

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE

Written by

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EXT. THEATER - DAY

--PART 1--

The front of the "Film Noir Cinema". A gated metal fence goes around the street corner. A long window a door and a poster face the street, a pillar marks the corner- PETE, late 20s, white, sitting against it in baggy clothes with a backpack and skateboard. PARAM, South Indian, early 20s, stands at the front of the line with nice clothes and a collapsible selfie stick. Next is ALICE, black, 11-14 y.o. girl, hanging out on the railing itself instead of against the building, drawing something on a notebook propped against the rail. IRENE, white, 40s, in a wasp-y outfit, is in some kind of silent conflict with JAMES, black, 30s, male, in plain clothes, uncomfortable and texting/playing on his phone. A couple stands behind them: ROBIN, white-passing Latina, late 30s, in a signature leather jacket and denim jeans, and AHANU, Latino/indigenous, 30s, male, in a high-end suit with a nice watch.

A truck LURCHES past LEFT-TO-RIGHT, HITS a bird just below frame, rounds the corner and continues to DRIVE away. Alice turns to see it, looks around for anyone else who noticed. Robin and Ahanu glance and glance away. Pete meets her eye.

PETE

Yeah.

Another couple arrives FAR CAMERA LEFT- JESSICA, "Asian Baby Girl", Korean woman, early 20s, festival/punk attire, and BIANCA, Filipina woman, early 20, in a notably conformist turtleneck and slacks. They take their oblivious place in line, performatively cuddling, hands in each others pockets.

Robin and Ahanu move half a step away from all that.

PARAM

What's up everybody, I'm here just outside... "The View From Outside."
Woah. Mind blown. Alright, we're going in cold on this. But based on the poster, I'm thinkin like a very stark but like, very understated chill but kind of surreal vibe.

--PART 2--

Entering from behind the line FAR CAMERA LEFT is TIFFANY and SPROCKET, a mother in her 30s and her young child, any race or ethnicity.

PARAM

You know what I'm sayin? Heightened, but like, grounded. Reminiscent of like, Tarkovsky.

TIFFANY

Hi mom gang! Taking Sprocket to his first lil indie film here, it looks nice and simple, but even if it's got some, uh...

She glances over at Param... continues her video.

PARAM

Or Kubrick, or Kaufman. Or maybe, it sucks? Who knows.

TIFFANY

Even if it's got a complicated experience in store for him, his therapist says parents are practicing "random ambush exposure therapy" where they let their children encounter what they want to encounter and react the way that they want to react. I guess we'll see... Oh, and by the way, comments are disabled on the channel, but if you want to comment on the photos we take today, head over to tiktok or the gram..! Those memories and many more are on our page @tiffany-twinings-and-sprocket-twinings-jones-explore-the-world-together.

Param talks into his camera as out-of-frame he draws the wallet smoothly, dogears a 20 and puts the wallet back. She's clearly running out of words. He's not.

PARAM

I'm really curious to see whether indie film is going to change its conventions with the lowering of costs. Already we're seeing more of that... The simple sets and silences we're used to seeing out of Cannes and Tribeca are coming out alongside these massive new cinema-pro-level adventure pieces, what Scorsese called "theme park cinema..."

Tiffany can't help but notice he's still talking. She pivots to cut him out of the frame.

TIFFANY

(frustrated)

Link below. Don't forget to like and subscribe! We now accept cashapp! Our giver of the week gets to sign his school shoes!

PARAM

And I for one am totally psyched at the level of quality I'm seeing from some of them. Fairytale, tree-people, high fantasy costumes, horror, action, sci-fi, but I for one still want to keep my roots in the classical style, ya know what I'm sayin..? I'm here for a real duct-tape-and-toothpicks, lightbulb-from-the-ceiling indie picture, let's go.

Bianca and Jessica continue making public displays of affection as two more people approach from DOWN CAMERA RIGHT: CHERYL, white woman, mid-to-late 60s, prim, glances at the dead bird as they pass. STEWART, white man, 70s, does not.

CHERYL

(sympathetic)

Aww.

KHADIJA, Arab woman, early 20s, student, Muslim garb from the waist up, American apparel from the waist down, approaches from around the corner CAMERA RIGHT as BILLY, a militant white supremacist (man), mid-30s, in jeans and a button-up rolled at the sleeves, tattoos from the middle ages, and jackboots, stays right over her shoulder the whole time, saying something in a LOW VOICE. No one sees yet.

Robin and Ahanu share an amused, exasperated look as Bianca and Jessica continue making public displays.

Irene cranes her neck to look over Alice's shoulder.

IRENE

Huh. I don't get it.

James, Alice and Pete all look at her somewhat surprised.

--PART 3--

Bianca's phone rings, the PDA is interrupted. Bianca checks her phone, JESSICA tries to read over her shoulder. She ASKS Bianca something [unclear], who calmly RESPONDS, to which JESSICA SCOFFS and the two start a LOW-VOICED argument.

Robin and Ahanu share another more judging, smirking glance.

Tiffany glares at the lesbians. She puts her son down a little too fast and cuts the video. She COLLAPSES the selfie stick loudly, folding and SHOVING it in her bag, grabs an iPad for Sprocket.

Cheryl and Stewart see the iPad childhood in front of them and exchange a look. Param stops talking but continues to work: b-roll, selfies, sound. Cheryl approaches the mother.

CHERYL

Oh what's wrong dear?

Tiffany hesitates, surprised.

TIFFANY

Huh? Oh, no I just-

She visibly decompresses a little. She looks at the PARAM, continuing to film and work.

TIFFANY (cont'd)

He doesn't need this.

Cheryl doesn't quite know what to do with this, but she puts a warm and supportive hand on her arm. Tiffany squeezes Cheryl's hand and smiles back.

CHERYL

Well you're a trooper.

She turns, easily getting to the level of the child. Stewart reacts to this immediately, doesn't like it.

CHERYL (cont'd)

And you're being very patient. I just so really like your shoes, Mister. What's your na-?

STEWART

It's a real shame about that bird.

Cheryl looks over at her husband then back to Tiffany and smiles, standing back up like "ignore him".

Demetrios OPENS the window and checks the line. Param makes sure he's getting it on camera: himself, Pete, Alice, Irene and James turn to see as Demetrios...

IRENE

Hi! Do you offer VIP services here?

...SHUTS the window. Pete SNORTS, Alice smirks. James, still looking at his phone, laughs with his eyes.

IRENE (cont'd)

Hey!

Hearing the snort, she turns on James by mistake.

IRENE (cont'd)

You think that's funny!? Am I just a big joke to you??

James, eyes still glued to his phone, tenses up in response to Irene's behavior.

JAMES

How am I supposed to respond to that?

Khadija and Billy's volume INCREASE enough for Cheryl and Stewart to "clutch their pearls" in front of them.

Sprocket plays on the tablet while Tiffany checks her social media.

BILLY

I told you take it off.

LOUD enough for heads to turn but not loud enough for all heads to turn. Stewart and Cheryl observe furtively, Pete hears but there are too many people in the way from his height for him to see. Param decides not to engage.

Billy's hand starts to slide up Khadija's hijab and she WRIGGLES free of his hands, sliding up just past Cheryl and Stewart.

KHADIJA

Hey, don't touch me! This man is assaulting me! Yeah, this man with the white supremacist tattoos, he just tried to take off my hijab.

Alice, Stewart, Cheryl, and Pete all saw it.

--PART 4--

A lock CLICKS... The door opens, and tension breaks.

JAMES

(to Param, Everyone)

Alright everybody quiet on set.

PARAM
(laughing)
That's what cuts are for.

One by one:

PARAM (cont'd)
Okay fam. This guy looks like he's a
little crashed out, take a look.

Param shoves his camera in Pete's face with one hand.

PARAM (cont'd)
Alright man, here you go.

He pulls his 20 back out with the other and sticks it in the
cup, turning the camera to film himself as he goes...

PARAM (cont'd)
Gotta pay it forward guys, you know
what I'm sayin? Lucky to be here, too
blessed to be stressed and I gotta
spread it around.
(to Pete)
Hey dude what's your social?

Pause.

PETE
You want my social security number?

PARAM
No man like insta.

DEMETRIOS
Keep the line moving please.

Param turns the camera to Demetrios.

PARAM
Oh, right on, sorry! Okay, keepin' it
movin, okay,
(to Pete)
Hey good luck...!
(to camera)
Keep' it movin'...!

...and can be heard practically YELLING in the theater...

Alice closes her notebook and stuffs it in an oversize
pocket, Irene pauses momentarily at the threshold, not
wanting to pass him, inching her feet around his cup, turning
her ankle slightly...

IRENE
Someone could trip.

...James doesn't even look up from his phone...

JAMES
(quietly,
sarcastically)
Oh no.

Robin kneels down to Pete's level and offers him a joint.

ROBIN
Hey brother, you want some medicine?

PETE
Nah I'm good thanks.

Ahanu gestures Bianca and Jessica ahead, he and Robin follow.

Tiffany looks up from her phone to pull her oblivious child to her left side, away from Pete as they pass.

After mom and child, Stewart holds Cheryl slightly-more-tightly as the two pass Pete. Khadija drops a QUARTER into the cup as she passes.

PETE (cont'd)
(dryly)
Thanks.

Billy KICKS over the cup as he passes.

PETE (cont'd)
Yeah. Thank you.

They all walk into the theater lobby. We can HEAR them indistinctly, FADING as they go further in.

Demetrios glances out the door and meets Pete's eyes momentarily as he's cleaning up his cup. The front door SHUTS. The light on the posterbox FLICKERS audibly.

--PART 5--

The street is calm, the theater is quiet from outside at first. Then a strange hum of noises can be heard, MUFFLED in the beginning and then LOUDER, introducing additional layers one at a time: film sounds, pigeons mixed with tropical birds, heavy construction, antique steam ships, socks rubbing on carpet and shoes over hardwood floor. Chewing. Heavy scribbling of pen on paper until it starts to tear. Brown noise and cosmic radio frequencies.

The ambiguous cries of laughter or tears, an ascending shepherd's tone, scales on musical instruments. As this strange voluminous noise continues to expand and ring out, DRUMS beat out a steady rhythm that begins to ACCELERATE. Ocean waves, wind in leaves and wheat, slowed down water droplets, sped up water droplets and rain crossfade over each other.

The sounds continue to BUILD, OVERLAP and start to CLASH, alarming Pete. He goes from casually listening, to intently listening, to looking deathly serious.

--PART 6--

The front door OPENS. Robin and Ahanu step out, jackets swapped, calm and happy. Robin only has eyes for Ahanu. He reflects her love back as he remains open to everything around him. They stand by Pete briefly as Ahanu takes off his fine watch and drops it in the cup, surprising Pete.

PETE

Woah.
(pulling out the watch)
Are you serious?

Ahanu smiles genuinely at Pete. Then the couple open the front gate and takes each others hand and walk around the theater to the right and up the sidewalk.

Bianca and JESSICA rush out of the theater. Bianca has her phone out and JESSICA tries to look at the phone. Bianca makes a phone call.

JESSICA

Are you serious? You're doing this now? Who are you calling?

Latin Couple EXIT, disappearing into the distance frame right, hands in each others' pockets.

BIANCA

Huh? Hey, Stas, just calling you back-

JESSICA SNATCHES the phone out from Bianca's hand and ends the call. Bianca tries to snatch her phone back.

JESSICA

You couldn't even go an hour!

James exits unfazed, tossing an empty popcorn bag in the can.

BIANCA

Why do you need to be the center of the universe? The world doesn't stop for you! There are other people!

James takes out his phone and walks off CAMERA LEFT.

Billy steps out the theater with his shoulders a bit hunched forward. Pete looks up at him. Billy rolls down his sleeves to cover his tattoos, suddenly really weirdly shy.

Param comes out without filming, kneels by Pete again.

PARAM

Hey, sorry about shoving a camera in your face before.

PETE

That's cool man you're harmless.

PARAM

Ok cool, I just wanted to-

PETE

No. You're good.

Param stands up, walks up to the edge of the sidewalk and slowly starts recording again.

PARAM

I don't know what to say guys. I feel like my expectations were completely irrelevant to the experience I just had. The ignorant once appeared wise, the weak appeared strong, everything old is new again. Sorry, I don't know. I don't know if I would have come if I knew. I'm glad I did, but I don't know if I would have.

Pete hears this and his eyes go kind of wide.

Khadija exits the theater with Irene close beside her. The two walk past Billy by the entrance, who stares at the ground, hands in his pockets.

IRENE

...You know, I understand your generation has a tough road ahead, I do. But honestly it's a relief every time I see someone your age even remotely responsible.

KHADIJA

Thank you, that means a lot. You know, it's not always I can be seen by someone your age.

IRENE

Aw.

--PART 7--

Tiffany comes out with Sprocket tightly in her arms as Cheryl is frantically trying to stay inside their personal space. Stewart is very nervously trying to pull her back, MUTTERING.

CHERYL

So I heard you say something before about your, whatever, donor of the week signing Sprocket's shoes, and I was just wondering if I could get a good look-

Tiffany is actively rejecting Cheryl's advance, alarmed. Tiffany turns on her.

TIFFANY

I need you to give us some space, ok? You're frightening my child.

CHERYL

Now you want what's best for "your child"? Your reality TV star child?

Sprocket is burying half themselves in their mother's shoulder, obviously scared. Tiffany continues gliding them away. Cheryl, in a flutter of desperation, gets her phone out of her pocket to take a picture of the kid's shoes. Unfortunately, she doesn't see Param filming.

Param, filming with the front camera on his phone, was able to witness the whole interaction between Tiffany, Sprocket, Cheryl, and Stewart. He turns around, still filming. At this point, Alice walks out of the theater, but at her height the view is blocked by people.

PARAM

Woah. Did you just take a picture of that kid's feet?

Tiffany instantly wheels around for the second time. She gently puts Sprocket down right behind her with her arm keeping him close with her other arm free.

Everyone else standing outside the theater turns their attention to the commotion.

TIFFANY

What?

CHERYL

No!

IRENE

Woah. Okay, no. You can't do that.

TIFFANY

You absolutely can't do that...

CHERYL

I didn't!

PARAM

It's on camera. I'm not guessing, I was looking at the screen.

TIFFANY

...Delete that picture right now or I'm calling the police.

Irene holds up her phone and makes a few keystrokes. People have shuffled around enough for Alice to witness.

IRENE

Oh honey you've got your hands busy, you just say the word and I'm dialing.

Tiffany reaches for Cheryl's phone. Cheryl moves the phone out of reach and pushes Tiffany with her other hand.

CHERYL

You don't know what you're talking about!

IRENE

(obviously)

That's assault.

PARAM

(sarcastically)

Good work. Yes it is.

STEWART

(to Cheryl)

Stop it!

Stewart tries to grab Cheryl's arm and she throws it off. At this point her and Tiffany's body language becomes confrontational and aggressive. She grabs at Cheryl. Billy instinctively gets between them.

BILLY

Okay-

TIFFANY

Your husband's right. You need to stop this.

CHERYL

I didn't do anything!

PARAM

Again, I have it on camera.

Cheryl shoves her phone in her pocket.

TIFFANY

Show me the picture. Delete it in front of me, right now. Do it! Do it right now!

PARAM

If you're just tuning in, this older lady took a picture of a kid's feet without her consent...

Cheryl gets increasingly agitated.

PARAM (cont'd)

Now the mom is obviously not too happy about that.

CHERYL

Shut your fucking mouth!

PARAM

(gleefully)

Excellent.

She takes a SWING at Tiffany and it CLIPS Billy in the ear, who puts his hand to his head like "Ow".

PARAM (cont'd)

Oh shit. She took out "American History X". Oh yeah, that guy yells at Muslim people, he did it earlier.

Khadija stands frozen and Irene's eyes are fixed. Tiffany and Cheryl pause, and it's in that moment Stewart slides his hand into Cheryl's pocket, PULLS the phone out, unlocks it, turns the screen to Social Media Mom and deletes it.

STEWART

There. You see? You got it, it's done. It's over. We're leaving.

Cheryl is enraged. She reaches for Stewart's pocket.

CHERYL

Oh yeah? I see. What's on your phone?

PARAM

Woahhhh!

Stewart SNATCHES her by the wrist and the bicep with her hand still in his pocket.

CHERYL

(lower)

Come on, let's find out. What?

PARAM

Yes please, sir, no honestly you gotta show us now, I'm dying to know.

STEWART

(firmly)

There's nothing on my phone. We're leaving.

He's stronger than her and half-DRAGS her away.

CHERYL

(fading)

Let go of me...

STEWART

(lower)

Come on.

--PART 8--

PARAM

Photo finish. Gold.

Stewart and Cheryl exit.

IRENE

What!? You saw what just happened and you're excited about it?

PARAM

I'm excited I got it on camera. Are you kidding? I just collected evidence of a crime, where have you been?

Irene suddenly brushes past Khadija and Param and beelines for Tiffany.

IRENE

Oh my god, I don't know what is wrong with that generation.

TIFFANY

It's fine.

IRENE

No it is not! I can't believe, I mean I've just never seen anything like it. In broad daylight, in public?

TIFFANY

Oh you mean those-

IRENE

It's like they think they can just get away with whatever they want. What is wrong with those people?

Billy is just standing there, not knowing what to do, surrounded by people he doesn't feel himself hating at this moment but that he feels vulnerable around regardless.

Param lets the selfie stick hang at his side. Without noticing Khadija, he approaches Tiffany.

PARAM

Hey you ok?

TIFFANY

Yeah I'm fine, we're just going home.

PARAM

That's- yeah, right on. Hey, are you Sprocket's mom? I saw your channel, that you were uh...

Irene, Tiffany and Param EXIT, STILL TALKING.

TIFFANY

Really?

PARAM

Yeah I just started following last week. Sorry I took up the space, I didn't know any other influencers would be here and I was on a roll, I didn't mean to...

TIFFANY

Oh yeah, no, that's ok...

PARAM

...I tried to wrap early but then you stopped so I guess it just kept rolling.

TIFFANY

No honestly, it's fine.

PARAM

Would you maybe want to film some content together?

TIFFANY

Uh, sure. Yeah.

It's just Khadija and Billy. Khadija startles when she notices (she doesn't notice Alice) and leaves quickly.

Billy, uncomfortable in his skin, leaves in a different direction, leaving Pete and Alice by the entrance.

A moment of silence passes between them. Wordlessly, Alice exits through the original gate on the left.

Another moment of silence as Pete is alone.

She reenters the frame, now on the outside of the rail walking around the building towards Pete.

She TEARS a page out of her notebook and lets it fall by the Pete's cup. She's almost too far...

PETE

Hey.

She stops. He picks up the drawing and looks at it, gesturing with it.

PETE (cont'd)

Thank you very much.

Alice nods casually and leaves.

--PART 9--

Another moment of silence. Demetrios comes out.

PETE

You shouldn't have.

DEMETRIOS

You shouldn't even be here.

A PAUSE.

PETE

Word.

There is some agreement on that point. Pete slowly PACKS up his shit and leaves frame, crossing to other side of the fence. Demetrios CLOSES up shop, and Pete re-crosses frame as he leaves.

--PART 10--

The street is empty and the light in the sign FLICKERS audibly again.

CUT TO BLACK.