

MIA FRANKLIN

INT. ALMA'S ROOM - ALMA'S CLINIC - DAY

Sitting on the bed is **MIA FRANKLIN**, 38, a shifty woman. Raspy voice. No eye contact. She's half-blind, left eye smaller than her right. Silence for a beat. Then Patrick eyes Franklin --

Scene 1
Start

PATRICK
Go ahead. Tell her.

FRANKLIN
I'm escaping... You can come.

Alma takes that in. She glances at Patrick warily. Then --

ALMA
Is this a joke?

FRANKLIN
No. But you tell anyone, deal's off.

ALMA
You don't remember the Samaritan Collective two years ago. Shot point blank in broad daylight. Middle of the Manhattan Bridge.

PATRICK
Hear her out --

ALMA
No. It's suicide. They see you, they assume you're a spy and they shoot you on the spot. You know how many people have died trying to escape?

FRANKLIN
How many of those dummies are Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technicians?

A beat. Alma sees that Franklin's dead serious --

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
We go through the subway tunnels.

ALMA
They're patrolled.

FRANKLIN
By bombs, not humans. I know bombs.

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ALMA

... To the US or the Free States?

FRANKLIN

US. Through Queens. Fuck if I'm going to Jersey.

She reveals a map of the MTA. Opens and lays it out --

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

In each tunnel that runs east there's a trigger plane where it crosses under the river. Crossing it sets off a sequence of explosions down the tunnel collapsing it. I dealt with these sensors in Yemen. Moving them without triggering them is like sliding a cup of water on sandpaper without causing ripples.

(points at Steinway tunnel)

I did that... Down all eleven hundred feet of the Steinway Tunnel. Took me fifteen months. Now the trigger plane's past the bombs in Queens.

PATRICK

So we can run through and collapse the tunnel 'cause it'll be behind us.

FRANKLIN

US soldiers will assume we're crushed while we're running down the tracks to Flushing. It's a one-time-use plan. And we go tonight. When people will be drinking. There'll be fireworks.

A beat. Alma is shocked. It's a sound plan. She eyes Patrick --

ALMA

Why're you telling us?

FRANKLIN

You remember when you told me I'd never see in this eye again?... We were alone in one of these rooms. It was night. I said that without you, I would've been beat dead. And that I couldn't repay you.

(beat)

(MORE)

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FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You said that people here deal in all kinds of things. Water, batteries, bullets, people. You called it all small-minded. Then you said: "I barter with something more powerful: Good will. Do the same." That was three years ago and I've been thinking about that everyday since. So here I am.

Off Alma's silence, Franklin rises and folds up the map.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

There's a change of guard at the Vernon Avenue stop at one-thirty. That's our window. If you're in, be at Grand Central at midnight. Otherwise, we're even... Good luck.

End
→

She leaves.

INT. THE 7 TRACKS - NIGHT

Alma, Patrick, Franklin plod through calf-high water. Alma lost in her thoughts.

Franklin lights a cigarette. All smiles. She points up along a side to an EXPLOSIVE CHARGE embedded in the stone wall.

Scene 2
Start
→

FRANKLIN

They're every thirty yards.
(then, at Patrick)
Thought about what you're gonna do?

PATRICK

I bought a boat eight years ago.
The Aloha. Used it once. I'm gonna pull it out of storage. Patch it up. And I'm gonna fish.

FRANKLIN

What about you, Alma?

Alma, faraway, stares at the yawning darkness of the tunnel --

ALMA

What?

Patrick shakes his head at Franklin. Then, covering --

PATRICK

What about you --

FRANKLIN

I've spent the last fifteen years doing one of two things: Diffusing bombs and nearly getting blown up; or speaking my mind and getting in fights. So... I've been alone.

(beat, smiles)

What if I do something crazy and have me a baby? Maybe a few. A family.

She knows it comes off as a joke. And she plays it as a joke. But somewhere deep down, it's not. Patrick winces, chuckles.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Yeah, fuck babies...
(laughs with him)
Can't look at 'em anyway without remembering getting beat half blind.

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PATRICK
That's... specific.

FRANKLIN
Last thing my left eye ever saw.
Fuckin' tattoo of a crawling baby.

Alma is eyeing another explosive charge ahead, when she snaps her attention to Franklin.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Right up on his shoulder. No
flaming skull. No naked woman.
Nah... Motherfucker had a tattoo of
a crawling goddamn baby. That's
what I stared at between each
punch.

(tapping a raw nerve)
And for what -- 'Cause I painted
over his wall and called him a
coward... So he takes my sight...
Makes me live in fear... My name
never came off that wall. Seven
hundred and seventy-five days it's
been up there. Reminding me.

ALMA
(on another track
altogether)
What'd it look like?... The tattoo --

FRANKLIN
Like a cartoon. Lines around it
like the baby was shining or some
shit.

ALMA
That was... two years ago?... Have
you seen him since?

FRANKLIN
Fuck no. Only time you see that guy
is right before you die.

Alma is spinning. Her heart, racing.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
(holds up a hand, *Shh*)
We're here.

Around a gentle bend ahead, dim light emanates in the tunnel,
as does LAUGHTER. Franklin crosses ahead slowly nearing

THE TRIGGER PLANE

Franklin points at two new, smaller devices -- SENSORS -- on opposite sides of the wall. She sucks in the last of her cig and blows smoke, revealing a laser TRIGGER FIELD at the plane of the sensors.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

That is what will make this whole fucking place blow.

(then, invigorated)

And right there... That's the United States of America. Welcome home.

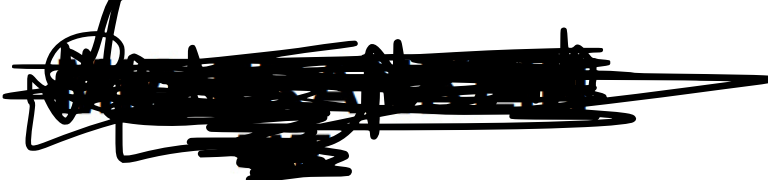
(checks watch, 1:18)

Twelve minutes.

End
→

Off Alma, glancing back at the tunnel behind her --

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INT. THE 7 TRACKS - TRIGGER PLANE - NIGHT

FRANKLIN'S WATCH: 1:27. Franklin leans against a wall, waiting. Alma crouches, stares at nothing. Patrick eyes her. Speaking low --

Scene 3
Start
→

PATRICK

You okay?

ALMA

So he could still be alive --

FRANKLIN

Who --

ALMA

... The guy... who beat you up --

FRANKLIN

(glances at watch)

Fuck if I know. Two minutes.

Alma spins. Tortured. Then she makes a decision --

ALMA

I have to go back.

FRANKLIN

What?!

PATRICK

Alma... Please...

FRANKLIN

I'm fine with you getting blown up.
You will not fuck this up for me.

Alma crosses to Patrick. Kisses him. Takes him in once more.

ALMA

I love you... I'm sorry.

Then Alma takes off running back into the DMZ.

PATRICK

Alma --

Patrick makes to chase after her...

FRANKLIN

Do what you want, man, but in two
minutes, I am exploding this tunnel.

Patrick stops. It's brutal.

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End →

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

She made her choice. Not yours.

He watches Alma disappear into the darkness. Franklin turns
and faces the trigger plane, primed to run through.

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