

POWER PLAY

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CAR BY GRAVEYARD - DAY

A DRIVER cloaked in dark, baggy clothes watches a far off funeral. Their face is hidden under their sweater hood. On the passenger seat sits a HANDGUN and a SMARTPHONE.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE GRAVEYARD - DAY

Windmills in the distance turn. People dressed in black meander towards cars as ELLIE, a woman in her mid-thirties, hums and watches with little emotion. Ellie has long, dark hair and big, captivating eyes.

Ellie holds a SWISS ARMY KNIFE and a funeral pamphlet for a James Lawrence Senior. She cuts the corners off it in boredom.

JIMMY, a man in his forties, appears in front of her from the crowd. Jimmy looks like a stiff in his glasses and expensive suit -- a Poindexter. She doesn't notice him at first.

JIMMY
(Progressing anger)
El...El... Ellie!

Jimmy snaps his fingers in front of the pamphlet. Ellie comes to and closes the knife. She looks up at him.

ELLIE
Oh, hey.

JIMMY
I'm really happy that you made it.

ELLIE
Right.

JIMMY
Will you come by the house later?
Everyone sent so much food, I can't
eat it all myself. Plus, the lawyer
says we can work out dad's assets.

ELLIE
Okay.

Jimmy pats her on the shoulder and disappears back into the crowd. Ellie sits by a tree and carves into the bark with her knife. The cars leave. She's appears to be alone now.

The red sun sets behind the now still windmills. Ellie takes it all in for a moment, then grabs her PURSE and walks to her car. Something is off though --

-- The front left tire is slashed.

Ellie kneels and sticks her head close to the gravel, no nails, no glass, nothing. She pulls out her smart phone and taps through it.

INT. CAR BY GRAVEYARD - DAY

The phone buzzes and jingles. A gloved hand picks up the gun and the car starts.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE GRAVEYARD - DAY

Ellie stands by her car on the side of the road. She talks on her phone.

ELLIE

Yes, I'm a member. One sec, let me get my card...

Ellie digs through her purse as a sedan rolls up beside her and stops. Gravel crunches under the tires. Ellie opens the back door.

INT. CAR - DAY

Ellie gets in the backseat. She's still on her phone and preoccupied with her purse.

ELLIE

(To the driver)
All set?

DRIVER

(Electronically)
Not quite.

Puzzled, Ellie looks up from her phone --

-- She looks down the barrel of a quivering HANDGUN. The driver, ASH, holds it. ASH is wearing a SKI MASK and GOGGLES to cover their face. Their form is hidden under their clothes.

Ash holds an ELECTROLARYNX, a small mechanical device, up to their throat. They hold their gloved finger up to where their mouth would be. Be quiet.

ASH
D-drop the phone into the purse and
hand it to me, please.

Every distorted word Ash "speaks" is strange and chilling.
Ellie hangs up and does as she is told.

ASH (CONT'D)
Go to the trunk.

Ellie slowly complies, the gun still trained on her.

EXT. CAR TRUNK - DAY

Red light shafts shine down on Ash and Ellie in the otherwise
deserted graveyard.

ASH
(Electronically)
Get in.

ELLIE
No please, I can't. I'll freak.

ASH
You'll be fine.

Ash opens the trunk to reveal a nest of BLANKETS and PILLOWS.
There's also a LANTERN, and a BOX of CRACKERS.

ASH (CONT'D)
I'm not a monster... have you
eaten?

ELLIE
W-what?

ASH
Have you eaten recently? The
crackers are still sealed. Have
some. Mind your head now.

Ellie whimpers and gets in. Ash closes the trunk on her.

Ash takes a deep breath and supports themselves on the car,
shaking their hands anxiously. They get in the driver seat
and speed off.

INT. RATTLING CAR TRUNK - DAY

Ellie munches on some crackers. Her situation begins to set
in and she panics, hyperventilates, and coughs.

INT. CAR ON ROAD - DAY

Ash drives with their sweater hood up. It covers their conspicuous, masked face.

ELLIE (O.S)
 (Muffled, coughing)
 Please Mister, I'm claustrophobic.
 I have pills I take in my purse, I
 need them. Please, please, let me
 have them or I may faint.

Ash looks at the purse, then pulls over off the road and out of sight.

EXT. FIELD BY POWER PLANT - DAY

It's dusk. The car is parked off a dirt road. A large COAL POWER PLANT lies beyond an expansive grass field behind the car.

Ash lets Ellie out of the trunk. Ellie still chews a cracker. Ash tosses her the PILL BOTTLE. Ellie snuffles, Mascara runs down her face.

ELLIE
 I need water.

Ash sighs and leans in the car window, comes out with a BOTTLE, and throws it to Ellie. Ellie takes her pills.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
 Are you gonna murder me?

ASH
 (Electronically)
 A m-murderer wouldn't tell their
 victim they're gonna murder them
 right? No. And no I won't. Even
 though I made it sound like I lied
 just now... I won't. In you go.

Ash gestures like a servant leading Ellie to her quarters. Ellie begins to get in --

-- She grabs the LANTERN and BASHES Ash in their masked face with it. One of Ash's goggle lenses breaks as they crumble to the ground.

Turning, Ellie scrambles away across the field with unexpected speed.

Ash regains balance and gives chase, but wises up and runs back to the car, jumps in, and skids around in Ellie's direction.

Ellie screams as she tears away into the field. The car quickly gains ground on her. Lurching closer over the uneven terrain.

The car is alongside Ellie now, only inches away. Ash kicks the driver door open and connects hard with Ellie. THWACK.

CUT TO:

INT. POSH HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

The roomy office boasts stained wooden chairs, bookcases, and a desk. Jimmy dials his smart phone. Behind him sits his Lawyer, TREVOR, with a briefcase and legal documents. There are tin food trays stacked all around the two men.

Jimmy gets no answer, he dials again.

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. A personalized phone jingle rings out. A SACK is ripped off Ellie's head.

A grimy room. It's lit by one fluorescent light. The concrete is old and chipping, WOODEN BLOCKS and DEBRIS line the corners. The only exit is a bulky metal door.

Ellie looks down at a makeshift SLING on her arm. Ash sits in a chair across from her with the gun and a large SKI BAG.

ASH
(Electronically)
Don't try that again, please.

ELLIE
What do you want?

ASH
Your phone code.

ELLIE
(Making the motion with
her uninjured arm)
You gotta make a square from the
bottom left going clockwise.

Ash takes Ellie's phone and removes their GLOVE. Ellie notices painted nails. Ash attempts the phone password twice, and then takes a PICTURE of Ellie with it.

ASH
Oh, sorry about hitting you with
the car.

Ash walks out with the bag and locks the door. Ellie notices her sling is signed "ASH".

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ash removes the ski mask to reveal her red, sweating face. She wipes the sweat away from her forehead.

ASH
(No Electrolarynx)
You got this... you got this.

She takes a deep breath and dials Ellie's phone.

INT. POSH HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Jimmy answers his phone.

JIMMY
Hey El. Are you on your way?

ASH (V.O)
(Electronically)
Jimmy Lawrence. I have your sister.

Jimmy's phone PINGS. He sees the PICTURE of Ellie.

ASH (V.O) (CONT'D)
Sorry for your loss. However, it's
not all that bad is it. What's the
inheritance? A-About... hold on.

Jimmy hears nervous, muffled coughing through the phone followed by a gasp.

ASH (V.O) (CONT'D)
You should get about two and a half
million each yes?

JIMMY
Nice Photoshop. I'm hanging up and
calling the police now.

Perking up, Trevor comes to his side.

ASH (V.O)
Do it. She'll... die.

JIMMY
Try to stop me.

ASH (V.O)
I uh, have people watching you.
Thirty-four Wildflower Ave, right?

Jimmy freezes at the mention of his address. This could be real. He slinks to the window and pulls the blinds. A young GIRL walking her dog notices JIMMY watching her. She waves politely -- or menacingly? Jimmy whips the blinds closed.

ASH (V.O) (CONT'D)
You know what you and your dad did.
That's not your money.

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ash looks deathly anxious. Her electronic voice doesn't give it away.

ASH (CONT'D)
You snuck it away while your people
got sick. Call the police to help
find dirty money.

INT. POSH HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Jimmy grows more upset with every word. He snaps his fingers at Trevor and signals for him to look out at the girl.

JIMMY
(Bluffing)
Sounds like a phone scam to me.

BANG. Jimmy jumps as an overblown gunshot rings through the phone.

ASH (V.O)
I want three of the five million,
don't let greed kill your sister.
It's just money. I'll call you
tomorrow with a location... B-bye!

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ash hangs up. Her legs wobble so slightly as she holds herself up on the wall. She wipes away more sweat and puts her mask back on.

INT. POSH HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

TREVOR

Only someone close to the company could know all that. We really should call the police.

JIMMY

Well hold on... he makes a pretty good point. Okay, I got something. We're gonna get El back.

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - NIGHT

Still holding the electrolarynx, Ash takes SIX BABY MONITORS, A SCREWDRIVER, a HAMMER, and WIRES out of her bag. She tinkers with the monitors.

ELLIE

Why do you use that? Can you not talk?

A beat. Ash ignores her.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I know you're a woman. You don't have to take your mask off, but I bet that thing is annoying to use. I doubt I could I.D a voice.

Ash pauses, then sets the electrolarynx down.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

We're in my father's power plant aren't we? I saw it.

ASH

(No electrolarynx)
Yours now.

ELLIE

I don't want it.

ASH

Good.

JIMMY

Huh? Yeah, sorry. That guy seemed to dislike the plant enough. Anthony Coolidge. Let's look him up.

Trevor writes down the name in his book. Anthony Coolidge.

TREVOR

All the workers on this block are going to dislike your company Jim. The coal basically gave the whole neighborhood cancer, allegedly.

JIMMY

My company...

The two suits walk down the street.

EXT. BLUE HOME - NIGHT

An elderly WOMAN wearing a SCARF opens the front door.

TREVOR

(Flips through his book)
Hi Mrs... Cunningham? We represent Lawrence Power. Can we have a moment of your time?

INT. BLUE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy and Trevor stand in a small, yet pleasantly furnished living room. The elderly woman, MRS. CUNNINGHAM shuffles to a comfortable looking chair and sits.

The chair seems inviting, but the MEDICAL IV's and OXYGEN TANKS surrounding it do not. PILL BOTTLES and snacks are strewn on a table by her side.

TREVOR

You worked at the plant for some time yes?

Mrs. Cunningham nods her head, yes.

JIMMY

And how was your time at the plant?

Mrs. Cunningham looks at the IV's and tanks surrounding her and gestures "so-so" with her hand.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Would you, or anyone you know, have any reason to do something to hurt the company?

She stares at them blankly and shakes her head, no. Trevor leans in and whispers to Jimmy.

TREVOR

Jim, you think this is your perp? C'mon, let's head to the next one.

Mrs. Cunningham slowly eats a cracker.

JIMMY

Fine... Thank you for your time ma'am.

They exit. Mrs. Cunningham flips on the TV. Sitting in the mix of the pill bottles is a FRAMED PICTURE --

-- It's of her and Ash.

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - NIGHT

Ash wraps the monitors with wires. Having trouble, she puts her gun down to use both hands and faces away from Ellie -- A chance.

Ellie creeps towards the DEBRIS. She gently places her good hand on a TWO BY FOUR, and inches slowly towards Ash.

Ellie carefully stands. She raises her weapon. Ash turns.

ASH

(No Electrolarynx)

Shit.

Ellie WHACKS Ash hard over the head with the WOOD, knocking her down. Ellie takes the gun, throws the door open, and runs out of the room.

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ellie runs down the twisting corridors. She stumbles around corners then stops. There's a VENT at her feet. It's a tight squeeze even for someone who isn't claustrophobic.

With a deep breath she jams herself in.

INT. METAL VENT - NIGHT

The vent squeaks as she crawls through it. It's hard with one good arm. She makes it a few feet in -- but panics. Her breathing quickens, she squirms in fear.

She freezes, confused. Next to her in the vent is a BABY MONITOR. It's green light flickering softly --

-- WHOOSH. Ellie is yanked backwards.

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ash drags her out of the vent by her feet and holds her to the ground.

ASH

That. Hurt.

Ellie whips around and points the gun at Ash. She aims, but hesitates in a moment of conflict --

-- But it's just for one moment. She pulls the trigger.

POP. A small plastic pellet hits Ash's head and skips along the cracked floor.

A beat. Ash looks at Ellie in disbelief. She punches Ellie in her injured arm, hard. Ellie agonizes.

ASH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, sorry.

Ash drags Ellie back towards her confinement. Her pained shrieks echo through the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - NIGHT

Silence. Ellie is now tied to a chair with rope. Ash continues to tinker with her monitors. She's a little less cheerful now, almost offended at this attempt on her life.

ELLIE

But... I heard you fire it.

Ash digs a FIRECRACKER out of her bag, lights it, and tosses it towards Ellie where it goes off, BANG.

Just like a gun.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Please, the pills.

Ash takes the pill bottle, pours the pills on the floor, and crushes them under her boot.

INT. POSH HOME OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy waits by his phone with a steaming mug of coffee. Trevor sleeps in a leather chair. The phone rings.

JIMMY
This is Jimmy. How can I help you... Anthony?

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - EARLY MORNING

ASH
(Electronically)
Nope.

JIMMY (V.O)
Shit.

ELLIE
Jimmy? Jimmy!? Listen! The gun-!

INT. POSH HOME OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy hears ruffling and TAPE being stretched out. Ellis is silent.

ASH (V.O)
Two PM, sector Six-G of your plant.
Try anything and I k-kill her...
It's on you.

Ash hangs up. Jimmy grabs a BAG OF MONEY and a PISTOL off his table and leaves. Trevor still sleeps.

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - DAY

Ash dons a jerry-rigged ARMBAND of the BABY MONITORS.

They run up her arm, lined one by one. She waves her hand in front of a monitor in the room, a monitor on her arm lights up, HISSING.

ASH

Neat huh? Once I get the money you'll be free. Please don't try anything else. Please. Here's ten dollars... for ice cream or something. I'm sure you could use it. Also, take these.

Ash tries to put a ten dollar bill and several DOCUMENTS in Ellie's hands, but they're tied up. She settles for placing them in her lap.

ASH (CONT'D)

Proof.

Ellie might have responded if her mouth wasn't taped shut. She shoots Ash a look of angry skepticism, but not disbelief.

EXT. POWER PLANT LOT - DAY

Jimmy parks his CAR neatly between the lines and gets out. He scans the lot, no other cars. He crosses the lot towards the plant carrying his bag.

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - DAY

The maze-like corridors stretch in every direction. Ash wriggles her hands anxiously. A monitor on her arm blinks softly.

Jimmy advances down a hallway. Ash rounds the corner holding her gun up. Jimmy stops and throws the BAG towards her. She inspects it. He notices the armband.

JIMMY

What are you, insane?

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - DAY

Ellie begins to fumble with her restraints. She writhes in her seat and falls on her side.

Her SWISS ARMY KNIFE falls out of her pocket.

Seeing this, she jerks her whole body towards the knife, moving the toppled chair. An inch at a time, she lurches closer.

She's so close now. With one last lunge she finagles the knife into her hands and cuts the rope off. She rips the tape from her mouth and tries the door. Locked. She pounds on it, but it's hopeless --

-- Then she sees the monitor.

ELLIE
Jimmy! Jimmy!

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - DAY

Ash's monitor-band goes off with a crackle. Through it comes Ellie's distorted voice.

ELLIE (V.O) (CONT'D)
It's fake Jimmy! The gun is fake!
She can't do anything!

Ash fumbles frantically to cover the sound, she tries turn it off but her gloves slip on the plastic switch.

It's too late.

ASH
(No electrolarynx)
Shit.

Jimmy whips his gun out and fires at her, BANG! BANG! Ash ducks, weaves, and runs down the winding hallways to hide around a corner. She waits.

INT. CRAMPED CONCRETE ROOM - DAY

The garbled gunshots carry through the monitor. Ellie takes the HAMMER Ash used earlier and WHACKS at the door hinges.

INT. CONCRETE HALLWAY - DAY

Jimmy slowly closes in on Ash's location. His nerdy traits almost amplified by the gun, not diminished. He doesn't notice a monitor at his feet.

Around a corner, Ash studies her armband. The crackling green lights work their way up her arm.

She waits.

The green light creeps higher. The sound of Jimmy's loafers faintly echo through the maze of hallways.

She waits. He's close now.

The green light climbs to the highest monitor -- Jimmy turns the corner and Ash KNOCKS him to the ground. They wrestle for the gun.

Ash gets on top of him with the gun. Jimmy raises his arms instinctively.

She aims --

-- HISS. Her monitors go off. The light crackles up her arm.

Several FIRECRACKERS land by Ash and Jimmy -- BLAM. Ash covers her face, stunned.

Ellie barrels around the corner and SLAMS herself into Ash, knocking her off Jimmy. Ash skids on the hard concrete, shredding her mask --

-- But she holds onto the gun. She stands up and points it at Ellie, who defends the cowering Jimmy.

ELLIE

Not a monster, huh?

ASH

(No electrolarynx)

No.

Ash runs off with the bag. Ellie breaths deeply as Jimmy shivers on the floor.

A beat. Ellie collects herself and turns angrily to Jimmy.

ELLIE

You stole from the workers?!

JIMMY

Hello, thank you for saving me Jim,
you're welcome Ellie.

EXT. BEHIND POWER PLANT - DAY

Ash throws the cash in her car and gets in, takes off her mask, and speeds away onto the road.

INT. CAR ON COUNTRYSIDE ROAD - DAY

Jimmy drives down a lonely winding road. Windmills turn in the distance beyond fields. Ellie is dirty, tired, and defeated. She sits with a plastic bowl of ice cream in her lap. Jimmy licks a cone while he drives.

JIMMY

Man, there sure are some awful people in this world... Ellie, I'm just glad you're okay.

ELLIE

Why didn't you call the police?

JIMMY

You don't really believe that stuff do you? She just wanted money.

Ellie doesn't give an answer. She grips the DOCUMENTS tightly in her uninjured hand and takes in the view.

INT. BLUE HOME - DAY

Mrs. Cunningham closes the front door holding a PACKAGE. She sits in her chair and opens it. Inside is the ELECTROLARYNX, bands of CASH, and a CARD with a charity organization logo on it.

The card reads "Thank you for your help" Mrs. Cunningham opens her card.

A handwritten message in the card reads "I'm sorry Nana. For taking this, and because I can't be there for the rest of your treatments, which this should cover. Stay strong. Love, Ash." Mrs. Cunningham smiles and places the electrolarynx up to her throat.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM

(Electronically reading)

Love, Ash.

FADE OUT:

END