

Last Chance

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

ALEX GOODSMAN, 33, stands in his US ARMY DRESS UNIFORM looking at himself in the mirror. A near-empty bottle of whiskey in one hand.

He's drunk and barely standing on his own two feet. He looks at the collection of EMPTY PILL BOTTLES on a nightstand. He offers himself a shaky salute.

ALEX  
Rangers lead the way, buddy.

He takes the last few pills in his hand, tosses them in his mouth, and takes a swig from the bottle. A nod to himself to seal his fate. His eyes widen, followed by a pained grimace while smacking himself on the head.

He stumbles in the dimly lit room to the desk. He sits and powers up a laptop.

ON THE DESKTOP: a video program shows Alex taking another swig. The bottom right shows a notification "3 Missed Video Calls."

Alex clicks to dismiss the notifications. He looks to the LAPTOP CAMERA, shakes his head in incredulity, then clears his throat, and clicks the red RECORD BUTTON. A TIMER starts.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Everything has just been a fog or something. Doesn't really make sense.

Alex looks up again.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry. I just can't... I don't want to...

Suddenly a video call comes in -- UNKNOWN CALLER. He answers, revealing the ghastly visage of a seemingly dead high school-age rocker, strumming his bass guitar.

ROCKER  
A little fogginess is okay, dude.

Alex is confused.

ROCKER (CONT'D)

Hey, that's some nasty stuff you're drinking. Have ya tried butterscotch schnapps? It's really good.

ALEX

You're...

ROCKER

Far out, right?

Alex looks back to the pill bottles, trying to piece things together.

ALEX

I'm seeing things.

ROCKER

What's wrong with that?

ALEX

I didn't want to end up like you. I wanted my life to mean something.

ROCKER

Don't buy into that, kemosabe. It's all a big party.

ALEX

Easy for you to say. All you ever cared about was getting high. Look how that turned out for you.

ROCKER

Yo, heir to the throne, I died in your shadow and you're still throwin' shade? But don't worry, you'll like oblivion. Pretty sure Mom does.

At the mention of "Mom" Alex twists his forearm to reveal a tattoo of eyes -- one blue, one green.

ALEX

You don't get to talk about her.

He sits up and knife-hands.

No... No, you don't know what she was like after you...

ROCKER  
Hey, chill out!  
(plays guitar)  
Just enjoy your song, bro.

Alex ruminates, then looks up to see the rocker gone and the video recording timer still ticking away.

ALEX  
Focus, Alex. Focus on what's  
important. The ones I hurt.

Alex addresses the camera once more.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
My platoon... we were ambushed. For  
whatever reason, no one else made  
it. Why me? I keep thinking about  
what I could have done differently,  
and it just... hurts.

A VIDEO CALL ALERT pops up and Alex reflexively answers. A new window displaying a dead woman appears. She wears desert fatigues, a matching helmet, and a harsh gaze. She has one blue eye and one green.

Alex flinches and inhales sharply.

SOLDIER  
"Hurts" you said? A little pain  
never hurt nobody, Corporal. Now,  
you gonna tell me what this is  
about?

ALEX  
We... my unit, we didn't see them  
until it was too late. They all  
died.

SOLDIER  
Yeah, shit happens sometimes,  
didn't you ever hear that? But  
those soldiers knew what they were  
signing up for. They don't need  
your sorry ass to join them.

Alex slams his hand on his desk in anger.

ALEX  
You don't get it.

SOLDIER  
What, you think I don't understand  
loss?

Alex breaks apart, and tears flow.

ALEX

When you didn't come home, at least  
it meant something. You saved  
lives! I just... got lucky. I let  
down the ones who counted on me.

SOLDIER

And now you're letting everyone  
else down by going AWOL.

ALEX

I tried! But their faces...

He closes his eyes. FLASHES of the faces of his fellow  
soldiers, bloodied, dead.

Alex's tone frosts over.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You had it easy.

The soldier's eyes meet Alex's, and as her resolve fades,  
Alex eyes slowly blink. Only the video recorder window  
remains, the timer still running.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Come on... you need to finish this.

Alex takes another swig from his bottle, his words  
increasingly slurred.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Ashley -- I'm sorry for how I've  
been lately. My mind... I just keep  
seeing it happen over and over. You  
don't deserve all this. You deserve  
better.

Another call pops up and Alex clicks on it. A window opens  
showing an empty kitchen, with half-prepared plates of food  
on the counter. Ashley, 33, rushes past the frame.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Gabby, put those toys away! It's  
time for dinner.

Alex squints and tries to look around the edge of the frame.

ALEX

Ashley?

No response.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Ash?

Ashley rushes to her seat.

ASHLEY

(still distracted)

Oh, Alex, I've been trying you and  
wasn't expecting you to be still  
awake. Where are...

Ashley's eyes square with her camera and she leans in as Alex  
is finishing a yawn.

ALEX

Hi Ash, I'm...

ASHLEY

Alex! Are you okay? Talk to me!

ALEX

I'm here Ashley. It's good to see  
you.

ASHLEY

Alex! Alex! Wake up!

ALEX

What? I'm awake. Is Gabby with you?

Ashley inhales sharply and calls 911 on her phone

ASHLEY

Yes, I need help! It's my husband.  
Hello?

Ashley glances into her camera then gets up, her tone  
increasingly frantic and fearful.

ASHLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Can you hear me? No, I don't know.  
He's in some hotel room. Can you  
track his computer or something?  
It's urgent!

Ashley's voice fades into echoes.

ALEX

Ashley! Everything will be fine.

In the call window, an 8 year old girl's head peeks out from  
the corner, with a soldier action figure in her hand.

GABRIELLE  
Daddy, look what Mommy got me!

Alex's eyes spring open and he leans forward.

ALEX  
Gabby! Hi baby girl.

GABRIELLE  
Are you coming home soon?

Alex averts his eyes. Gabrielle plays with the soldier, making it march in front of her.

GABRIELLE (CONT'D)  
Hup, two, three, four..

ALEX  
Sweetheart. I just wanted to tell  
you...

His eyes return, and he smiles warmly.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I love y--

Gabrielle's skin turns paler, speckled with ridges, as she continues to play.

GABRIELLE  
Hup, two, three, four...

Alex's mood drops as he watches with alarm.

Gabrielle's eyes droop as her lips tighten. Her veins darken. The soldier continues to march.

ALEX  
Gabby! No!

Alex's breath quivers as he stands and claws at his scalp. The deathly visage of Gabrielle, now wearing a scarred military helmet, considers the toy soldier.

GABRIELLE  
You were supposed to protect me.

Alex pleads to his dead daughter.

ALEX  
It... It was for you.

Gabrielle puts the toy down and looks up.

GABRIELLE  
I reminded Mommy of you.

Alex, at a loss for words, touches the screen, and crumbles back into his seat, tears streaming.

GABRIELLE (CONT'D)  
I wanted to be with you, Daddy.

ALEX  
(stuttering)  
I... I'm... s...s...sorry.

Alex cries into his arm, sobbing, letting it all out. Alex's vision fades to black.

ASHLEY (O.S.)  
Alex? Are you there?

GABRIELLE (O.S.)  
Daddy, wake up!

ASHLEY (O.S.)  
Alex! Alex!

Alex's arms shake and strain as he pushes himself back up, his eyelids fighting consciousness. The call window shows Ashley and Gabrielle, both very much alive and frightened.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Tell us where you are! Alex, can you hear me? Where are you?

ALEX  
9th Street... Motel...

Alex's head thumps back to his arm.

ASHLEY (O.S.)  
He's at the motel on 9th Street.  
Please, hurry...

FADE OUT.