

X P L T R

by

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INT. X'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT

X, early 30s, soaks in a bubble bath, five o'clock shadow and beer belly rest just beneath the suds. His smartphone hovers above the water, parades blue light across his face.

X (V.O.)

Part of the problem with internet sleuthing is the constant distractions.

X breaks his trance long enough to pull his eyes from the phone screen, study the tips of his fingers--pruned. He kicks the drain on the tub, the water level recedes.

X (V.O.)

I ran this bath over an hour ago, told myself I'd have a new mark by the time I got out.

He's back in the rabbit hole...TikToks of amateur chefs, Instagram reels of scantily clad women in yoga poses, basketball highlights, lightsaber duels...blue light bounces off his face like a human projector screen.

The tub's drain gobbles down the rest of the bath water.

INT. X'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

X leaves the bathroom in a shaggy robe, grabs a half empty gatorade bottle off the counter, imbibes. He cracks a window, lifts the pipe from its spot on the ledge, smokes what's left of the of the ashy pot. Exhale...swig of gatorade.

He claims a seat on his throne--a small desk positioned in the crevice between his living room couch and the radiator. Like X has summoned a pocket dimension to sit at and do work.

X (V.O.)

Yeah, the apartment's small. But it's *mine*.

He places his smartphone in the display next to his laptop, goes back and forth between screens like an NSA hacker.

X (V.O.)

I've worked out an arrangement with my land lord where I'm paying out the ass on rent, but it goes against the cost of the apartment, which I will eventually buy.

INT. LANDLORD'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

LANDLORD, 60s, unkempt, sits in the dark on his toilet. He scrolls through the Instagram profile of a *very young lady* with one hand, the other hand bobs just below the frame.

X (V.O.)

This is an arrangement I insisted on,
not one my landlord agreed to
willingly.

He clicks the MESSAGE button on the young lady's profile, DMs her: "Hello beautiful, how old are you?"

X (V.O.)

Finding his vulnerabilities was as
simple as listening to the chatter of
my neighbors, deducing that he likes
to DM the young pretty ones, and then
prescribing a basic catfish.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - FLASHBACK

X smokes a cigarette, receives the DM from his landlord.

He messages back: "I'm 16, hbu?"

X (V.O.)

Landlord's wife probably wouldn't care
as much as he thinks she would. He
doesn't need to know that though.

X sends Landlord a fake selfie of a teenaged girl.

X (V.O.)

My social accounts provide the
leverage. I began exposing cheaters
and liars and the followers came in
droves. It wasn't long before they
started sending me the goods, exposing
one another in my DMs.

INT. X'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On X's phone screen he pulls up the Instagram profile of a young man named MARK. Mark's posts imply *former frat star*.

X (V.O.)

I still remember the first time I got
a thousand likes...you can't pay for
that kind of validation.

On X's laptop, he pulls up Mark's twitter feed. On his phone he scrolls through Mark's Instagram profile, studies the handles that routinely *like* and *comment* on Mark's posts. @CutiePie77 routinely comments with a heart emoji.

X finds an Instagram post of Mark proposing to a WOMAN tagged as @GymSquirrel111, pulls her account up on his laptop. On his phone, he continues scrolling through the comments of support and congrats on Mark's proposal post.

X (V.O.)

A simple cross reference will let us know if I'm onto something.

X searches the accounts that Gym Squirrel follows on Instagram, types in @CutiePie77--nothing comes up.

X (V.O.)

Bingo.

X scrolls through CutiePie's Instagram profile: Yoga poses, pilates selfies, pre-dinner food pics, walks in the park, amateur concert footage, and lots of chai lattes.

X (V.O.)

This is how early stage investigations go. Overlap is what I'm looking for...or the complete absence of.

He stops on a selfie of CutiePie drinking a chai latte, notices the geo-tag: BERT'S ORGANIC TEA AND COFFEE SPA.

X (V.O.)

It's all quite boring, really. Hone in on an affair. Find their secret watering hole--

INT. BERT'S ORGANIC TEA AND COFFEE SPA - DAY

--X sits at a discreet corner table, subtly keeps tabs on CutiePie three tables away. Mark enters. CutiePie can't contain her excitement. Their embrace looks positively incriminating on X's camera phone.

X (V.O.)

She used to ask me to tell her about my work. As if there were something romantic about private investigations. That's not how it is though. At least, that's not how it used to be.

X rises, scrolls through the blackmail pics, exits the cafe.

EXT. BERTS ORGANIC TEA AND COFFEE SPA - DAY

X strolls down the sidewalk, lights a cigarette.

X (V.O.)

There's irony in things heating up
after she went cold on me. But I
suppose this would all make more sense
if I started at the beginning.

INT. PUB, TABLE - NIGHT

X sips whisky with his right hand, STUDIES A TINDER PROFILE
with his left. His DMs with **PRETTY STRANGER** are filled with
winking emojis and LOLs. A shadow engulfs him--he looks up
from his phone--Pretty Stranger stands before him.

X (V.O.)

That very. First. Millisecond.

Pretty Stranger reaches her hand out. X looks at his phone,
looks at his whisky, places the whisky down on a ledge,
shakes her hand.

INT. PUB, BAR TOP - NIGHT

They sit at the bar, cheers a couple of tall beers.

X (V.O.)

It's hard to explain...when you meet
someone. Sometimes you just *know*.

INT. ARCADE - NIGHT

X and Pretty Stranger play arcade games, lean against one
another, faces glow in neon lights.

X (V.O.)

She encouraged me to start the
account. She was always encouraging
me.

She covers his eyes with one hand, manipulates the arcade
game's joy stick with the other, wins the game. Before he can
complain, she pulls him in by his shirt, they kiss.

X (V.O.)

Knowing someone in three
dimensions...it's incomparable.

INT. X'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

X sends Mark a DM featuring the incriminating pictures of him and CutiePie.

Three dots pop up in the chat...

X (V.O.)

As far as the account goes, I think she just saw it as something for me to do. A way to keep me out of trouble.

Mark's message reads: "What's it gonna cost to make this go away, permanently?"

X (V.O.)

But trouble's got a way of finding me.

X gets a Twitter notification:

"Burgeoning Actress Found Slain."

He clicks on it...nearly drops his phone when he sees the image that accompanies the headline.

X

What the--

It's a picture of Pretty Stranger.

X (V.O.)

Now, I know what you're thinking...another story about a dead girl? What is this, a Christopher Nolan film?

X puts his phone on the display next to his laptop, floods both screens with his socials, downloads as much instant information as his eyes can handle.

X (V.O.)

But you know the thing about Christopher Nolan films?

Blue light bounces across his face.

X (V.O.)

They're fucking awesome.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - DAY

X climbs onto his fire escape, puts a cigarette in his mouth.

X (V.O.)
I started smoking cigarettes to quit
vaping. Couldn't tell you why I
started vaping in the first place.
Perhaps that's my next mystery.

He struggles to light the cigarette--his Bic won't produce a
flame.

X (V.O.)
In the meantime, I've got something
more pressing to get to the bottom of.

He places the Bic on the outer window ledge, fishes a
matchbook from his wallet.

X (V.O.)
The first thing I do is check the
veracity of the post.

He strikes a match.

X (V.O.)
"@Show Biz Wiz" was the first to break
the news. The Twitter account doesn't
have many followers. No blue check
either--not that that's worth much
these days. The corresponding
Instagram account gets a little more
action.

He lights his smoke.

X (V.O.)
Comment section seems legitimate. The
trick is to look for a bot-rate of
higher than twenty-five percent.
Better bots can be tougher to spot,
though. Even for me.

He lets the cigarette hang between his lips, climbs down the
fire escape.

X (V.O.)
To be absolutely certain, I'll need
some face time with The Algorithm.

INT. WEED DISPENSARY - DAY

X enters a recreational marijuana dispensary.

White walls. Touchscreens. Weed and edibles and vaporizers behind glass cabinets.

X (V.O.)

I used to buy my pot from a paraplegic rabbi who said he was the second-coming of Christ.

X approaches the counter furthest from the front door.

X (V.O.)

Now you can't walk ten feet in this city without passing by one of these storefronts.

X

Hey Al.

THE ALGORITHM, early 30s, nose ring, eyebrow ring, cartilage piercings, hits a handheld vape from behind the checkout counter, doesn't look up from her computer screen.

THE ALGORITHM

What are you doing here?

X

Maybe I just need some OG Kush.

THE ALGORITHM

Heard you stopped smoking.

X

No you didn't.

X (V.O.)

If she did it'd be true.

THE ALGORITHM

I saw the post about your Pretty Stranger. I assume that's why you're here.

X

I have to warn you against assumptions Al, they can be deadly in my line of work.

She finally looks up from her screen, grins at him.

THE ALGORITHM

And what exactly is your line of work these days?

X (V.O.)

If you think she's being stand offish, it's because she no longer approves of my occupational undertakings.

X

I just need to know if it's legit. The account.

The Algorithm glances past X at her colleagues.

SIGHS.

THE ALGORITHM

Fine. Buy some pot, though. Or you'll get me in trouble.

X browses the marijuana selection.

The Algorithm types into her laptop, fingers strike keys a mile a minute.

THE ALGORITHM

I'll start with the comments sections.

X

Which comments section?

THE ALGORITHM

All of them.

X (V.O.)

She's tapped into the feed. Has been for as long as I've known her. Some say she was born this way.

THE ALGORITHM

She doesn't look like a bot.

X

No. But something's not quite *normal* either--wait, did you say...*she*?

The Algorithm looks up at him, shrugs.

THE ALGORITHM

Yeah, I don't know. I guess it's the cadence of her posts. I suppose it could be a man--

X

I thought it was a woman, too. Just wanted to hear you say it.

THE ALGORITHM

Who's being stand offish now?

X arches an eyebrow.

X (V.O.)

Did I call her that out loud or in my head?

THE ALGORITHM

Show Biz Wiz geo-tagged her location a few times.

X

That was the second thing I looked for--

THE ALGORITHM

She untagged them after the fact.

X

Smart girl.

THE ALGORITHM

Not smart enough.

The Algorithm jots down some information on a post-it note.

She removes a **vape pen** from a hidden compartment behind the counter, hands it to X with the post-it.

THE ALGORITHM

This one's on the house. I recommend not operating any heavy machinery.

X

I usually try to keep things light.

X pockets the vape pen, looks down at the note:

"Solstice Gym, corner of Adams and Front Street.

EXT. SOLSTICE GYM - DAY

X looks up at the street signs for Adams and Front Street.

X (V.O.)

Solstice is one of those institutions that makes me wonder how there could possibly be so many one percenters in this city. The monthly membership fees alone run a few hundred bills.

X approaches the gym's front doors.

INT. SOLSTICE GYM, FRONT DESK - DAY

X approaches the gym's front desk.

X

Hi there, I was hoping I could use today as a trial run and see if I'd like to join your gym.

The FRONT DESK ASSOCIATE doesn't look up from the TikTok videos that have him entranced.

FRONT DESK ASSOCIATE

Just fill this out.

He slides a clipboard across the counter to X, who takes the pen dangling from a string and writes "Sam Spade" in the name section, checks off some random boxes, slides the clipboard back across the desk.

Front Desk Associate chuckles at his phone, places a guest badge on the counter.

FRONT DESK ASSOCIATE

This is good for one hour.

X picks up the badge.

INT. SOLSTICE GYM, CARDIO AREA - DAY

X puts the badge down, pedals a stationary bike that gives him a good view of the rest of the gym.

X (V.O.)

If Show Biz Wiz is here, I'll have to flush her out. Shouldn't be too hard.

X pulls Instagram up on his phone.

He goes to Show Biz Wiz's profile, sends it a DM that reads:
"Good time for a workout?"

THREE WOMEN jog on treadmills at varied paces.

TWO MEN take turns at the bench press.

A third MAN does squats. A GUY and GAL are stretching out.

They all look at their phones every ninety seconds.

X sends Show Biz Wiz another DM: "Make sure to drink a lot of fluids," then another: "it's important to stretch after."

X hones in on one of the treadmill women looking at her phone screen, confusion all over her face. He continues DMing Show Biz Wiz: "You run with great posture. Perhaps we can stretch each other out after..."

The woman in question shuts off her treadmill, turns around to scope out the room--makes direct eye contact with X.

X (V.O.)

Bingo.

Show Biz Wiz hops off the treadmill, heads toward a door that says LOCKER ROOM. X rises from the stationary bike, takes a step toward the locker room--falls to the ground, grabs his ham string.

X

Ahhhh, damn!

He's cramping. Show Biz Wiz turns around, sees him on the floor, more eye contact, she darts into the locker room.

X

Shit.

The men in the gym crowd X, he pulls himself to his feet.

MAN

You should stay down, stretch out--

X

Don't worry, happens all the time.

X limps to the locker room, pushes through the door.

MAN

Hey, that's the women's locker room!

INT. SOLSTICE GYM, LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A couple of WOMEN in various stages of changing look up at X.

X

Sorry, maintenance.

He limps on, head on a swivel, stalks the locker room for signs of movement...sees a shadow flicker two rows down, darts after it...he spots the back of Show Biz Wiz, follows her down an aisle of lockers.

X

Hey, stop!

She hits the end of the aisle, cuts right, X limps after her.

He cuts right, doesn't see her, cuts right again into the next aisle of lockers--BAM--a locker door swings open, cracks him in the forehead.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BLACKNESS - MOMENTS LATER

Eyes closed, maybe unconscious, maybe wading through a liminal space, X hears a female's voice.

FEMALE VOICE

Someone came to the gym...chased after me...I hit him in the face with a locker door...how did he find me...he's going to figure it out.

INT. SOLSTICE GYM, LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

X opens his eyes, dangling light fixture blurs his vision. The female voice belongs to Show Biz Wiz, pacing the locker room, smartphone to her ear. X shuts his eyes, plays possum.

SHOW BIZ WIZ

Okay fine...what do I do about him?

Show Biz Wiz pulls the phone from her ear, snaps a pic of X.

SHOW BIZ WIZ

Just sent it...meet you out front.

X opens his eyes, watches Show Biz Wiz exit the locker room through the back door. He pulls himself up off the floor. Blood trickles down his forehead as he limps toward the exit.

EXT. BACK OF SOLSTICE GYM - NIGHT

X emerges from a back door, surprised by how night has settled over the city. Up ahead, Show Biz Wiz waves down a black Toyota RAV4.

X fumbles around in his pocket, manages to pull out his smartphone, snap a picture of the RAV4's license plate.

Show Biz Wiz climbs into the back seat, the car drives off.

X limps across the street, puts the phone to his ear.

X (INTO PHONE)
I'm wounded...behind the Solstice on
Adams and Front Street...thanks.

X limps across the street into a BANK.

INT. BANK, ATM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

X approaches the ATM.

X (V.O.)
Situation's getting sticky.

X inserts his debit card.

X (V.O.)
The smart thing for me to do would be
to go and get a drink and forget this
whole mess.

An **AMBULANCE** pulls up outside the bank.

X (V.O.)
This case is like an itch I can't
scratch. But I've never been one for
lotion and I ain't the type to cut my
losses.

X withdraws cash, collects his debit card.

X (V.O.)
So I'm lowering my shoulder and
driving forward. That's how smart I
am.

He heads for the door.

EXT. BACK OF SOLSTICE GYM - MOMENTS LATER

X emerges from the bank, stuffs cash into his pocket, b-lines toward the back of the ambulance.

X (V.O.)

Haven't had a checkup in years. Now's as good a time as any.

INT. BACK OF AMBULANCE - NIGHT

X sits on the stretcher, hunched over.

MENDER, 30s, female, dressed in EMT gear, holds a cotton swab to his head, shines a flash light in his eyes.

MENDER

You're concussed. Won't need stitches though. Stay off the booze for at least two weeks, and no action either. Hit your head again, you're risking serious brain damage.

X

Thanks Mender. Got anything for the pain?

She puts the flashlight down, pulls open a small drawer.

MENDER

Hold this.

X takes over holding the cotton swab against his forehead. Mender loads a syringe with clear liquid, rolls X's sleeve up, shoots the needle into his shoulder.

MENDER

What have you gotten yourself into?

X (V.O.)

A worthy question.

X

Not sure exactly.

MENDER

This about that girl you used to see.

X

You saw the post?

MENDER

I live in Brooklyn, not under a rock.

X

Alright then, what do you think?

MENDER

I think you need to tread lightly. Not everybody's a mark waiting for you to train your camera on them.

X

I was tracking people down long before I had any followers.

MENDER

Don't I know it.

X (V.O.)

Once upon a time Mender was a girl gone missing. Her parents had lit up their social channels with reward offerings for anyone who could find her.

She tosses the bloody cotton swab and syringe in a small trash can, removes her latex gloves.

X (V.O.)

When I finally did, she made it clear she didn't want to be found. I wasn't inclined to pass up on the reward money, but she made it worth my while.

Mender lightly touches X's chin.

MENDER

Now get the fuck out of my ambulance.

EXT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

X climbs out the back of the ambulance. Rain falls from the sky, trash floats down overflowed gutters.

X

When will the pain meds kick in?

The backdoor of the ambulance slams shut, drives off. He stuffs his hands in his pockets, strolls up the gutter.

X (V.O.)
 What's this?

He finds something in his jacket pocket, pulls it out--the vape pen The Algorithm gave him.

X (V.O.)
 I'm hurtin' too bad to think straight.
 One puff a this aughtta get my
 synapses firing.

X takes a small, curious puff of the vape...nods to himself, content to suck down a nice long hit.

EXT. THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Rainfall speeds up/slow down simultaneously. Stoplights reflect off wet concrete, encase the city in a multicolored glow. X trudges on through the neon storm. The water level rises to his ankles...shins...knees, continues rising.

X's HEARTBEAT competes with BULLETS OF RAIN for loudest decibel.

It's touch and go...but only for a moment, as X passes an empty canoe floating up the gutter, climbs in.

EXT. CANOE - MOMENTS LATER

He grabs an oar from the floor of the canoe, paddles fruitlessly through the neon storm.

PRETTY STRANGER
 The city hasn't seen rain like this
 since our second date.

X looks up...Pretty Stranger sits at the other end of the canoe, faces him.

X
 The flash flood. Came outta nowhere.
 You were soaked.

PRETTY STRANGER
 We both were.

X
 Yeah, but you had those sandals on.

PRETTY STRANGER
 You remember.

X

A lobotomy couldn't make me forget.

PRETTY STRANGER

What are you even doing?

X

I'm looking for you.

PRETTY STRANGER

I'm dead, remember?

X

I don't buy it. Not for one cent.

PRETTY STRANGER

Well then maybe you need to wake up.

X

What?

Her voices changes...

PRETTY STRANGER

WAKE UP MAN--

INT. BACKSEAT, TOYOTA CAMRY - DAY

X's eyes shoot open--

MALE STRANGER

WAKE UP MAN, you gotta go. Or I'll call the cops.

X

What?

Male Stranger stands outside, hand on the open back door.

MALE STRANGER

I'm sure there's a homeless shelter around here somewhere.

X

I'm not homeless.

Male Stranger rolls his eyes.

MALE STRANGER

Unhoused, fine. Just get outta my fucking car asshole!

EXT. THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

X climbs out of the stranger's Camry.

It's sunny out, gutters swallow up the storm's remnants.

Male Stranger slams the back door, climbs into the driver's seat, drives off.

X (V.O.)

What the hell happened last night?

X approaches a STREET VENDOR, takes a pair of sunglasses from the man's table, fishes through his jacket pockets...pulls out the vape pen gifted to him by The Algorithm...re-pockets it...finds some cash in his other pocket, hands it over to the street vendor, puts the sunglasses on.

X (V.O.)

My investigation's in a sensitive spot. I've shaken a brew branches and come away with only one decent lead.

X pulls his phone out, opens the picture of the RAV4's license plate--the car that Show Biz Wiz climbed into when she left the gym.

X (V.O.)

Unfortunately for me, it's time to call in a favor.

X puts his phone to his ear.

INT. APPLE STORE, FIRST FLOOR - DAY

X, strung out, enters the pristine Apple Store, sunglasses on his face, nearly walks into a display of iPads as he scans the first floor.

Store employees talk to pedestrians, kids play with display models.

APPLE STORE EMPLOYEE

Can I help you find anything?

X

Genius Bar.

APPLE STORE EMPLOYEE

Second floor.

INT. APPLE STORE, SECOND FLOOR - DAY

X barely makes it up the staircase, approaches the amorphous line gathering at the Genius Bar.

GENI, 30s, eyes X while finishing up with a customer. She is a ray of natural sunshine in an otherwise artificially sterile environment.

X
Something's going down--

GENI
Sir, I'm helping a customer at the moment. If you put your name into the system, a Genius will get to you shortly.

X backs up, momentarily stunned, recedes to the sign-up iPad, types "Philip Marlowe" into the name section, meanders over to a line of iPhones and Mac Books to kill time.

Satisfied, the customer speaking with Geni packs up his laptop and leaves the store.

X prepares to approach but she reads another name off an iPad--

GENI
Pete Rausch?

Another customer raises his hand, approaches Geni.

X rolls his eyes, walks gingerly down the staircase.

INT. APPLE STORE, FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

X tries on a pair of bluetooth headphones.

He turns to check out the price tag--Geni walks toward him from the staircase.

He removes the headphones.

GENI
I called Philip Marlowe like ten times.

X
He must'a got tired of waiting. I need you to find a plate for me.

GENI

No small talk? All that screen time's made you uncivilized.

X

Maybe it was the two hour wait at the Genius Bar. I need you to find a license plate.

GENI

Where am I looking?

X

Your former employer.

GENI

You know you need a ride this bad, you could just use the app.

X

Just a hunch. Could be Lyft. Could be a private cab.

Geni approaches a Mac Book on display, runs her fingers over the keys a million miles a minute.

GENI

Nod along with me, act like I'm showing you how to use this piece of junk.

X

Nice to know you haven't drank the cool aid, all these years slaving away for our tech overlords.

GENI

Somebody's got to keep an eye from the inside.

An APPLE STORE SUPERVISOR strolls by.

GENI

See what I'm doing here...

Geni points at the screen of the Mac Book, pretends she's teaching X how to use it. X nods along like an idiot.

The supervisor turns their attention elsewhere.

GENI

Alright, I've entered the backend of Uber's dispatch software. What's the license plate we're looking for.

X shows Geni the picture of the RAV4, her fingers go back to work a million miles a minute.

GENI

Found 'em.

X (V.O.)

Knew she would. It's what she does.

X

So he's an Uber driver then?

Geni takes a picture of the Mac Book screen with her phone, closes the computer dramatically.

X

What's the deal?

GENI

That's the question now, isn't it? On my count, I squared my debt with you some time ago.

X (V.O.)

She's playing hard ball. Had a feeling it would come to this.

X

Name it then, what do you want?

GENI

My brother. He's missing again.

X

He's not missing, he's high somewhere. There's a difference...he's probably holed up with the other fiends and junkies and bottom feeders wherever it is they're collecting these days.

Geni checks her watch.

GENI

Would you look at that--my shift's over. Thank you for booking an appointment with the Genius Bar.

She heads for the exit.

X (V.O.)
 Damn it.

X pinches the bridge of his nose.

X (V.O.)
 Life's about leverage. About using it
 when you've got it.

X
 I'll do it.

Geni stops.

X (V.O.)
 And getting it when you don't.

GENI
 Do what?

X
 I'll find him. I'll find your brother.

Geni refuses to turn back toward X.

GENI
 Your driver starts his shift every
 morning at the same location, I'll
 airdrop it to you.

X
 Must be a garage he parks in.

Geni punches the touch screen on her smart phone.

GENI
 Well well well, look who's playing
 detective...Find my brother before the
 holidays. I would hate to have to
 upend your life.

X (V.O.)
 She could do it, too. Geni ain't one
 for empty threats.

X looks at his phone, accepts the air drop.

Apple Maps opens up on his screen.

X (V.O.)
Well now...this is interesting.

He removes the cheap sunglasses from his face.

X (V.O.)
I should've known that eventually this
whole thing would hit closer to home.

INT. X'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

X sits at his desk, the RAV4's license plate displayed on his
computer, the Uber App searching for a driver on his phone.

X (V.O.)
Oddly enough, the garage that Geni
pointed me toward is right across the
street from my apartment.

X rises, looks out the window.

X (V.O.)
I've called and canceled on three
driver's already.

X pulls open his window, steps out onto the fire escape.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - MOMENTS LATER

X lights a joint, eyes darting back and forth from his phone
to the garage entrance.

Uber displays the "searching for driver" message.

X (V.O.)
If this doesn't pan out soon I'll have
to rethink my strategy.

The message display changes to "connecting."

X (V.O.)
C'mon now, show me the money.

A black Toyota RAV4 pops up on the screen.

X (V.O.)
License plate matches, it's go time.

X stubs out his joint on the railing of the fire escape,
climbs down the ladder.

INT. TOYOTA RAV4 - DAY

X pulls open the backdoor, climbs in.

DRIVER looks at him through the rearview mirror.

DRIVER

X?

X

That's me.

DRIVER

And you're going to the airport? Where are your bags?

X

I'm just picking someone up, actually.

DRIVER

The destination says, "Departures."

X (V.O.)

Driver's paranoid.

X

I'll change it.

The car moves, Driver peers back at X through the rearview mirror. X adjusts the destination setting in his Uber app.

X

So, how long you been driving?

DRIVER

You're my first fair of the day.

X

You get out to Brooklyn much?

DRIVER

I go where the app takes me.

X

That's kind of the point, isn't it?

DRIVER

Huh?

X (V.O.)

I need a through line.

X
 You ever make any pick ups behind
 Solstice Gym?

Driver's eyes linger on the rearview mirror. X opens the camera roll on his phone.

X (V.O.)
 He knows before I send him the
 airdrop.

DRIVER
 No, I don't know it.

X clicks the airdrop icon, selects Driver's phone number.

Driver's phone BUZZES, he looks at it, looks at X through the rearview mirror, back at the phone, back at the mirror, back at the phone--

X
 Look out!

Driver hits a harsh left turn to avoid rear-ending an ambulance, pulls the RAV4 over in front of a fire hydrant.

DRIVER
 Your ride is over, get out.

X
 That's no way to get a five star
 rating.

DRIVER
 What do you want?

X
 Answers.

DRIVER
 You haven't asked any questions.

X
 Skip a step, save us some time.

DRIVER
 I don't know anything, man.

X
 You know her. The woman in the
 picture.

The airdropped photo was that of Show Biz Wiz.

DRIVER

She was a fair.

X

You were on standby.

X (V.O.)

Lie to him.

X

All I'm saying, is that if *I* were the last guy seen talking to a dead girl, I'd probably wanna produce some answers--

DRIVER

Wait, what?

X

You know they *always* blame the Uber driver--

DRIVER

Show Biz Wiz is...dead? I swear I don't know anything man, I just drive them.

X

Who's them?

DRIVER

They call and I come. Pay me twice as much as the app.

X

Who's *they*?

DRIVER

These...chicks yo! I met them at this party, it's like a rave in an old abandoned subway platform.

X

Give me the address.

DRIVER

No address, man. The entrance is off the 1 train, somewhere past 86 street. If you hit 96 you've gone too far.

EXT. 1 TRAIN SUBWAY STATION, 86 STREET ENTRANCE - DAY

X stares at the sign over the entrance to the 1 train.

MENDER (O.S.)

His investigation is advancing faster
than anticipated.

X walks down the steps, disappears beneath the sidewalk.

SHOW BIZ WIZ (O.S.)

Should we be concerned about what he
might find?

INT. 1 TRAIN SUBWAY STATION, PLATFORM - DAY

X searches TikTok for ABANDONED SUBWAY PLATFORMS, watches videos of young people scurrying over the tracks, finding hidden passage ways.

A train blasts through the station. When it passes, X moves to the edge of the platform, looks out over the tracks.

MENDER (O.S.)

Or *who*?

X jumps down onto the subway tracks, scurries north.

INT. SUBWAY TRACKS - DAY

X finds a small hole in the wall just off the tracks, looks inside, sees nothing but blackness. He hesitates...soon he's illuminated in the light of an oncoming train.

X (V.O.)

I'm late, I'm late. For a very
important date.

X climbs into the hole just before the train runs him over, disappears into the blackness--

INT. BACK OF AMBULANCE - DAY

Pretty Stranger is very much alive, holding court in the back of the ambulance with Mender and Show Biz Wiz.

PRETTY STRANGER

Stick to the plan and everything will
play out exactly as it's suppose to.

They nod in agreement.

INT. X'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT

--X lays in his bathtub, pruned and covered in soap suds.

A half smoked cigarette, still lit, rests on the edge of the tub.

X's eyes shoot open--startled, he sits up, water overflows, covers the bathroom floor, puts out the lit cigarette, knocks it off the edge of the tub.

X

What the--

He looks around, shocked.

X (V.O.)

How did I...how long have...

X reaches over the side of the tub, picks the half-smoked cigarette off the floor, studies the pinkish-red lipstick on the filter.

X (V.O.)

What the hell happened last night?