

Here and Now

written by
John August

a.k.a. NOW AND THEN

FADE IN:

EXT. CROWDED MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Worn snow tires leave two dirty tracks in the sludge as a Toyota inches down a crowded row. Road grime clings to the underbelly of the car, brown mutant icicles hunched behind the wheels. Green-and-white Colorado plates. University of Colorado parking sticker.

The Toyota stops with its blinker on as TWO CHRISTMAS SHOPPERS walk past in the opposite direction. We only see them from the knee down, each carrying two shopping bags.

WOMAN 1

I'm telling you, no warning
whatsoever. One minute he was fine,
the next...

WOMAN 2

Don't even say that.

As they walk past camera, we move up to the open

DRIVER'S SIDE WINDOW

where KAREN MILLER (22) motions for an OLD MAN in a Buick to keep backing out. She smiles at the little man hunched over the wheel, an honest smile. Rolling the window back up, she shifts the car into gear with a grinding SCRAPE.

INT. A MERCEDES - SAME

A WOMAN IN A DONNA KARAN SUIT (35) climbs in hurriedly, shoving a Limited bag into the well in front of the passenger's seat. Checks her watch as she turns the key, already late. Checks her teeth in the rear view mirror, wiping off a lipstick smudge.

IN THE MIRROR

The Old Man's Buick comes around the edge of a parked van, slowly chugging away.

INT. KAREN'S TOYOTA

Karen starts to pull ahead into the vacant space.

INT. MERCEDES

The Donna Karan Woman digs her sunglasses out of the glove compartment as she back out with a ROAR.

KAREN'S P.O.V. -- THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The Mercedes is headed right for her. Karen hits the brake, tries to find reverse. But she's boxed in.

SLOW MOTION

Karen closes her eyes, bracing herself. The Mercedes catches the Toyota right above the bumper, blowing out the headlight, crumpling in the grille.

The AIRBAG fires like a SHOTGUN in a closed space. Her hands are knocked away from the wheel by the exploding restraint, one pinned against the window.

BACK TO REAL TIME

The engine WHIRS and CLATTERS as fan belts and cylinders adjust to their new homes. Karen sits frozen for a moment, her nose beginning to bleed. She feels for the door latch.

EXT. PARKING LOT ROW

The Donna Karan Woman has emerged unscathed from the Mercedes, estimating in abject horror the damage to her insurance rating. She manages to find some genuine concern for Karen as she climbs out of the Toyota.

DONNA KARAN WOMAN

You're not hurt, are you?

KAREN

(a little dazed)

I don't think so.

DONNA KARAN WOMAN

You're lucky you don't have a good car.

She smiles nervously, flipping through her Filofax to find her insurance card. Shakes her pen to get the ink flowing.

Half in shock, Karen looks at herself in the reflection of her windshield. Seeing the blood, she wipes her nose with a kleenex. She's really very pretty, a page torn from a J. Crew catalog, fresh-faced and a little delicate. She looks more closely at the reflection.

Someone is standing directly behind her, the face lost in the sun's glare.

ANGLE ON KAREN

There's no one there, just parked cars behind her.

BACK ON THE WINDSHIELD

There is someone there, standing right at her shoulder. Smiling a bit, she reaches forward to touch the reflection on the glass.

The Donna Karan Woman tears a sheet off her notepad with all the necessary information. Looking over at the strange girl staring at a windshield, compassion trickles back in.

DONNA KARAN WOMAN

Listen, are you all right?
(a step closer)
Do you need someone?

Karen looks up at her, giving half a laugh. Smiles a little to herself. In the distance, CARILLON BELLS ring, continuing as we cut to:

TITLE OVER BLACK

"One year earlier."

FADE IN:

EXT. BELL TOWER - DAY

The CARILLON BELLS ring brightly from their perch, high above the University of Colorado, Boulder.

BEGIN MAIN TITLES

In the distance, the Rockies, a torn edge of snow and rock against the bright blue sky. Red tile roofs snake back to the edge of the foothills.

Spokes of two mountain bikes catch the sun as they cut a trail across the virgin snow on the main quad. Outside the campus commons, an ASSERTIVE YOUNG MAN tries to sell subscriptions to the Denver Post. In a line at the automatic teller, two FRESHMAN WOMEN go out of their way not to look like they're staring at the GUY behind them.

As a black FRATERNITY PLEDGE CLASS shuffles by in step, a HIPPIE GIRL kisses her Asian boyfriend against the trunk of Chancellor's Elm. A GUY IN BIRKENSTOCK SANDALS throws snowballs to his dog, who catches them in his mouth, biting through them.

It's still the dead of winter, but the campus is very much alive.
INT. SPORTS ARENA - DAY