

THE THERAPIST

Written by

Michael Cornetto

FADE IN:

INT. ROOM - DAY

A cot-like bed, a toilet, a STRANGE MACHINE and PETER (23) street-strong, dressed white, smacks patient 3271 (30s female) firmly across the face. THWACK!

3271 stares defiantly - not willing to cry. Peter seems uncertain, then resolute. THWACK! Other hand, other cheek.

PETER (V.O.)
Mom always said I'd end up dead in
a gutter.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Peter and his well-dressed VICTIM dance through the thick, dusty air.

PETER (V.O.)
She wasn't pleased with how I
earned our bread.

Knocked to the ground, VICTIM bleeds. Peter holds up a wallet, inside a few notes.

PETER (V.O.)
What else was I going to do?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Peter exits the alley, disappears into a sea of people.

PETER (V.O.)
There were no other opportunities
after twenty squared.

HORIZON

The red hot tip of the sun peeks over it.

PETER (V.O.)
That's when it all changed.

Time-lapse as it rises. Its arid heat is palpable.

PETER (V.O.)
It wasn't gradual like you'd
expect. It just sort of snapped.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A crowd riots.

PETER (V.O.)
And so did the people. Those were
dangerous times.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Dilapidated. YOUNG PETER (10) squats, stares at the floor.

PETER (V.O.)
With droughts and food-shortages,
we did what we could to survive.

Young Peter's hand darts to the floor. He lifts a cockroach to his mouth, pops it in.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

A GREEN VAN with THE COLLECTIVE printed on the side sits at the curb.

A WOMAN (30s), not unlike patient 3271, cries while she struggles to escape from two MEN dressed in black riot gear who drag her along the front walk.

Her HUSBAND and CHILDREN watch sadly from the front porch.

PETER (V.O.)
The things we do catch up with us.
And those who gained the most from
what they did were the first to pay
for it.

They toss her in the back of a van, which has a STRANGE MACHINE and a NURSE. She smiles at the Woman.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Another bloody VICTIM on the ground. Peter eyes his take...

PETER (V.O.)
But eventually we all get caught.

...then he's tackled. It's the COPS.

INT. LINE UP OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

An OFFICER sits near two well dressed MEN. Victims? One of the men points through the mirror, toward Peter who stands in a line up of six other PRISONERS.

PETER (V.O.)

And some of us pay in ways we never even dreamed of.

INT. LINE UP ROOM

Peter steps forward, he seems stricken.

INT. WAITING ROOM

Peter sits with a group of nervous prisoners. The pointing MAN enters. The Prisoners stir, ask questions. The Man calms them.

PETER (V.O.)

The Collective, the new world's answer to all of life's problems was about to answer mine.

Peter smiles.

INT. CLASSROOM

The same Prisoners man the desks and look attentively forward.

A TEACHER stands in front of the classroom. On the green board behind him the following rules.

1. Be relentless
2. Be indifferent
3. Be anonymous

PETER (V.O.)

Commit a violent crime and you too can be recruited as a Therapist. Just think, you can help people help the world.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Peter looks intense. THWACK!

PETER (V.O.)
My first day at my respectable job.
I'm going to make my mom proud.

3271 stares at him sadly. She holds back her tears. Peter prepares another swing.

3271
My name is Veronica.

Peter steps back, lowers his arms, looks around. A test?

3271
What's your name?

Peter shakes his head, he steels himself, then... THWACK!
Veronica glares at him.

VERONICA
Tell me your name!

Another nervous glance around, then Peter swallows.

PETER
Look lady..

VERONICA
Veronica!

PETER
Uh... Veronica...

Peter watches for lighting but none strikes.

PETER
I probably shouldn't be telling you this, I could lose my job, but my name, it's Peter. Can we get back to your therapy now?

Peter raises his hand.

VERONICA
I have a son.

Peter scowls but he doesn't swing.

VERONICA
His name is Bill. He's ten years old. I haven't seen him in weeks. When was the last time you saw your mother?

Peter shifts anxiously.

PETER

My mother has nothing to do with
this!

VERONICA

Doesn't she?

THWACK! Tears well in Veronica's eyes but don't fall.

VERONICA

You won't get what you want through
violence.

PETER

It's always worked before.

Peter grabs her by the throat.

PETER

Maybe we need to increase your
dosage.

VERONICA

Let me talk to my son then I'll
give you what you want.

PETER

I can't do that.

VERONICA

Then do your worst. Make your
mother proud.

Peter tenses to the breaking point then he pushes her away.
He lowers his head in thought.

Defeated, he reaches into his pocket, pulls out a phone and
hands it to Veronica. She snaps it up, dials and puts it to
her ear.

VERONICA

Bill? Oh Bill. I've missed you.

She smiles. Tears stream from her eyes.

From the STRANGE MACHINE Peter grabs two small cups attached
to tubes. He quickly covers Veronica's eyes with the cups.

PETER (V.O.)

Today, every drop of moisture
counts.

FADE OUT.