Keen like he's feral but controlled like a tactful man.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

There's a certain thrill in seeing their reaction, in imagining what's to come.

I remember how it felt the first time around.

MAN places his hand on his mouth for a moment. A weak smile and quickly suppresses it.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

An amalgamation of anticipation and excitement and seeing the nervousness on whoever you're trying to get to.

MAN pats his suit jacket and pant pockets.

MAN [VOICEOVER] (CONTD.)

It's important to prepare yourself. To make sure everything's in order. There's no room for error, not now.

WOMAN continues to walk without turning back.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

Then, you finally see the moment you've been patiently looking for, for so long.



WOMAN stops at a bus stop.

MAN [VOICEOVER]

They stop.

CUT TO;

CUT IN:

**5) EXT. BUS STOP - I LATE EVENING**

The WOMAN stands at the bus stop. She is uncomfortable and looks everywhere. The MAN changes his long, fast strides into a casual stroll. He looks around casually.

MAN [VOICE OVER]

You make it a point to loosen your stride  
down to a saunter.

The MAN continues to walk, and as he gets closer to the WOMAN, he looks around a little again with a smile. A smile that signifies his satisfaction.

MAN [VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

You've won. There's no retaliation now.  
You look around, pretending to mind your  
own business,

The MAN walks up right next to the WOMAN.

MAN [VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

and casually approach them.

The WOMAN is frozen in her position. Her face is that of complete fear and borderline shock.

MAN [VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

Their face, pale as the walls of a  
hospital. Their body, stiff as board.

The MAN stands right next to her. Their shoulders touch.  
The MAN is looking ahead, not at the WOMAN. The WOMAN turns her head a little to the side to see the MAN right next to her.

[VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

You stand next to them,

The MAN feels his breast pocket and his brief-bag to make sure he has everything.

MAN [VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

making sure one last time that you have  
everything you need.

The MAN looks behind the WOMAN, and then to the other side making sure there's nobody else there.

MAN [VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

You look around once more,

The MAN slowly lifts his arm and places it on the WOMAN's shoulder, opposite to the side he is on. The WOMAN begins to almost cry. She has the expression on her face, but she is not sobbing. It's a face of having surrendered.

MAN [VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

And slowly place your hand on their  
shoulder.

(WHISPERS)

They don't resist.

CUT TO;

CUT IN;

**6) INT. A THERAPIST'S OFFICE, AFTERNOON**

The MAN is lying on a sofa and reading from a small journal. It's edged, showing that he's been using it for quite some time. A therapist sitting on her chair with a notepad and phone on the center table with the recorder on.

The therapist gives the man a gaping look, sets her pen and pad down, and sits upright with her fingers entwined. At this point the MAN looks up. The Therapist picks up her pad again and looks straight at the MAN.

THERAPIST

(Clears throat)

Go on.

The man slowly sits upright and looks at the therapist. He closes the journal and holds it below. He starts speaking again.

CUT TO;

CUT IN:

**7) EXT. BUS STOP - II LATE EVENING**

The MAN, still right next to the WOMAN with his hands on her shoulder, takes them off and looks up to the sky with joy.

[VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

You enjoy the moment.

A sequence of their surroundings, all dreary and redundant-street lights blinking, a dilapidated shop sign etc. all in contrast to his words.

[VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

The fresh breeze, the setting sun, the feeling of having finally reached this elusive position.

The MAN reaches inside his inside coat pocket. He opens his brief-bag and shuffles inside it. He looks down into the WOMAN's eyes. The WOMAN, with the same expression of crying, looks up into his eyes.

[VOICE OVER] (CONTD.)

You look into their eyes and say the magic words.

THE MAN

Can I interest you in our new home loan scheme ma'am?

CUT TO CREDITS;

THE END