

DIAMOND HANDS

by

Cole Depner

FADE IN:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A FINGER anxiously taps an armrest as a MUFFLED VOICE calling the person's name gradually becomes clear...

DR. ANDREWS (O.S.)

Liam.

LIAM MCKAY, 23, quiet, ambiguous, the person in the chair, closes his eyes in anguish.

LIAM

I didn't want to do it.

DR. ANDREWS, female, mid-forties, unflappable, sits across from him.

DR. ANDREWS

I know.

LIAM

I just didn't know what else to do.
They won't go away.

DR. ANDREWS

Liam, they're not real.

LIAM

I don't want to hurt anyone.

DR. ANDREWS

They're not real, Liam. They don't control you.

LIAM

Then why won't they go away? I just want them to go away.

DR. ANDREWS

You're not going to hurt anyone,
Liam. I promise.

Liam looks at Dr. Andrews, desperate for answers.

LIAM

How do you know?

DR. ANDREWS

Because this isn't who you are,
it's just who you thought you were.

PRE-LAP - EDM music PLAYS.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A STONER takes a hit from a giant bong.

College students dance to EDM. RGB lighting illuminates the living room.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A FRAT BOY pounds on the bathroom door.

FRAT BOY

Hurry up in there! I don't have all night!

INT. FRAT HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam shouts back --

LIAM

Just a minute!

He looks at his reflection in the mirror, staring nervously.

A bead of sweat drips down his brow. He wipes it away, takes a deep breath, and opens the door.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam steps out of the bathroom.

FRAT BOY

Finally.

He heads to the living room.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam finds a spot in the corner, on high alert.

The beat DROPS. The students jump up and down, fists pumping.

Liam watches. His eyes are drawn to one in particular: MAYA HILL, 23, forthright, passionate. She dances without a care in the world.

They lock eyes. Maya smiles, then goes over.

MAYA
You lost?

LIAM
(smiling)
No.

MAYA
Looks like it.

LIAM
I don't like crowds.

MAYA
(blatantly)
It's a party.

Liam looks around.

LIAM
Really? I never would have guessed.

Maya hits him on the arm.

MAYA
Don't be a smart-ass.

LIAM
You're one to talk.

Maya smiles, enamored.

MAYA
So then what are you doing here?

Liam gazes into Maya's eyes.

LIAM
Isn't it obvious?

She blushes.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Liam and Maya stumble into the bedroom, lips locked, falling onto the bed.

Liam's hand slowly moves from Maya's waist to the back of her neck. He grabs a handful of her hair and tugs on it. She moans softly.

He tugs again, harder. She gasps, opening her eyes. He lets go.

Liam caresses Maya's throat. His grip begins to tighten. Maya's eyes widen in panic. She stops kissing him.

MAYA
Stop. You're hurting me.

Liam doesn't listen. Maya grabs his wrist, legs kicking.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Liam, stop it! You're hurting me.
Stop it!

He hit her.

LIAM
Shut up!

Maya screams in pain. Liam puts his hands around her neck and squeezes as hard as he can. She starts gagging. He watches the life drain out of her eyes...

Liam pulls away from Maya.

MAYA
What's wrong?

He looks at her, startled.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Liam. What's wrong?

LIAM
Nothing. Nothing, sorry.

She smiles. They start kissing again.

VIOLENT THOUGHT - LIAM CHOKING MAYA

Maya claws at Liam's hands, fighting to breathe.

BACK TO SCENE

Liam pulls away again, petrified.

MAYA
What? What is it?

Maya stares at him, confused.

LIAM
Sorry. I...

-- The bedroom door SWINGS open. Liam springs to his feet.

A COUPLE with the same idea rudely interrupts --

COUPLE
Oh, shit!/ Sorry.

They burst out laughing, closing the door. Liam looks at Maya, his eyes filled with terror...

INT. FRAT HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Liam rushes down the hallway. Maya chases after him --

MAYA
Liam, wait! Where are you going?

He ignores her. She follows him down the stairs.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Liam forces his way through the crowd.

MAYA
Liam!

Maya runs up and grabs Liam by the shoulder, turning him around.

MAYA (CONT'D)
What the hell?!

LIAM
I gotta go. I can't be here right now.

MAYA
Why? What's wrong?

A DRUNK FRAT BOY bumps into them, spilling his beer. Liam jumps out of his skin.

DRUNK FRAT BOY
Oh, fuck! My bad.

The drunk frat boy laughs. Maya stares at Liam, waiting for an explanation...

LIAM
I gotta go. I'm sorry

He leaves.

MAYA
Liam, wait! Liam!

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Liam hurries across campus in the dead of the night. The city skyline looms in the background.

EXT. DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

Liam enters an old brick building -- his dormitory.

INT. DORMITORY - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Liam heads up the stairs, passing a few DORMMATES on their way out.

DORMMATES
Hey, Liam.

LIAM
Hey.

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam picks up the pace, nearing his dorm room. He opens the door and slips inside.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam quickly LOCKS the door, breathing a sigh of relief.

He walks blindly over to his bed and turns on the bedside table lamp. There's a clear distinction between his side of the room and Kyle's. His bed is perfectly made -- everything has its place.

He opens his closet and gets undressed. All his clothes are separated by category.

He rotates his desk chair precisely forty-five degrees toward the door.

Finally, he crawls into bed, turns off the light, and stares into the darkness, disturbed...

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Liam sits at his desk, hunched over his laptop. The rising sun breaks through the window.

He TYPES the words "Are homicidal thoughts normal?" into the search bar and hits ENTER. Titles of articles about homicidal ideology appear on the screen.

Liam scrolls through the results, deeply concerned. An alarm RINGS.

KYLE STAFFORD, 23, charismatic, daring, doesn't move, out cold. The alarm keeps RINGING.

LIAM

Kyle.

Liam says his name a little louder.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Kyle.

Still nothing.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Kyle!

Kyle jolts awake. He fumbles to turn OFF his alarm, rolls over, and stares at the ceiling, wide-eyed.

KYLE

Fuck me. I'm never drinking again.

He sits up.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What time did you take off?

LIAM

I don't know. Early.

KYLE

Maya was there. Did you talk to her?

LIAM

Yeah.

KYLE

And?

LIAM

And nothing. We just talked.

Kyle can take a hint.

KYLE
Okay.

He checks his phone.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Holy shit.

LIAM
What?

KYLE
Bitcoin's exploded.

Liam rolls his eyes.

LIAM
Musk tweet something again?

Kyle jumps out of his bed and gets dressed.

KYLE
Who knows.

LIAM
So much for decentralized.

Kyle goes to the bathroom and "brushes" his teeth.

KYLE
Face it, dude. Crypto's here to stay.

Liam CLICKS on one of the articles.

LIAM
We'll see.

KYLE
That's what they said about the internet.

Kyle creeps up on Liam, peering over his shoulder.

KYLE (CONT'D)
What are you reading?

Liam SNAPS his laptop shut.

LIAM
Nothing.

He gets up.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Come on, we're gonna be late.

Kyle grabs his bag. Liam looks at Kyle's unmade bed.

LIAM (CONT'D)
You gonna make that?

Kyle follows Liam's gaze.

KYLE
No.

LIAM
Why not?

KYLE
What's the point? It's not gonna
stay that way.

LIAM
Yeah, but it looks like shit.

KYLE
Who cares? No one sees it.

LIAM
I do.

Kyle walks out the door.

KYLE
You'll get used to it.

Liam stares at Kyle's unmade bed, perturbed.

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Liam and Kyle head to class.

KYLE
You know, you really need to get
laid.

Liam keeps moving, distracted. Suddenly, he stops --

LIAM
Shit, I forgot my notebook.

He hustles back to their dorm room.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Liam swiftly makes Kyle's bed. Satisfied, he leaves.

EXT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Liam and Kyle climb the steps to the entrance of a shiny glass building.

LIAM
(re: Elon Musk)
The guy doesn't give a shit. He's a troll.

KYLE
Obviously. Who else has the balls to tell the SEC to suck his cock?

They funnel into the atrium.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - ATRIUM - CONTINUOUS

Swarms of students pass through, veering off to class.

LIAM
He was probably high. It's worthless. They all are.

They take a sharp right down a hallway.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kyle retorts --

KYLE
Okay, Mr. Buffett. They're digital assets, and the network is global. It's not a trend -- it's a financial revolution, and there's no stopping it.

-- Liam stops dead in his tracks. Maya stands across from him...

LIAM
Hi.

Maya gives Liam a fierce stare and storms into the lecture hall. Kyle looks at Liam, puzzled.

KYLE

Okay, what'd I miss?

Liam goes inside, tail between his legs.

KYLE (CONT'D)

No, seriously. What'd you do?

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - LECTURE HALL - DAY

The PROFESSOR traces the price pattern of a stock chart on the projection screen with a laser pointer.

PROFESSOR

As you can see, price patterns move in cycles. Understanding them is the first step to keeping your losses small and your profits large. Anyone can buy a stock. What separates the winners from the losers is the ability to manage a position and the acumen to consistently profit from the market.

Liam watches Maya take notes, eager to talk to her.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

As traders, our goal is to plan our trades precisely. Humans are creatures of habitual reaction. Fear and greed reign supreme. They cause us to chase stocks or hold onto losing positions. When the market slaps us in the face, fear stops us from capitalizing on the next opportunity because we're afraid of getting burned again.

(beat)

All right. I think that's enough for today. Algorithms are due Friday. Office hours are from one to three.

The students start packing up their things. The professor leaves them with some final words of wisdom --

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Remember, the market only hurts those who let it. Leave your emotions at the door.

Liam zips up his bag.

LIAM
(to Kyle)
I'll see you later.

Maya heads out the door. Liam calls after her --

LIAM (CONT'D)
Maya.

Liam hurtles down the stairs, dodging several students in his way.

LIAM (CONT'D)

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam dashes out of the lecture hall, spotting Maya.

LIAM
Maya!

Maya turns around.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Hold on.

Liam jogs over. Maya exhales scornfully.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Look, um... I shouldn't have left like that. I just had to go. I had to get out of there.

MAYA
Is that it?

LIAM
No. I still owe you an apology. I'm sorry. Can we just forget it ever happened?

Maya avoids his gaze.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I really like you, Maya.

She looks at him, won over.

MAYA
I like you too.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - DAY

Rows of computers. Flat-screen TVs showing real-time news hang from the ceiling. Large digital boards display the major market indexes.

Liam furiously types lines of code, programming a trading algorithm.

Kyle chuckles to himself. Liam glances at his screen, then shakes his head --

LIAM

Why do you read that crap?

Kyle scrolls through a trading subreddit full of outlandish memes and disaster stories.

KYLE

It's hilarious. There's actually some good advice in here if you look hard enough.

LIAM

I'll stick to the Wall Street Journal.

KYLE

This guy just doubled down on SPY puts after losing over two hundred and thirty grand. That's like trading in a Ferrari for a Prius.

LIAM

I wonder where he got that idea.

KYLE

You gotta admire his commitment.

LIAM

He's an idiot.

KYLE

He's misguided.

(beat)

They're not all morons. What about that guy who made four million on Carnival puts when the cruise industry crashed?

LIAM

Yeah, I remember that guy. A month later, he was left with twenty thousand and a chart that looked like Satan's erection.

KYLE

Cut him some slack. No one could have predicted the government would intervene.

LIAM

The writing was on the wall. He should have sold when he had the chance.

Just then, Kyle gets a bright idea.

KYLE

We should trade.

LIAM

(scoffs)

With what?

KYLE

Come on, you must have some money saved.

LIAM

Yeah, and I'd prefer to keep it that way.

KYLE

The market's red hot. Interest rates are in the toilet and inflation is through the roof. Everybody's panicking. Just think about how much we could have made already. I mean, that's why we're here, isn't it? How many more simulations do you need to run?

Liam gives it some thought, intrigued by the idea. Then --

LIAM

No.

KYLE

Liam, this is a golden opportunity. It's practically free money.

LIAM
I said no, all right? I'd like to
graduate in one piece.

Kyle sighs.

KYLE
Fine. Whatever.

INT. DORMITORY - MAYA'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Liam and Maya sit on her bed, studying. Maya glances at Liam. Her eyes linger on the cross pendant hanging from his necklace, twisting between his fingers.

MAYA
Are you religious?

LIAM
What?

Maya gestures to the cross.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Oh, um... no. My dad was. This was
his.

MAYA
Is he...?

LIAM
Yeah. He had ALS.

A beat.

MAYA
How old were you when he died?

LIAM
Fifteen... I think the hardest part
was not knowing when, you know? I
mean, he was still there. You could
see it in his eyes -- that he was
the same person... trapped in his
own body.

Liam's eyes cloud with sorrow.

MAYA
What was he like?

LIAM
He was the best.

Liam reminisces.

LIAM (CONT'D)
It didn't matter how tired he was,
he'd take me to the skate park
whenever I wanted.

MAYA
The skate park?

LIAM
It was a phase.

Maya smiles.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I remember every time I'd ask,
"Dad, how much longer can I
skateboard?" And every time he'd
say, "as long as you want."
(beat)
It was just the way he made me
feel, you know -- almost like I was
invincible.

MAYA
Dads can do that. It's one of their
superpowers.

Liam looks at Maya, smiling softly. Somehow she always knows
what to say -- her superpower.

MAYA (CONT'D)
So it's just you and your mom?

LIAM
Yeah.

Liam's grief resurfaces.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I never saw her cry. Not once. Even
when he died... Sometimes I feel
like I should be there, you know?
The same way she was for me.

Maya stares at Liam, feeling his pain. She rests her head on
his shoulder, comforting him...

Liam turns Maya's face toward him, gazing into her eyes. He
leans in, kissing her deeply.

They start making out, closing their textbooks. Clothes start
to come off.

All of a sudden, Liam's eyes shoot open, stricken with fear. Maya reaches down and UNZIPS his jeans. Her hand begins moving up and down. Liam closes his eyes tightly...

Maya stops, letting out a frustrated sigh. Liam embarrassingly turns away.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Fuck. Sorry... Sorry.

Maya rolls off him.

MAYA
It's okay.

She puts her shirt back on and tosses Liam his.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Here.

It lands on his chest. He stares at the ceiling, ashamed...

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

The door CREAKS open, casting a sliver of light across Kyle's sleeping face.

Liam stands in the doorway, staring at Kyle, then walks over, his steps hypnotic. He hovers over him, his eyes cold and soulless...

Suddenly, Liam's hands wrap around Kyle's neck like a vice grip. Kyle's eyes bulge open. Liam pins him down with his knee, squeezing tighter.

Kyle gasps for air, hands flailing. A sense of relief surges through Liam as Kyle fights for his last breaths.

Desperate, Kyle reaches for his bedside table lamp and hits Liam across the head.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Liam jolts awake. He looks over at Kyle, sound asleep. Rolls over and pulls up the covers, horrified.

INT. CAMPUS CLINIC - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Liam nervously waits to see the doctor, tapping his finger on the armrest in anticipation...

-- The door OPENS. Liam straightens.

DR. EVANS (O.S.)
Hi, I'm Dr. Evans.

LIAM
Liam.

DR. EVANS logs in to the computer and reviews Liam's medical history.

DR. EVANS
How can I help you?

LIAM
Uh, I've been having these, um,
these thoughts lately and, uh --

Dr. Evans starts TYPING.

DR. EVANS
What kind of thoughts?

LIAM
Just like... like random thoughts.

DR. EVANS
Random how?

LIAM
Like nightmares, I guess, but all
the time.

DR. EVANS
And how long have you been having
these thoughts?

LIAM
Uh, I don't know. Couple of months,
maybe.

DR. EVANS
Are you sleeping?

LIAM
Not really.

DR. EVANS
Are you currently on any
medications?

LIAM
No.

DR. EVANS
Do you drink?

LIAM
No.

DR. EVANS
What about drugs?

LIAM
You mean like weed?

DR. EVANS
No, like psychedelics.

LIAM
Oh. No.

DR. EVANS
Any history of mental illness in
the family?

LIAM
I don't think so.

DR. EVANS
What are you studying?

LIAM
Finance.

DR. EVANS
How are your grades?

LIAM
They're okay.

Dr. Evans turns around and stares at Liam, deliberating.

DR. EVANS
Sounds like you're just
experiencing some general anxiety.

He prints a prescription.

LIAM
That's it?

DR. EVANS
(reassuringly)
It's quite common for students with
heavy workloads, especially during
exams. This should help.

Dr. Evans hands Liam the prescription.

DR. EVANS (CONT'D)
Take one tablet three times a day.
If you miss a dose, just skip it
and take the next one. You might
feel a little drowsy or light-
headed at first, but that's normal.
Any questions?

LIAM
Is it addictive?

DR. EVANS
Only if you abuse it.

Liam looks at the prescription, uncertain...

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Liam sits at his desk, staring at a prescription bottle. The label reads: "XANAX 0.25 MG".

He opens his desk drawer, puts it away, and heads out the door.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Kyle and Liam eat lunch. Liam picks at his food, troubled.

KYLE
So it looks like AMC's next.

LIAM
The next what?

KYLE
GameStop. The apes are making some noise.

LIAM
Apes?

KYLE
You know, like Caesar from Planet of the Apes?

Kyle raises his fist in the air.

KYLE (CONT'D)
(ape voice)
Apes together strong!

Liam stares at Kyle, deadpan.

KYLE (CONT'D)
They're rallying troops -- trying
to send it to the moon.

LIAM
Then what are you waiting for?

Kyle scarfs down the rest of his food.

KYLE
I'm not sure I buy it. Short
interest is down. Doesn't seem like
there's enough to cause a swing.
And the fundamentals are terrible.
What do you think?

LIAM
I don't care. You done?

KYLE
Yeah.

Liam picks up his tray.

LIAM
Let's go.

KYLE
You didn't eat anything.

LIAM
I'm not hungry.

EXT. CAMPUS - CROSSWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle pushes the walk button --

KYLE
You know, we could have graduated
by now if we didn't have to take
these useless courses. Instead, I
gotta write a five-thousand-word
essay on the Cartesian worldview.

LIAM
They're supposed to broaden our
horizons.

KYLE

I swear, the only reason courses like philosophy exist is to poison our minds. They give hope to people who still believe the earth is flat.

LIAM

I told you, you should have taken astronomy.

KYLE

That's even worse. Now we're talking about the fate of the universe. I've got enough to worry about.

Just then, a car SPEEDS UP, running the amber light. Liam looks at Kyle, a flicker of malice in his eyes. Unexpectedly, he shoves him in front of the car.

Kyle flips over the hood, cracking his head on the pavement. Blood oozes from his skull...

KYLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Yo.

Kyle waves his hand in front of Liam's face. Liam stares at the spot on the street where Kyle's body was.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Anybody home?

Liam steps back, shaken.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

LIAM

Nothing. I just, uh...
(pretends to search
pockets)

I think I left my wallet in the dining hall.

KYLE

Oh, okay.

Kyle turns around.

LIAM

No! No, uh... I'll get it. See you in class.

Liam darts back in the direction of the dining hall, disappearing behind a building.

EXT. CAMPUS - BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Out of sight, Liam turns back, peers around the corner, and watches Kyle cross the street, unnerved.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Liam sits at a computer, writing his astronomy paper. A torturous look spreads across his face. He types the word "Jupiter" over and over again, unable to stop.

His phone BUZZES. He glances at the notification. It's a "Hey :)" text from Maya.

VIOLENT THOUGHT - LIAM CHOKING MAYA

Maya struggles to breathe.

BACK TO SCENE

Liam looks around the library, paranoid.

SERIES OF SHOTS - LIAM'S PARANOIA

STUDENT #1 FLIPS the page of a textbook.

STUDENT #2 UNZIPS their backpack.

STUDENT #3 COUGHS.

Liam looks back at his computer screen, trepidation in his eyes, watching the cursor blink... He closes his paper and opens an online trading account.

He deposits "\$250.00" and immediately starts analyzing the major market indexes.

TIME LAPSE

Charts, candlesticks, moving averages, and stock tickers reflect off the darks of Liam's eyes. He plots price patterns like a seasoned trader.

Hours pass. His account balance slowly increases. The students around him are replaced by new ones.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

The market closes. Liam sits back and looks at his account balance: "↗\$411.33 (64.53%)". A hint of a smile appears on his face.

LIAM (PRE-LAP)
I wasn't gambling. I was trading.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Liam shifts in his chair, disgruntled.

DR. ANDREWS
What's the difference? They both involve irreversible risks with binary outcomes.

LIAM
Gambling depends entirely on chance; trading doesn't. I was in control.

DR. ANDREWS
You mean the illusion of control.

LIAM
No. I knew what I was doing.

DR. ANDREWS
Then why'd you betray his trust?

Liam pauses.

DR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)
If you were in control, why couldn't you stop? I thought you didn't want to hurt anyone.

LIAM
(flustered)
I didn't. I don't. That wasn't supposed to happen. There was nothing I could do. I --

DR. ANDREWS
Exactly. It was out of your control. You're thoughts, they're not. The more you listen to them, the more powerful it becomes.

LIAM
It?

DR. ANDREWS

This disease, it's like the devil
with his pitchfork at your back.
You're damned if you do, damned if
you don't.

LIAM

I don't understand.

DR. ANDREWS

Understanding won't make it go
away, and trying to ignore it is
the road to hell.

(beat)

These thoughts don't define you,
Liam. They exist in spite of you,
not because of you...

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Liam timidly approaches his dorm room. He stops at the door,
his hand hovering over the doorknob.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kyle laughs at a prank video.

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam lets out a deep sigh and somberly walks away.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Liam takes a seat in a secluded corner of the library, rests
his head on his backpack, and tries to fall asleep.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - LECTURE HALL - DAY

Kyle strolls into the lecture hall, earbuds in. Maya calls
his name --

MAYA

Kyle.

He doesn't hear her. Maya gets up from her seat, waving at
him.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Kyle.

Kyle takes out one of his earbuds.

KYLE
Hey, Maya. What's up?

MAYA
Where's Liam?

KYLE
He's not here?

MAYA
No. Have you seen him? He's not
answering my texts.

KYLE
He's probably just busy.
Astrology's kicking his ass.

Kyle heads up the stairs.

MAYA
You mean astronomy?

KYLE
Yeah, that one.

Maya looks on, concerned.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - DAY

Liam draws an ascending triangle on a stock chart. Kyle plops into the seat beside him.

KYLE
Maya's looking for you. Sounds
serious.

LIAM
What'd you say?

KYLE
You were busy.

Liam internalizes...

KYLE (CONT'D)
Is it?

LIAM
"Is it," what?

KYLE

Serious.

LIAM

... I don't know. Can I copy your notes?

KYLE

Sure.

Kyle reaches for his notebook. He pauses, seeing Liam's computer screen. The trading account balance reads: "↗\$463.50 (85.40%)".

KYLE (CONT'D)

Is that real?

LIAM

Uh... Yeah.

KYLE

(hits Liam on shoulder)

What the fuck?!

LIAM

I was gonna tell you.

KYLE

When?

LIAM

Now.

KYLE

Is this why you skipped class?

LIAM

Natural gas was about to sell off.

KYLE

Did it?

LIAM

No, it's still going strong.

KYLE

What about oil?

LIAM

Doesn't matter. I gotta wait for my funds to settle. I mean, unless you have twenty-five grand lying around.

KYLE
Stupid PDT rule.

Kyle ponders...

KYLE (CONT'D)
How much do you have saved?

LIAM
Like five.

KYLE
Thousand?

LIAM
Yeah.

KYLE
Perfect! I got twenty.

LIAM
Dude, I gotta eat.

KYLE
There's a box of Top Ramen in the
closet. You'll survive.

Liam lets out an exasperated breath. Then --

LIAM
Where'd you get twenty grand?

KYLE
My gran.

LIAM
Lucky you.

KYLE
She died.

LIAM
Oh.

KYLE
Think about it. Look what you did
with a couple hundred. Imagine what
we could do with that extra buying
power.

LIAM
No. No way.

KYLE

If we trade on margin, we don't have to liquidate our assets.

LIAM

One mistake and we could lose everything.

KYLE

That's what stop-loss orders are for.

LIAM

They're not bulletproof. Haven't you ever seen Margin Call?

Kyle sees his point.

KYLE

All right, well then, what about options?

LIAM

Same thing. They're too risky. Look, I don't want to end up like one of those idiots you read about on Reddit. If we're gonna do this, we can't afford to take any chances. Literally.

KYLE

(sighs)

Fine. We'll do it your way... for now. Deal?

Liam thinks about it.

LIAM

We split the profits fifty-fifty?

KYLE

Sixty-forty.

Liam shoots Kyle a look -- *Really?*

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's only fair.

Kyle puts out his hand.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Don't worry. We're not gonna spend it all at once.

Liam looks at Kyle's hand, contemplating. Convinced, he shakes it.

LIAM

Okay. All right, let's do it.

KYLE

Yes! I knew you'd come around.

Kyle excitedly rubs his hands together.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Tendies are back on the menu.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - TRACK - DAY

Maya jogs around the track. She peels off to the side, catching her breath.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - MEN'S CHANGING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam ties his runners.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Maya makes her way down to the women's changing room.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - MEN'S CHANGING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam shuts his locker and heads to the weight room.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maya reaches the bottom of the stairs.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam steps out of the changing room. Maya spots him --

MAYA

Liam.

Liam freezes.

LIAM

Hey.

MAYA

Where have you been? I haven't seen
you in class.

LIAM

Yeah, I just, um... I've been busy.

MAYA

Too busy to text me back?

LIAM

Sorry. I was going to, I just, uh,
I forgot.

Maya nods indignantly.

MAYA

Did I do something wrong?

LIAM

No.

MAYA

It's not a big deal. It happens.

LIAM

No, it's not that --

MAYA

Then what? What is it? I mean, I
think I've been pretty
understanding.

LIAM

Nothing. I've just had a lot on my
mind lately.

MAYA

All right. Well, when you figure it
out, let me know.

Maya brushes past Liam. He sighs, then chases after her.

LIAM

Maya, wait. Wait. Wait.

Liam stops Maya outside the women's changing room.

LIAM (CONT'D)

You're right. I was embarrassed and
-- I mean, I thought you
wouldn't... I don't know what I
thought. I was an idiot.

MAYA

No shit.

LIAM

Can I make it up to you? Let me
make it up to you. Please.

Maya stares at Liam, debating. Then --

MAYA

You have my number.

With that, Maya goes into the women's changing room.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Liam shuffles through his gym playlist, resting between sets of bench press. A call comes in. The Caller ID reads: "Mom".

Liam stares at it, letting it go to voicemail. He puts his phone in his pocket and starts his next set.

INT. DORMITORY - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Liam skips up the stairs.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens. Liam turns on the light and takes a seat at his desk.

He pulls out his phone and PLAYS his voicemail. Opens his desk drawer and starts taking out the contents -- all his school supplies are compartmentalized.

LIAM'S MOM (V.O.)

Hey, sweetie. It's me. Mom. I just
thought I'd call... I miss hearing
your voice.

Liam stops reorganizing. Looks sadly at his phone.

LIAM'S MOM (V.O.)

Anyway, call me back when you get a
chance... Okay. Bye. I love you.
Bye.

The voicemail ENDS. Liam dismally continues reorganizing.

INT. DORMITORY - MAYA'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Maya puts the finishing touches on her makeup.

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam arrives at Maya's dorm room, takes a deep breath, and knocks.

INT. DORMITORY - MAYA'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maya puts on her coat.

MAYA

Coming.

She grabs her purse, fixes her hair in the mirror, and opens the door.

INT. DORMITORY - MAYA'S DORM ROOM/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam smiles.

LIAM

Hey.

MAYA

Hi.

LIAM

Ready?

MAYA

Yeah.

Maya steps into the hallway, closing the door.

EXT. CAMPUS - BUS STOP - NIGHT

Liam and Maya take a seat on the bench.

MAYA

So... are you going home for reading week?

LIAM

Probably. You?

MAYA

I don't know. Every time I do, I'm reminded why I left.

LIAM

What do you mean?

MAYA

It's just a dead end, you know? I mean, most of the girls I went to high school with are either pregnant or waiting tables -- not that there's anything wrong with that... I guess I just want something more.

LIAM

Like what?

MAYA

Like... I don't know. I just want to be somebody. Somebody like Oprah or Taylor Swift, but on Wall Street or in the boardroom. The first female CEO of Apple or Microsoft.

LIAM

Oh, okay. So basically, what you're saying is you want to be on the cover of Forbes.

MAYA

Exactly.

Liam chuckles.

LIAM

I thought so.

Maya smiles.

MAYA

I swear, sometimes I think I'm adopted.

LIAM

What?

MAYA

I'm serious. My parents, they just... they don't get it. They don't understand why I'm here. They wanted me to go to community college so I'd be close to home.

LIAM

Well, it sounds like they love you.

MAYA

They do. They're the only reason I keep going back.

Liam nods, relating.

LIAM

I kind of feel the same way.

MAYA

You do?

LIAM

Yeah. Whenever I go back, a part of me can't wait to leave.

MAYA

How come?

LIAM

I just didn't belong, you know? It was like the less you cared, the cooler you were. And I did so...

Then, opening up even more.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I didn't even go to prom.

MAYA

Really?

LIAM

(coyly)

I don't like crowds, remember?

Maya can't help but smile. This is the Liam she fell for.

MAYA

How could I forget?

They both laugh.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Liam and Maya watch a movie. Liam glances at his phone, checking his trading account balance: "↗\$32,594.11 (30.38%)".

A violent sequence of EXPLOSIONS blasts through the speakers. Liam looks up, alarmed. GUNS FIRE. The PIERCING SCREAMS of wounded soldiers fill the theater.

Liam watches, transfixed by the brutality. With each kill, the look of horror on his face intensifies. Unable to take it any longer, he abruptly leaves. Maya calls after him --

MAYA
(whispering)
Where are you going? Liam?

Liam races out of the theater.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Liam presses his forehead against the wall, his breath shaky, eyes clenched shut, trying to get a grip... Just then, a HAND gently touches him on the shoulder --

MAYA (O.S.)
Liam?

Liam spins around, swatting Maya's hand away.

LIAM
Don't touch me!

Maya flinches, backing away.

MAYA
Liam, what's wrong? What is it?

Liam paces, hanging on by a thread.

LIAM
Nothing. I just... I need a minute.

Maya cautiously reaches for him.

MAYA
Liam --

He recoils.

LIAM
I said I need a fucking minute! I'm fine.

MAYA
No, you're not fine. Something's wrong. Talk to me.

Liam shakes his head -- *You won't understand.*

LIAM
I... I can't.

MAYA
Just talk to me. Let me help you.

LIAM
No. I can't.

MAYA
Why not?

Liam snaps --

LIAM
I just can't! I FUCKING CAN'T! I
can't do this!

MAYA
Do what?!

LIAM
This! Us!

Maya stands there, speechless.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Did you hear what I said?! Fuck
off! I don't need your help.

Maya's eyes fill with betrayal.

MAYA
Go to hell.

She storms off.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Liam lies awake, haunted by his thoughts. Maya's voice echoes in his head.

MAYA (V.O.)
*Liam, stop it! You're hurting me.
Stop it!*

He gets out of bed, throws on some clothes, and tiptoes out the door, watching Kyle turn over in his sleep as he closes it.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - NIGHT

The door OPENS, automatically turning on the lights.

Liam logs in to the nearest computer and starts trading international markets.

PRE-LAP - A KNOCK at the door.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DOOR ROOM - DAY

Kyle opens the door. Maya stands there, a grave look on her face.

KYLE

Hey, Maya. Liam's not here.

MAYA

I know... Can I come in?

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DOOR ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle scratches his head --

KYLE

He screamed at you?

MAYA

Yeah. He just ran out of the theater. He did the same thing at the party.

KYLE

The frat party?

Maya nods.

MAYA

You need to say something.

KYLE

Me? What do you want me to say?

MAYA

I don't know. He won't talk to me. Maybe he'll talk to you.

Kyle exhales, reluctant.

KYLE

Even if I do say something, he's not gonna listen to me.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

He doesn't listen to anyone. That's his problem. And besides, he seems fine.

MAYA

He's not fine. He says he is, but he's not. Kyle, please. Just talk to him.

A long pause. Then --

KYLE

Honestly, Maya, I really don't think it's that serious.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - ATRIUM - DAY

Students file out of a lecture hall. Kyle emerges from the crowd and heads to the Trading Lab.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle saunters in, looking for Liam. He spots him at a computer in the far corner.

Liam analyzes the market, oblivious to his surroundings.

-- THUD. A notebook lands on his keyboard, breaking his concentration.

KYLE

You know, I don't remember this being part of the deal.

LIAM

It was in the fine print.

KYLE

Eco marks are up. What'd you get?

LIAM

I haven't checked.

KYLE

The economy's in a free fall, not the stock market. Come on.

Liam relents. He opens the student portal, logs in, and CLICKS on "Grades".

KYLE (CONT'D)

Shit. What happened?

Liam stares at the screen, expressionless. His grade reads: "8/20". He shrugs it off.

LIAM

It's just a quiz. Who cares?

KYLE

Did you even study?

LIAM

Apparently not enough. Whatever, it's worth like five percent.

KYLE

I guess.

Liam resumes trading. Kyle looks at him, recalling his conversation with Maya. Liam notices --

LIAM

What?

KYLE

Nothing.

Kyle sits down.

KYLE (CONT'D)

So I've been doing a little research... Looks like Tesla's ready for launch.

LIAM

Says who, the apes?

KYLE

The fundamentals speak for themselves.

LIAM

The stock's overpriced.

KYLE

Earnings are sky-high.

LIAM

That's easy to manipulate.

KYLE

They've doubled their free cash flow in the last year.

LIAM

That's not hard if it was negative.

KYLE

Jesus Christ. You're worse than my mom. I mean, when did you become such a pussy?

The last part strikes a nerve.

LIAM

See, that right there. That's why you're the notetaker. You think this is a game.

KYLE

No, I don't. I'm just not afraid to pull the trigger.

LIAM

You're reckless.

KYLE

I'm aggressive. There's a difference.

LIAM

I don't trust Musk. He's too unpredictable.

KYLE

That's why we diversify.

A beat.

LIAM

Kyle, this is our entire life savings. Do you really want to put it in the hands of that lunatic...? Do you? He'll do or say anything for attention.

Kyle exhales, conceding.

KYLE

You better hope you're right.

LIAM

(pats Kyle on back)

Trust me, you'll see.

Liam resumes trading again.

KYLE

(to self)

We might as well have opened a savings account.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

A bus turns into the station.

INT. BUS STATION - CONCOURSE - CONTINUOUS

A JANITOR, early thirties, mops a section of the floor.

Liam heads toward him, absorbed in his phone. His trading account is open. The balance reads: "↗\$41,352.74 (65.41%)".

The janitor wrings out the mop and puts down a wet floor sign.

Liam walks right past it, through the section the janitor just mopped.

JANITOR

Hey!

Liam stops. Looks at the janitor.

JANITOR (CONT'D)

Are you blind?

(points to sign)

Read the sign. I just cleaned that.

Liam looks at the wet floor sign.

LIAM

Oh, sorry. I --

JANITOR

Just watch where you're going.

LIAM

Okay. Sorry.

The janitor glares at Liam. He dips the mop back in the bucket and starts mopping where Liam stands.

Liam walks away, muttering under his breath --

LIAM (CONT'D)

Fucking dick.

The janitor drops his mop.

JANITOR

What'd you call me?

Liam turns around. The janitor gets in his face. He stands his ground...

LIAM
A fucking dick.

The janitor punches Liam -- hard.

Liam stumbles, then charges, tackling the janitor. They roll around, trading blows.

The janitor gets on top of Liam and starts raining down punches, bloodying Liam's nose.

Liam's mouth curls into a deranged grin. The janitor notices, punching him harder. Liam laughs, enjoying the beating...

JANITOR (V.O.)
Do you mind?

Liam stands rooted to the floor, staring blankly at the janitor. He blinks, snapping out of it.

JANITOR
What are you looking at?

LIAM
Uh, nothing. Sorry.

Liam keeps walking. The janitor watches him go --

JANITOR
Stupid kid.

EXT. BUS STATION - TERMINAL - DAY

Passengers board a bus. Liam shuffles along, at the back of the line, looking at his ticket. He stops at the bus door...

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)
Coming?

Liam looks up at the BUS DRIVER, then back down at his ticket.

LIAM
Um... No. Wrong bus.

The bus driver closes the door and DRIVES OFF. Liam watches, fighting back tears.

EXT. CAMPUS - QUAD - DAY

Kyle wheels his suitcase through the quad. Most of the leaves have fallen off the trees. A gust of wind blows a bundle by him.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam sits at his desk, trading. It looks like he hasn't slept or eaten in days.

INT. DORMITORY - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Kyle hauls his suitcase up the stairs, struggling mightily.

KYLE
Stupid fucking suitcase.

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kyle powers down the hallway.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle stumbles in and heaves his suitcase onto his bed, exhausted.

KYLE
I hate traveling.

He opens his suitcase and starts unpacking. Liam watches tensely.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I missed my connection. Dickheads
didn't distribute the luggage
evenly.

Kyle opens the closet and hangs his shirts up, ruining the order Liam had his in.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Meanwhile, I'm stuck behind a baby
who won't stop crying. I wanted to
kill myself. It literally cried
across the entire country.

One of Liam's jackets falls to the floor.

LIAM
(re: jacket)
Can you...?

KYLE
Sorry.

Kyle carelessly hangs Liam's jacket back up with the hanger facing the wrong way and continues unpacking.

LIAM
(agitated)
Other way.

Liam gets up and starts rearranging their clothes.

KYLE
When'd you get back?

LIAM
I didn't.

KYLE
You stayed?

LIAM
Yeah.

KYLE
Why?

LIAM
I don't know. Just felt like it.

Kyle flops onto Liam's bed.

KYLE
Aah, that's better.

Liam loses it.

LIAM
Dude!

KYLE
What?

LIAM
Get off! Get the fuck off!

Liam shoves Kyle off his bed and onto the floor. Kyle pops back up and looks at Liam, stunned.

KYLE
What the hell is wrong with you?

LIAM
Nothing. Just stay off my bed.

Kyle watches Liam manically smooth out the creases in his blanket -- *maybe Maya was right.*

Liam pulls out his phone and takes a seat, checking the stock market.

LIAM (CONT'D)
(sits up)
Whoa.

KYLE
What now?

LIAM
Tesla's trading at over a thousand.

KYLE
Fuck off.

Liam slumps into his chair, confirming.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Oh my god. I fucking told you...
Fuck! What happened?

Liam skims through the news article.

LIAM
Hertz ordered a hundred thousand vehicles.

KYLE
How the hell did they afford that?
I thought they went bankrupt.

Liam stares at his phone, in total disbelief.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Musk must have made a fortune.

LIAM
Thirty-six billion.

Kyle exhales, shaking his head in frustration. Then, seeing Liam's disappointment --

KYLE

Hey, it's one trade. Look on the
bright side, we didn't lose
anything.

Liam nods.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Don't worry. We'll just buy the
dip.

LIAM

Yeah.

Kyle stands.

KYLE

Let's get out of here.

LIAM

No, not tonight.

KYLE

Come on. It's our last chance
before midterms.

LIAM

Dude --

KYLE

Seriously. Before you kill someone.

Liam shoots Kyle an intense stare.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's a joke, man. Laugh.

Liam fakes a laugh, a shade of fear in his eyes...

INT. CLUB - LOUNGE - NIGHT

A jam-packed club. Strobe lights pulse to bass-heavy MUSIC.
Kyle and Liam sit at the bar, totally out of place.

Liam taps the bar top, head on a swivel. Kyle takes a sip of
his beer --

KYLE

Ugh. This tastes like piss.

Liam looks at him, confused.

LIAM

It's beer.

KYLE

This is not beer. This is basically carbonated water, strategically formulated to maximize profits, and only suitable for Monday Night Football.

LIAM

What did you expect?

KYLE

For fifteen bucks, a lot more.

-- A loud CHEER. Liam looks sharply in its direction. A group of FRIENDS celebrating a twenty-first birthday take shots. Kyle smiles, reminiscing.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I remember when I turned twenty-one. I invited thirty of my closest friends to the club and no one showed. Good times.

Liam takes a breath. Kyle notices.

KYLE (CONT'D)

You all right, man?

LIAM

Yeah. I'm fine.

Kyle stares at Liam, unconvinced. Liam deflects.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I'm gonna buy the eleven hundred Tesla call.

KYLE

What?

LIAM

You were right. It's on a run.

KYLE

What happened to no options?

LIAM

This isn't Pinterest. It's Tesla. We've got nothing to lose.

KYLE

Uh... Yeah. Yeah, we do. We got a lot to lose.

LIAM

Now who's being a pussy?

KYLE

It's overbought. We missed the bus.

LIAM

No, we didn't. There's still money to be made. I know it.

KYLE

Not on Tesla. Not now, all right?

LIAM

Yeah, but --

Kyle puts his foot down.

KYLE

Liam, I'm serious. Let it go... Or else we're gonna have a fucking problem.

Liam runs a frustrated hand through his hair, relenting.

KYLE (CONT'D)

You're chasing, bro. If this were any other stock, you'd be screaming sell.

(beat)

Hey. Look around.

A plethora of gorgeous girls surrounds them.

KYLE (CONT'D)

You know what I see? Opportunity.

Liam sighs -- *What else is new?*

KYLE (CONT'D)

Now I could use a wingman. You up for the challenge?

LIAM

Sure.

KYLE

I thought so.

Kyle gets up.

KYLE (CONT'D)
All right. I'm gonna go tune the
banjo.
(offers Liam beer)
Here, take this.

LIAM
No.

KYLE
Just take it.

LIAM
Dude, you know I don't drink.

KYLE
Tonight you do.

Kyle puts the beer down in front of Liam and goes to the
bathroom.

LIAM
Kyle!

Kyle keeps walking.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Kyle!

Liam turns back around, annoyed. He pulls out his phone.

Two STRIKING WOMEN in cocktail dresses, late twenties,
confidently approach the bar. The one closest to Liam glances
at him.

He stares numbly at Tesla's stock summary. The number
"1,024.86 +115.18" sticks out like a sore thumb, mocking him.
She takes a closer look at his phone. A subtle smile crosses
her face --

BROOKE
Market's closed.

Liam looks up.

LIAM
Pardon me?

BROOKE
I've seen that look before.
Drowning your sorrows?

LIAM
(looks at beer)
Oh, uh... no. That's not mine. I'm
just keeping it company.

BROOKE smiles, amused.

BROOKE
I'm Brooke. This is Skylar.

LIAM
Liam.

Liam nervously looks down.

LIAM (CONT'D)
(to Brooke)
So, do you, uh, do you trade?

BROOKE
God, no. A lot of our clients do.

LIAM
(naively)
Oh. What do you do?

SKYLAR gives Brooke a mischievous grin.

BROOKE
Uh... We're in sales.

Liam stares at them. Then, realizing --

LIAM
Oh. Cool... Cool.

BROOKE
What about you?

LIAM
I'm in school.

SKYLAR
Oh, that's cute. Do your parents
know you're out this late?

BROOKE
Ignore her. She has daddy issues.

SKYLAR
That makes two of us.

Kyle returns from the bathroom, invigorated.

KYLE
(to Liam)
All right, let's do this. What's
the scouting report?

Liam smiles embarrassingly.

LIAM
This is my friend, Kyle. Kyle, this
is Brooke and Skylar.

KYLE
Nice to meet you.

He leans over and whispers in Liam's ear.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Well done.
(to Brooke and Skylar)
So, what's the occasion?

SKYLAR
(provocatively)
We have the night off.

KYLE
Really?

SKYLAR
Really.

Kyle looks at Liam, a spark of excitement in his eyes. Then --

KYLE
Do you wanna do shots?

Brooke and Skylar glance at each other --

SKYLAR BROOKE
Yeah. Okay.

SKYLAR (CONT'D)
Let's do shots.

The girls let out a cheer. Kyle pats Liam on the back. He forces a smile.

INT. CLUB - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Liam and Brooke sit in a cozy booth, watching Kyle and Skylar flirt with each other at the bar. Skylar laughs, infatuated.

BROOKE
She has a thing for blue eyes.

LIAM
I figured.

Liam taps his finger on the table, scanning the room. Brooke notices. She places her hand on top of Liam's. He looks at her.

BROOKE
Relax.

LIAM
Sorry... So how long have you,
uh... you know?

BROOKE
A few years now.

An awkward silence.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
It's temporary.

LIAM
Do you, uh, do you like it?

BROOKE
It's a job. When you're broke and drowning in debt, the thought of having sex for money doesn't seem so bad.

(beat)
It gets easier. Sometimes I actually enjoy it -- the power. I say who, I say when, and I say how much.

Liam looks off, powerless against his own thoughts.

LIAM
What would you do -- you know, if you had the choice?

A pained expression washes over Brooke's face.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Sorry, I didn't mean --

BROOKE
I, um... I don't know. I'd probably go back to school. At least that's what I tell myself.

LIAM
(surprised)
You went to school?

Brooke smiles weakly.

BROOKE
Yeah. I was gonna be a nurse.

LIAM
What happened?

BROOKE
My mom got sick.

The words hit Liam like a ton of bricks.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
She's better now.

LIAM
Does she know?

Brooke shakes her head.

BROOKE
She's been through enough.

Liam's eyes darken, knowing what she means. He starts tapping his finger again. Brooke reaches over and softly puts her hand on the back of his head.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Do you have a girlfriend?

LIAM
No. There was this one girl but...

BROOKE
(sweetly)
Did she break your heart?

LIAM
No. She didn't do anything. It was me.

BROOKE
What did you do?

Liam looks at Brooke, letting his walls down. She stares at him, seeing the fear in his eyes -- a look she knows all too well.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
I got an idea.

Brooke opens her purse, puts her pinky in her mouth, and wraps her lips around it.

She slowly pulls out her pinky, staring at Liam seductively, and dips it into her purse. He nervously inhales, mesmerized.

Brooke raises her pinky, covered in white powder, to Liam's mouth. He stares at it.

LIAM
What is it?

BROOKE
Our sweet escape.

Liam looks at Brooke, hesitant.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Trust me.

Liam looks back down at Brooke's pinky. Then --

LIAM
Fuck it.

Brooke smiles. Liam sucks the powder off her finger. She dips it back into her purse and does the same. Takes Liam's hand and leads him through the lounge to the dance floor, vanishing into the crowd...

INT. CLUB - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Liam and Brooke dance with reckless abandon. Their bodies grind against each other, drenched in sweat.

Brooke grabs Liam's face and kisses him wildly. He kisses her back, hungry for more. They bump into a BODY, separating.

Liam looks up at the ceiling. The club lights flash and sparkle. He closes his eyes, exhilarated.

A pair of hands yanks Liam's head down. He opens his eyes.

Maya stares back at him. Liam's eyes widen in horror. She kisses him violently.

Liam pulls away, gasping. Brooke stands in Maya's place. He stares at her, blinking...

They kiss again. Mid-kiss, Liam opens his eyes and sees Maya. Terrified, he backs away.

Brooke keeps dancing, delirious. Bodies fill the space between them until Brooke disappears...

INT. DORMITORY - MAYA'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Maya sits at her desk, poring over an economics textbook. An abrupt KNOCK at the door startles her.

Another KNOCK. Maya gets up and cautiously approaches, peering through the peephole. Sighing, she opens the door. Liam waltzes in, giddy.

MAYA

Liam, what are you doing here?

LIAM

Hey.

(pokes Maya's nose)

Hey, you.

MAYA

What do you want?

LIAM

Oh, am I interrupting?

Maya's eyes narrow.

MAYA

Are you high?

Liam grins, raising a finger to his lips.

LIAM

Shhh.

MAYA

What did you take?

LIAM

(shrugs)

I don't know.

Liam notices the economics textbook open on Maya's desk.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Midterms. That's right.

He moseys over.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I should really study for those.
(gasps)
I know! Let's study together! Yeah,
yeah, let's study together. We can
be study buddies.

Liam picks up the textbook and eagerly takes a seat on Maya's bed, flipping through the pages.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Oh, boy. This is gonna be a long
night.

MAYA
Okay, you need to leave.

Maya reaches for her textbook. Liam SNAPS it shut and tosses it to the side.

LIAM
Good idea. Let's take a break.

Maya points to the door, her patience wearing thin.

MAYA
Get out, Liam.

LIAM
What do you mean, I just got here?

Liam jumps up, wrapping his arms around Maya's waist.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I miss you.

Maya tries to break free.

MAYA
Liam.

LIAM
(teasingly)
Come on.

MAYA
Liam, stop. LIAM (CONT'D)
Give me a kiss.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Stop!

Liam kisses Maya. She bites his lip. He cries out in pain, letting go.

Liam grabs his mouth, grimacing. He looks at the blood on his fingers.

LIAM
Fuck.

He squeezes his head.

LIAM (CONT'D)
(to self)
Get out of my head. Just...

Liam lets out a harrowing sigh. Maya's expression softens, seeing him suffering.

MAYA
Liam.

LIAM
I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

Liam hurries out, taking off down the hall.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Liam and Kyle lay sprawled on their beds, unconscious after a wild night.

Liam's phone RINGS. Neither of them moves. It keeps RINGING. Kyle groans, stirring awake.

KYLE
Liam.

Nothing. Kyle grabs a pillow and hurls it at Liam.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Yo!

It hits him in the face. He opens his eyes, disoriented.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Make it stop.

Liam answers his phone, half-asleep. Kyle rolls over, relieved.

LIAM
Hello.

INTERCUT - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM/DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Dr. Evans reads Liam's file.

DR. EVANS
Is this Liam?

LIAM
Yeah.

DR. EVANS
This is Dr. Evans.

Liam clears his throat.

LIAM
Who?

DR. EVANS
Dr. Evans. From the campus clinic.
Is this a bad time?

Liam sits up.

LIAM
Uh, no. No. What is it?

DR. EVANS
Well, you never booked a follow-up.
Is everything okay?

Liam glances at his desk drawer.

LIAM
Yeah, uh... yeah. You were right.
It was just stress.

DR. EVANS
So you didn't fill your
prescription?

Liam's eyes linger on the desk drawer, tension building...

DR. EVANS (CONT'D)
Hello? Liam?

Liam looks away.

LIAM
Sorry, what?

DR. EVANS
Did you fill your prescription?

LIAM
No. No, I didn't. I didn't need it.

Dr. Evans pauses, suspicious.

DR. EVANS
All right. Well --

LIAM
Sorry, I got to go. I'm gonna be
late for class.

Liam hangs up.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DR. EVANS
Hello...?

Dr. Evans slowly puts the phone down, concern etched on his face.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kyle rolls back over.

KYLE
Who was that?

Liam crawls back under the covers.

LIAM
No one.

Kyle sighs.

KYLE
I'm never drinking again.

Liam stares at his desk drawer, his expression shadowed with foreboding.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - BATHROOM -
SHOWER - DAY

Liam runs his head under the shower.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - BATHROOM - DAY

Liam dries himself off. Out of the corner of his eye, he notices something -- Kyle's razor. The blade glimmers in the light.

Liam stares at it nervously, his thoughts spiraling...

-- RING.

Liam flinches, looking at his phone. The caller ID reads: "Mom". Frightened, he sends the call to voicemail, grabs Kyle's razor, and flushes the blade down the toilet.

Liam looks at his reflection again, afraid of what he sees.

INT. LIBRARY - STUDY ROOM - NIGHT

Liam tiredly rubs his eyes, cramming for midterms. He looks across the room -- it's deserted except for one other STUDENT immersed in his studies.

The student vibrates in his seat, clearly stimmed out.

Liam looks at the mountain of notes in front of him, sighs, and goes over.

LIAM

Hey. Do you, um... do you know
where I can get some Adderall?

The student looks at Liam, wary.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Sorry. I just -- I thought --

STUDENT

Five bucks.

LIAM

What?

STUDENT

Five bucks.

LIAM

Oh.

Liam takes out his wallet and hands the student a five-dollar bill. The student reaches into his backpack, pulls out a plastic bag full of blue pills, and hands one to Liam.

STUDENT

Give it an hour.

LIAM

Thanks.

Liam goes back to his table, collects his things, and leaves the study room -- popping the pill on his way out.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - NIGHT

Liam sits at a computer, his books spread out around him, trying to focus...

He restlessly takes out his phone and opens his trading account. The balance reads: "↗\$75,994.08 (203.98%)".

VIOLENT THOUGHT - LIAM HITTING MAYA

Liam looks up from his bloody hand and marches toward Maya, his fist clenched.

BACK TO SCENE

Liam stares at the computer screen, tempted. His finger starts tapping the table, the Adderall kicking in. Unable to resist, he logs in and starts trading.

The digital clock on the wall reads: "2:47".

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - DAY

The time on the clock MORPHS into "9:53".

Students are now scattered throughout the Trading Lab.

Liam is passed out at the computer. Suddenly, his phone starts RINGING...

INT. EXAM CENTER - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

... Kyle waits for Liam to answer, watching students file into the exam room.

KYLE
(to self)
Jesus Christ.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - CONTINUOUS

... Liam jerks awake. He looks around, confused. Then, seeing the time --

LIAM
Oh, shit. Fuck. Fuck.

He quickly packs up, answering his phone.

INTERCUT - TRADING LAB/EXAM CENTER

LIAM (CONT'D)
I'm coming.

KYLE
Where are you?

LIAM
I'm coming.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - TRADING LAB - CONTINUOUS

Liam hangs up and scrambles for the door, forgetting to log off.

The computer screen shows a buy-to-open order for 1500 Tesla 1100 call options expiring November 19, 2021, at an ask price of \$42.49.

Liam screeches to a halt, runs back, and logs off.

EXT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - MAIN ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Liam bursts out of the School of Business and makes a beeline for the Exam Center.

INT. EXAM CENTER - EXAM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The students are seated, ready to write the exam. The HEAD TA gives them some final instructions --

HEAD TA
You have two hours and thirty minutes to complete the exam. All exam materials are to be labelled with your name and student number. At the end of the exam, remain in your seat until the exams have been collected.

Liam races into the exam room, drops his backpack, and takes a seat at an empty desk. Kyle shoots him a bewildered look. Maya stares.

The head TA looks at his watch --

HEAD TA (CONT'D)
It is now ten o'clock. You may begin.

The students OPEN their exams. Liam reads the first question:
 "Consider the following two-player normal-form game:

		Player 2	
		A	B
		1,1	3,3
Player 1	A	3,3	2,2
	B		

Determine all evolutionary stable strategies under symmetric role behavior."

A look of panic floods Liam's face.

INT. EXAM CENTER - EXAM ROOM - DAY

The head TA looks at his watch.

Liam hurriedly erases part of his answer to a question.

Kyle stares at the wall, finished writing. Maya checks her answers.

HEAD TA
 All right, times up. Pencils down.

The TAs start collecting the exams. Liam continues writing.
 The head TA notices --

HEAD TA (CONT'D)
 (sternly)
 Pencils down. Stop writing.

The head TA snatches Liam's exam.

Kyle gives Liam a thumbs-up. He nods, then looks off, worried...

INT. EXAM CENTER - LOBBY - DAY

Liam and Kyle shuffle out of the exam room --

KYLE

Well, that was easier than I expected. Hopefully we don't get screwed on the final.

Liam stares at the floor, deep in thought.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Hey, how many cookies did you give Barb?

LIAM

What? Uh... I don't know. Four.

KYLE

Four?

LIAM

Yeah, why? How many did you give her?

KYLE

Three. There were only six cookies, and they were indivisible.

LIAM

... Maybe I read it wrong.

Kyle stares at Liam, baffled. Then --

KYLE

Where the hell were you anyway?

LIAM

Oh, I, uh... I left my student card in the library.

KYLE

Seriously? I'm gonna have to buy you a Fanny pack.

MAYA (O.S.)

Liam.

Liam and Kyle turn around. Maya gives Liam the look -- *We need to talk.*

KYLE

(to Liam)

Good luck.

Liam goes over.

LIAM
If this is about the other night, I
--

 MAYA
It's not.

 LIAM
Then what?

Maya treads lightly.

 LIAM (CONT'D)
What?

 MAYA
I think you should talk to someone.

Liam stares at Maya, taken aback.

 LIAM
Thanks, but I'm fine.

 MAYA
You keep saying that but --

 LIAM
Because I am.

 MAYA
Look, there's obviously something
you're not telling me. I don't know
what, but you need to talk to
someone about it. Because whoever
this is, it isn't you.

 LIAM
(aggressively)
And who am I? Who am I?! Tell me.
I'm dying to know.

Maya takes a step back, frightened.

 LIAM (CONT'D)
Hmm? Maybe you should talk to
someone? I mean, you want it, you
don't want it. Make up your mind.

 MAYA
Wow. Okay. You know what? Just
forget I said anything.

Maya turns sharply, walking away. Liam grabs her wrist,
stopping her.

LIAM
Where are you going?

MAYA
Don't touch me!

Maya jerks her wrist free. Liam innocently raises his hands --

LIAM
What? I'm just talking. I'm
expressing my feelings.

MAYA
Fuck you, Liam. Stay the hell away
from me.

Maya stalks off. Liam yells after her --

LIAM
I'm feeling better already!

EXT. EXAM CENTER - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle chats with two STUDENTS --

KYLE
How many cookies did you give Barb?

STUDENT #4
Three.

STUDENT #5
Same. Three.

KYLE
Okay, good.

Just then, Maya comes charging their way.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Hey, Maya.

She keeps walking.

STUDENT #4
What's her problem?

Kyle knowingly watches her go.

LIAM (PRE-LAP)
I didn't want to believe that I was
going crazy...

INT. PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Liam taps the armrest, aggravated. He's now been seeing Dr. Andrews for several weeks and appears to be slowly coming to terms with his condition.

LIAM

... That I was what I was thinking.

Dr. Andrews looks at Liam's hand. He makes a fist.

DR. ANDREWS

Did you?

LIAM

I don't know, but I was scared to find out.

DR. ANDREWS

The truth can be scary, but it doesn't have to be. We fear the truth because of the pain or shame it may bring. Fear can protect us. It can remind us of what's important -- of the things we're afraid to lose. But driven by fear, we prolong feelings of helplessness and weakness. There is no escaping it. The only way out is through.

Liam looks inward, confronting his demons...

LIAM

It was the only time I felt safe.

DR. ANDREWS

When?

LIAM

Trading. If I was trading, the thoughts went away.

DR. ANDREWS

An idle mind is the devil's workshop, but if you let your emotions cling to certain behaviors, they can easily become obsessions.

LIAM

I wasn't obsessed. It was just a means to an end.

DR. ANDREWS
Just a means to an end?

Dr. Andrews gives Liam a dubious stare. He looks away, admitting that's not all it was.

DR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)
 What is it they say? Bears make money, bulls make money, but pigs, pigs get slaughtered...

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Liam sits at his desk, completely still, staring at his laptop.

His Economics midterm grade is posted. The grade reads: "27/90 (30%)".

Just then, a notification pops up at the bottom right corner of the screen: "Tesla Shares Plunge..."

Liam alertly CLICKS on it and skims the article. The words "Tesla headed for biggest two-day slide in 14 months" jump off the screen.

He scrolls down: "Musk's weekend tweets sparked investor concerns".

Liam shrinks the article and pulls up Musk's Twitter account. He reads his latest tweets:

"Elon Musk ✓ @elonmusk • 6 Nov 2021

I will abide by the results of this poll, whichever way it goes

Elon Musk ✓ @elonmusk • 6 Nov 2021

Much has been made lately of unrealized gains being a means of tax avoidance, so I propose selling 10% of my Tesla stock.

Do you support this?"

The poll results show: "57.0% Yes 42.1% No".

LIAM
 No, no, no, no, no. This can't be happening. This can't be happening.

Liam grabs his phone and checks the Tesla stock price: "1,053.36 -117.24".

LIAM (CONT'D)
(stands)
Shit... Shit!

He paces, tugging at his hair.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Fuck... What am I gonna do? What
the fuck am I gonna do?

The door OPENS. Kyle enters --

KYLE
(flinches)
Jesus... You scared me.

Liam straightens, pulling himself together.

LIAM
Sorry.

Kyle stares at him.

KYLE
(re: Maya)
Don't apologize to me.

Liam shamefully lowers his gaze.

LIAM
Is she okay?

KYLE
(insinuating)
Are you?

Liam glances at his phone. The Tesla stock price reads:
"1,052.97 -116.85".

LIAM
What?

KYLE
Are you okay?

Liam puts his phone away.

LIAM
Yeah.

KYLE
You sure?

LIAM

Yes. I'm fine. What else do you want me to say?

KYLE

I don't know. I just worry about you sometimes.

Kyle goes to the bathroom. Liam stares across the room, sick to his stomach.

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

Oh, bro! Did you hear? Musk did it again.

No response.

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

Liam?

He opens the door -- Liam is gone.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - MEN'S CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Liam stuffs his clothes into a locker and checks the Tesla stock price: "**1049.66** -123.94". He slams the locker door shut and heads to the weight room.

MONTAGE - LIAM'S WORKOUT

With each exercise, the stock price falls: "**1041.14** -132.46, **1026.14** -147.46, **1016.58** -157.02".

At one point, Liam looks desperately at the clock: "3:27". Just over half an hour until the market closes.

He finishes a set of seated shoulder presses, drops the dumbbells, and checks the Tesla stock price: "**1,021.29** - 152.31". A glimmer of hope. He pleads to his phone --

LIAM

Come on!

Students stare at him strangely. He notices, gets up, and briskly leaves the weight room.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - MEN'S CHANGING ROOM - DAY

A devastated Liam sits on the changing room bench, staring at his phone. The closing stock price reads: "**1023.50** -150.1".

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle sits at his desk, scribbling equations into a notebook.

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam stands outside their dorm room, dreading what comes next. He braces himself and enters.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kyle looks up --

KYLE

Where the fuck did you go?

Liam closes the door.

LIAM

Uh... The gym. Look, um --

KYLE

Oh, dude. Aren't you glad you listened to me? You can always count on Musk to shake things up. Never a dull moment. One hundred and forty billion down the drain in a matter of days. All from one tweet. That's gotta be some kind of record.

LIAM

Kyle --

KYLE

Someone really needs to take that guy's phone away. He's literally ruining lives. I mean, can you imagine if we had bought those calls? We would have been fucked.

Kyle grins.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry. What were you gonna say?

Liam can hardly look at him.

KYLE (CONT'D)

You didn't?

Liam looks away, draped in guilt. Kyle stands up, infuriated.

KYLE (CONT'D)
You fucking cunt!

LIAM
(profusely)
I'm sorry.

KYLE
(shoves Liam)
Who the fuck do you think you are?!

LIAM
I'm sorry. I fucked up.

KYLE
You went behind my back, asshole! I
trusted you!

LIAM
I know. I'm sorry.

KYLE
I told you to let it fucking go,
but you and your bruised ego just
wouldn't listen.

LIAM
I can get it back.

Kyle backs Liam into a corner.

KYLE
How much?

LIAM
Kyle --

KYLE
HOW MUCH?!

LIAM
... All of it.

Kyle stares at Liam, seething with rage. The silence is
deafening...

LIAM (CONT'D)
I can get it back.

Kyle punches Liam in the face, knocking him to the floor...

KYLE

You know, Maya tried to tell me something was wrong -- that I needed to talk to you... You want to know what I think? There's nothing wrong. You're just a piece of shit.

Liam lies there, gutted -- his worst fear is becoming a reality.

LIAM

I can get it back. I swear.

KYLE

I don't care what you do. Just leave me and my money out of it.

Kyle tears open the door and storms out. Liam calls after him, pleading --

LIAM

Kyle! Kyle! I'm sorry!

He staggers to the door, his voice cracking --

LIAM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry!

INT. LOAN AGENCY - OFFICE - DAY

Liam gazes at a framed grad photo of a TEENAGE BOY, his expression solemn.

LOAN OFFICER (O.S.)

That's my son.

Liam looks at the LOAN OFFICER sitting across from him.

LOAN OFFICER (CONT'D)

(proudly)

He just got into Rutgers -- starts in the fall. Any advice?

LIAM

... Yeah. Go to class.

The loan officer laughs. Liam smiles thinly.

LOAN OFFICER

So we offer a ten-year repayment term with a six-month grace period.

LIAM
What's the rate?

LOAN OFFICER
Eleven percent.

Liam winces.

LOAN OFFICER (CONT'D)
How much do you need?

LIAM
A lot. Like Seventy-five grand.

LOAN OFFICER
Over ten years... you can easily
pay that off. Depending on your
job, probably sooner.

Liam thinks it over...

LIAM
And you'll deposit the money
directly into my account?

LOAN OFFICER
We can have it sent to your school
if you want?

LIAM
(abruptly)
No.

The loan officer stares at Liam.

LIAM (CONT'D)
... No, that's fine. I'll take care
of it.

The loan officer smiles.

LOAN OFFICER
All right. I'll just need your
credit score.

LIAM
My credit score?

LOAN OFFICER
For the application.

LIAM
I don't have a credit card.

LOAN OFFICER

Oh. Okay. Well then, you'll just
need someone to co-sign.

Liam deflates.

LOAN OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

A family member. Anyone with good
credit and a steady income.

EXT. CAMPUS - QUAD - NIGHT

Liam sits on a dimly lit park bench, holding his phone. He stares at the name "Mom", rubbing his cross pendant. Closes the screen and looks away, teary-eyed.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Liam watches a PAWNBROKER examine his necklace. He places it on the jewelry display case --

PAWNBROKER

I'll give you nine hundred.

LIAM

That's it? That's twenty-four-carat
gold.

PAWNBROKER

(ruthlessly)

Nine hundred. Take it or leave it.

Liam glares at the pawnbroker, out of options.

LIAM

Fine.

The pawnbroker scoops up the necklace and takes it to the cash register.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Liam busts through the door and turns on his laptop, his finger anxiously tapping on the desk. The screen glows, displaying his bank account balance: "\$900.00".

He stares at the number, hesitating...

In too deep, he transfers every last dollar into his trading account and starts trading.

MONTAGE - LIAM TRADING

(Note: This montage contains a monologue from Liam that alternates between voice-over and on-screen.)

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM

LIAM (V.O.)

Now I was gambling. I had no plan or strategy. I just had to get it back. If I did everything would be okay. Like it never happened.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Liam gazes out the window in retrospect.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM

Liam yells at his stock, standing up.

LIAM

Come on!

He paces, watching it trend upward.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Liam looks at Dr. Andrews, coming to a realization --

LIAM

Day trading is not charting. It's not analysis. It has nothing to do with price patterns, trendlines, or indicators. Day trading is a constant battle with yourself. You are your biggest enemy, and the market knows it. That's what makes it so dangerous. Nothing's guaranteed.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM

Liam's stock approaches resistance. He rushes over to his laptop, eyes glued to the screen --

LIAM

Come on, come on. Fucking go!

He pounds his desk.

LIAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You can make every correct move --
buy at the perfect entry point,
time the pullback -- and still get
burned.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Liam stares into space, detached from his emotions.

LIAM
When your stock loses steam and the
market starts to tank, you try and
convince yourself it's just
temporary. But the market has a
mind of its own. What we want and
wish to happen won't change
anything. It couldn't care less.

END MONTAGE.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Liam watches his stock, adrenaline pumping. The price reads:
"126.44 +5.11".

Suddenly, it nosedives: **"119.88 -1.45"**. The color of the
number changes from green to red.

LIAM
What the fuck? No... No!

Again, the stock price drops: **"118.13 -3.19"**.

LIAM (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no, no. Not again. Not
again.

And again: **"117.86 -3.47"**. Liam collapses to his knees.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Stop. Stop! Please, stop! Don't do
this to me! Don't do this to me!!

The stock plummets: **"117.34 -3.99, 116.06 -5.27, 115.41 -**
5.92, 113.52 -4.89". The trendline forms a steep downward
slope. Liam begs to the stock --

LIAM (CONT'D)
Please! Please, stop!

It doesn't listen, continuing to fall: "113.09 -8.24, 112.79 -8.54". Liam screams in agony --

LIAM (CONT'D)
Noooooooo! Noooooooo!

He crumples to the floor, bawling uncontrollably.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Stop... Just stop. Please... Why?
Why are you doing this to me?

He curls into a ball, shattered...

INT. DORMITORY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kyle strides down the hallway, brimming with resentment.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door swings open. Kyle stiffens in shock. Liam's lifeless body lies on the floor.

KYLE
Liam?

Liam doesn't move. Kyle drops his bag and runs over.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Liam?!

He rolls Liam onto his back.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Liam, wake up. Wake up, man.

Kyle slaps Liam lightly on the face.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Wake up, Liam. Come on, wake up.
Wake up!

Liam groans, fading in and out of consciousness.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Fuck! Fuck, Liam! What did you do?

Kyle frantically searches around him. He spots an empty prescription bottle under Liam's desk, picks it up, and reads the label: "XANAX 0.25 MG".

KYLE (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ.

Kyle pulls out his phone and calls 911.

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Nine-one-one. What's your
emergency?

KYLE
I think my roommate's OD'd. He's
barely breathing.

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Okay, calm down.

KYLE
What do I do?

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Just calm down. What did he
take? KYLE (CONT'D)
What do I do?!

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)
What did he take?

KYLE
Uh, Xanax. Xanax!

EMERGENCY DISPATCHER (V.O.)
What's your address?

Liam lies limply in Kyle's arms as his panicked voice FADES OUT...

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Liam's eyelids FLUTTER open. White light BLURS his vision. The quiet MURMUR of voices and steady BEEPING of monitors fill his ears. He BLINKS. Hospital curtains SHIFT into focus.

Beside him, a NURSE records his vital signs. He opens his mouth to speak, coughing violently.

The nurse gasps, nearly dropping her tablet. She hurries out, disappearing through a slit in the curtains.

Liam looks around, scared and confused. The IV in his arm sends a jolt of panic through him.

-- The curtains OPEN. The DOCTOR steps in, cold and clinical, accompanied by the nurse. He speaks to Liam like a wayward child --

DOCTOR
What's your name?

The doctor shines a flashlight into Liam's eyes. He squints.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Hey. What's your name?

LIAM
(strenuously)
Liam... Liam.

DOCTOR
Liam what?

LIAM
McKay.

Liam coughs weakly.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Water... Water.

The doctor gestures to the nurse. She nods, leaving.

DOCTOR
(callously)
Do you realize what you've done?
You're lucky to be alive.

The nurse brushes past the doctor. She tilts a cup of water toward Liam's mouth. He thirstily takes a gulp, choking.

NURSE
Slow down. Slow down.

DOCTOR
Where'd you get the Xanax?

LIAM
What?

QUICK FLASHBACK - STOCK CRASH

The trendline of Liam's stock crashes.

BACK TO SCENE

Liam suddenly remembers...

LIAM
How'd I get here?

DOCTOR
Your roommate.

Liam stares at the doctor, piecing together what happened.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Have you tried this before?

LIAM
No.

DOCTOR
How long have you had suicidal
thoughts?

LIAM
I haven't. I mean, I have, but
that's not why I did it. I wasn't
trying to kill myself.

Liam grabs his head in torment.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I just wanted them to stop. They
won't stop. I don't want to do
these things.

The nurse looks at the doctor.

DOCTOR
Where's the crisis counselor?

NURSE
On her way.

DOCTOR
Send him to imaging for a CT scan.
That should tell us something.

Liam jerks upright --

LIAM
(to doctor)
You're not listening to me. I can't
get them out of my head. I'm gonna
hurt someone.

The nurse places a HAND on Liam's shoulder.

BROOKE (O.S.)
Liam, relax.

Liam looks at the nurse, only it's not her, it's Brooke,
wearing the nurse's scrubs. He screams in terror, recoiling --

LIAM
Ah! Get away from me!

Liam smacks Brooke's hand away, accidentally hitting her in the face. The doctor drops his clipboard.

DOCTOR
Hey!

The doctor lunges forward, pinning Liam down. He resists.

LIAM
Get off me! Get off!

SOMEONE grabs Liam's arm -- the nurse. He stares at her, horror in his eyes, realizing she's the one he hit.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Oh, shit. I'm sorry.

The doctor yells out --

DOCTOR
Can we get some help over here?!

Several NURSES rush in.

LIAM
I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. I
didn't mean it, I swear!

DOCTOR
Sedate him!

The nurses restrain Liam. He thrashes wildly.

LIAM
(shouting)
No. No, please. It was an accident.
Please. Don't. Don't.

One of the nurses stabs Liam with a needle. His mania begins to subside as the drug takes effect. Darkness CREEPS IN...

LIAM (CONT'D)
Just make them stop... Make them
stop.

Liam passes out.

INT. HOSPITAL - PSYCHIATRIC WARD - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Again, Liam's eyelids FLUTTER open. This time he's in a stark, dully lit room. He tries to move, but can't, restrained. Starts thrashing, terrified.

LIAM

Hey! Hey!

A HAND grabs his forearm. He turns, yelping.

LIAM'S MOM

It's okay, it's okay. It's me. It's Mom.

LIAM

Mom?

LIAM'S MOM

Yeah, baby.

LIAM

Mom?

LIAM'S MOM

It's me. It's all right. I'm here.

Liam calms down.

LIAM

Where am I?

LIAM'S MOM

You're safe. That's all that matters.

Liam rests his head on his pillow.

LIAM

I'm scared, Mom. I'm scared I'm gonna hurt someone. I wanted to tell you. I just didn't know how. I'm not a bad person.

LIAM'S MOM

Baby, of course not.

LIAM

I sold Dad's necklace.

LIAM'S MOM can't hide her surprise.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I didn't know what else
to do. I --

LIAM'S MOM
(stroking his hair)
Shh. It's okay. It's just a
necklace. You're my boy.

Liam breaks down in tears.

LIAM
They won't stop, Mom. I can't get
these thoughts out of my head. I've
tried, but I can't. What's wrong
with me?

LIAM'S MOM
I don't know, but we'll figure it
out... together. Like we always
have.

-- The door OPENS. Dr. Andrews enters.

DR. ANDREWS
Hi, Liam. My name is Dr. Andrews.

Liam looks at his mom. She gives him a reassuring smile.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Andrews gives Liam a moment. He sits in his chair, at
ease. Months have passed since he first started seeing her.

DR. ANDREWS
Now do you understand what happens
when you let your emotions take
control?

LIAM
Yeah. It's not me. It's my OCD.
They're just thoughts. They don't
control me.

DR. ANDREWS
You must learn to recognize them
for what they really are: symptoms
of your disease. The more you do,
the weaker they become. And the
sooner you can get on with your
life. OCD may mimic the feeling of
reality, but reality never mimics
the feeling of OCD.

LIAM

You make it sound so easy.

DR. ANDREWS

It's not. It's a constant uphill battle. But once you know what you're fighting, it becomes a lot easier.

Liam nods, accepting the challenge.

DR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

See you next week?

LIAM

Yeah.

Dr. Andrews jots down a few notes. Liam gets up and heads for the door. He pauses, turning back --

LIAM (CONT'D)

Hey, Dr. Andrews.

Dr. Andrews looks up. Liam smiles, appreciative.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Thanks.

DR. ANDREWS

You're welcome.

Liam leaves.

INT. DORMITORY - LIAM AND KYLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Kyle puts a book into his bag. Outside his window, the campus yard is covered in snow.

-- The door OPENS. Liam stands in the doorway. Kyle looks at him. Neither says a word. Then --

LIAM

Hey.

KYLE

Hey.

Liam closes the door and places his bag on his bed -- everything is exactly as he had it.

LIAM

So, uh... I'm not sure how much they told you, but, um --

KYLE

Enough.

(beat)

You should have said something.

LIAM

I know. I'm sorry.

KYLE

You okay?

LIAM

I will be.

KYLE

Do I need to leave the light on?

LIAM

Uh...

Kyle cracks a smile.

KYLE

Too soon?

LIAM

Probably, but that's never stopped you before.

KYLE

(chuckles)

No, I guess not.

LIAM

I'm gonna pay you back.

KYLE

You're damn right you will. Every last penny.

LIAM

It might take me a while.

KYLE

That's fine. I know where you live.

Kyle slings his bag over his shoulder and heads out. Liam's eyes linger on the open door. Just as he looks away, Kyle reappears --

KYLE (CONT'D)

You coming?

Liam smiles, grabs his notebook, and catches up.

INT. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS - HALLWAY - DAY

Liam and Kyle turn down the hallway.

KYLE

What did the guidance counselor
say?

LIAM

I have to go to summer school.

KYLE

Fuck, that sucks.

LIAM

Yeah.

KYLE

Hey, it could be worse. At least
you'll still graduate on time.

LIAM

I guess.

Liam stops.

KYLE

What?

Kyle follows Liam's stare. Maya stands across from them. Kyle takes that as his cue --

KYLE (CONT'D)

(to Liam)

I'll save you a seat.

He goes into the lecture hall.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Hi, Maya.

MAYA

Hey.

A beat.

MAYA (CONT'D)

How are you?

LIAM

I've been worse.

MAYA

Yeah, I heard what happened.

Liam looks down.

MAYA (CONT'D)
I thought about calling, but I
didn't know what to say.

LIAM
Me too.
(beat)
I'm sorry... for everything.

Maya nods forgivingly.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I've been talking to someone.

MAYA
That's good.

LIAM
Yeah, it's helping... a lot. Um...
Maybe -- I mean, if you want -- I
don't know. Maybe... maybe we could
talk sometime?

Maya smiles tenderly.

MAYA
I'd like that.

LIAM
Cool...
(gestures to lecture
hall)
Do you wanna?

MAYA
Yeah.

Maya heads inside. Liam follows her -- at peace.

FADE OUT:

THE END