

Fleeing (2025)

written by

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EXT. CITY PARK - PATHWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Music drifts through the air – not from speakers, but from a group of street performers near the fountain. A small crowd has formed around them. Someone beats a drum on an upside-down bucket, while a dancer does a running flip that earns a cheer.

Tourists film on their phones. A guy walks by with a pretzel in one hand and a leash in the other. Joggers cut around the edges of the crowd. Someone's overpriced boba spills into the grass.

It's busy, but not overly chaotic. The kind of everyday noise that perfectly defines city life.

CAIN MERCER pushes against the flow of bodies, wearing a Fordham University sweatshirt that is a size or two too small.

CAIN
(awkwardly, but politely)
Excuse me, erm...sorry? Thank you -
sorry.

He weaves through the crowd, a little more frantically now.

CAIN (CONT'D)
Can I just get through here?
Please, so sorry, thanks -

He bumps someone.

PASSERBY
(cheerful, and raising his
fist)
Go Rams!

Cain forces a thin, nervous smile and pushes past.

He finally slips free of the crowd. Up ahead – slightly away from the main path – sits an empty bench under a lamppost with a busted bulb.

He heads straight for it.

Cain takes a seat. He sets his messenger bag down beside him, close. One hand stays hooked through the strap. He wipes sweat from his forehead with the back of his other hand.

Cain scans the park.

CAIN

(quietly, muttering to
himself)

Okay. Breathe. You're fine. Just
another guy on a bench. Thousands
of benches. Nothing special.

He swallows. His thumb rubbing the edge of his bag strap
unconsciously.

CAIN (CONT'D)

They got to Julia first. She didn't
even know. God...she didn't even
know what they were into.

CAIN (CONT'D)

I thought it was just family
secrets. Small-time. Private. Then
I opened the ledger — real entries,
hundreds of documents. Shipping
routes, tons of them. Numbers that
didn't quite add up...

(beat)

She texted me — said we should just
go to the cops. Said they'd put us
in witness protection. New lives or
whatever.

His jaw tightens.

CAIN (CONT'D)

But, they must've found out, seen
our messages. Or someone told them.
Had to.

(beat)

I mean...how could you do *that* to
your family. Your own blood?

Cain starts counting on his fingers.

CAIN (CONT'D)

Option one — police. Walk into the
station, tell them everything.

(beat)

Except we tried that already. And J
died for it.

CAIN (CONT'D)

Option two — disappear in the city.
New name, new face. Maybe just
until the heat dies down. But, then
again, everything leaves a trace.
They'll stitch my whereabouts
together too easily.

CAIN (CONT'D)
Dad's old cabin! Off-grid, woods,
no towers pulling signals. If I can
just get north tonight, hit the
ramp before dark...that'll just
maybe work.

(beat)
Unless they're already waiting
there for me - ugh!

Cain leans forward, head in hands, elbows on his knees.

He exhales deeply when he hears...

A FAINT MOTORIZED WHIR - the sound of a PTZ (Pan, Tilt, Zoom)
security camera repositioning.

EXT. CITY PARK - BENCH - CONTINUOUS

Cain, startled, lifts his head.

The faint mechanical whir fades. The camera above him -
perched on the bent lamppost - has stopped moving. Its lens
is pointed directly at him.

CAIN (V.O.)
No. No, that...that wasn't facing
me before. Was it?

His fingers tighten around his bag strap.

CAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's fine. Public park. Cameras
exist. That's totally normal. It's-

Cain suddenly notices a second camera, across the stone path,
clicking softly - its head also turning and settling in his
direction.

Then, a third, farther down.

Three cameras. Triangulating his position.

Cain's leg starts bouncing.

CAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Three of them. All on me. No - no,
that's not possible unless-
(beat)
Unless they found me. Unless
someone tipped them off. I
shouldn't have come here. Stupid.
Stupid.

Cain spots a man standing near the tree line. He's wearing a rounded, BLUE CAP, pulled low over his brow, and a long, dark coat that is far too formal for the given setting.

He's holding up his phone like he's filming - except it isn't pointed at the performers.

Cain looks away sharply.

Another figure crosses into his view. A woman, half-turned toward him, wearing sunglasses. One hand near her hip, the other grazing her ear. She's wearing the same BLUE CAP.

Cain's pulse jumps a beat.

He scans again.

A third figure stands beside a lamppost in a hooded jacket. Under the edge of his hood - another, identical BLUE CAP.

Cain's breathing grows shallow.

CAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Why aren't they filming like
everyone else?
(beat)
They're not here for the show.

His knee starts bouncing harder. His grip tightening around the bag.

CAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Are they here for me? Assassins?
Would they really send them to the
park like this? It's so public.
(beat)
Move, Cain. Now. Before it's too
late.

He squeezes his eyes shut.

CAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Go or stay. Go or stay. Go or stay-

CAIN
(blurts, louder than he
means to)
GO!

EXT. CITY PARK - PATHWAY / CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

A few people glance over in his direction, but the BLUE CAP figures don't move.

Cain begins walking away toward the park's exit, too fast to be casual, trying to keep his head down, and his eyes forward.

His heart is racing.

Behind him — the man in the dark coat shifts his weight, like he might start following him.

Cain doesn't look back.

CAIN (V.O.)
Just keep walking. Easy going.
You're fine.

The music and crowd noise fade out.

He passes through the wrought-iron gate onto the sidewalk.

CAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Sidewalk seems like a better place.
Busier. Safe enough.

He exhales, and as he turns the corner—

He SLAMS into someone.

His bag slips from his shoulder. Papers, receipts, and an EMPTY PILL BOTTLE skitter across the pavement.

CAIN
(startled)
Sorry — I'm — I didn't mean to...I
didn't see you there.

Cain drops to the floor quickly to gather his things.

He glances up from the ground—

A BLUE CAP. The same kind as the figures in the park.

The BLUE CAP MAN crouches to help, reaching for the pill bottle, but—

Cain SNATCHES it first.

CAIN (CONT'D)
(trembling)
No — it's fine. I've got it. Thank
you.

The man studies him for a second — focused, intent — like he's trying to place where he's seen Cain before.

Cain shoves the bottle and papers back into his bag and bolts down the street.

BLUE CAP MAN
(into radio, low whisper)
Possible match just ran past me.
Headed east on -
(pauses, listening)
Copy. Moving to intercept.

Cain doesn't hear the reply - he's already halfway down the block.

He ducks into a narrow alley between two brick buildings.

CAIN
(muttering to himself)
Too close. Too close.

He reaches the back of the alley. It's a dead end. Chain-link fence. Barbed wire.

The BLUE CAP man steps just inside the alley, no more than 10 feet away, blocking the only exit.

Cain backs into the fence. There's nowhere else for him to go.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

BLUE CAP MAN
Sir...I need you to stop right
there. What's your name?

Cain forces himself to speak. He gives a fake name.

CAIN
(stammering)
Uh-Jason.

BLUE CAP MAN
Jason what?

CAIN
Sanders.

The man watches him. He doesn't buy it - but he also doesn't call it out.

BLUE CAP MAN
You carrying any weapons, Jason?

CAIN
(shakes head quickly)
Uh-no. Just my stuff. I'm walking home.

The man steps closer.

BLUE CAP MAN
Alright. Here's what's gonna happen.
(beat)
Kick the bag over to me. Then get on your knees.

Cain hesitates.

The man's hand moves to his hip. He draws a PISTOL.

BLUE CAP MAN (CONT'D)
Do it. Now.

Cain nudges the bag over and slowly sinks to his knees.

CAIN (V.O.)
What are you doing! They killed Julia! And you're gonna be next if you don't do something. This is the assassin! Don't let him get an inch!

The man reaches for the bag.

Cain lunges.

He BITES down hard into the man's ankle — tearing skin and tendon.

The man SHOUTS. His gun slips onto the floor.

Cain scrambles to his feet.

The man goes for his weapon but Cain kicks it away, sending it spinning under a dumpster.

The man lunges and punches Cain in the face, hard. He hits the wall, dazed, before falling toward the floor.

The man grabs Cain by the coat, dragging him along the ground.

Cain's hand fumbles blindly until he finds a BROKEN BRICK near the trash.

He swings.

CRACK.

The man drops to a knee.

Cain, now off the floor, swings again.

CRACK.

The man collapses fully to the pavement.

Cain stands over him, shaking, with wide eyes.

Then—

He keeps going.

Blood splatters against the wall.

He raises the brick again and again — primal, terrified — slamming it down long after the man's body has stopped reacting.

Cain finally stops.

He drops the brick. It thuds into a puddle.

Cain drags the body deeper into the alley shadows.

He works quickly, trembling as he strips off the BLUE CAP and pulls the man's outer layers onto himself.

Cain notices something jingling in his left pocket.

CAR KEYS.

EXT. HIGHWAY INTERSECTION - EARLY EVENING

Cain's car drifts down an almost empty road. The city skyline is now only a faint smudge behind him.

A traffic light ahead shifts to yellow.

Cain slows.

It turns red just as he reaches it.

He stops. The engine idles — the only sound in the quiet stretch of road.

One car sits a block away, waiting to turn.

Otherwise, empty.

Cain reaches for the radio.

CLICK.

The radio switches on, mid-sentence.

NEWS ANCHOR

—asking anyone along Route 9 or near the northbound on-ramps to remain alert.

Authorities continue the search for thirty-two-year-old Cain Mercer. Mercer, a financial advisor formerly employed by Harbridge & Company, is wanted by local police and the FBI in connection with the murder of his girlfriend, Julia Hart.

Hart was found dead late last night inside the couple's apartment. Investigators say Mercer fled the scene before officers arrived.

Officials have also linked Mercer to a federal investigation involving money laundering for a narcotics organization. They believe Hart may have discovered financial documents he was falsifying shortly before her death.

Mercer was last seen near Eastside Park wearing a gray Fordham Rams sweatshirt believed to have belonged to Hart, a graduate student at the university.

Please be advised that Mercer has a documented history of untreated personality disorder and delusional behavior. He is considered armed and extremely dangerous. He was last seen traveling on foot or possibly in a stolen—

WEE-00. WEE-00.

SIRENS erupt — cutting the broadcast off.

Red and blue lights flash across Cain's face, across the empty road, and across the hood of the vehicle.

Only now is the vehicle fully visible under the moonlight:

A POLICE CRUISER.

The light turns green.

Cain doesn't move immediately.

He takes a deep, long breath. He is no longer nervous. In fact, he smiles, briefly.

Then he drives through the intersection.

A highway sign glides past the windshield: NORTHBOUND - EXIT 18.

He takes the ramp.

The sirens wail as the cruiser disappears up the road into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.

END.