

"BLANC"

Written by

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ACT I

FADE IN:

1 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A black Harley Davidson motorcycle is zooming through a Pretoria street that is lit only by dim streetlights and the headlights of the few cars on the road. The lines separating the two lanes on the one side of the road are very faded. The lines separating the two lanes on the opposite side of the central divider looks to be freshly painted. Some police sirens can be heard faintly.

The rider of the Harley Davidson motorcycle is also clad in black with the exception of a yellow stripe vertically running down the back and front of the thick motorcycle jacket he wears. His helmet is also a glossy black with a heavily tinted shield.

The rider is going almost double the speed limit as he zooms between the few cars populating the road and past the green traffic lights.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT

- A) Over the right shoulder of the rider, the next traffic light turns yellow.
- B) The rider speeds up, the roar of his motorcycle's engine becoming louder.
- C) About 500 metres from the traffic light, a sign shows that the speed limit is 60 km/h.
- D) The speed gauge of the motorcycle is nearing 110 km/h.
- E) P.O.V. of rider in helmet. The streetlights after the traffic light is off. The rider passes the yellow traffic light.
- F) A massive screen on the left side of the road shows an advertisement with a stark white background in contrast to its dark surroundings.
- G) P.O.V. of rider. Left hand of rider comes up to shield the rider's stinging eyes from the bright advertisement.
- H) Worm's eye tracking shot. We see a small stone in the road with the rider approaching. As the rider nears, the small

stone starts shaking. We follow the stone as it is lifted from the road and sucked into the exhaust of the Harley Davidson as the rider passes its original position.

I) Overhead medium shot. Rider loses control of motorcycle. Rider and motorcycle falls to the right side with a loud crash. The engine of the motorcycle is sputtering.

J) Medium shot. Rider and motorcycle skids across the gravel of the road. Loud screeching of stainless steel scraping against the gravel is heard.

K) We hear a truck engine starting up and its lights coming on. With the light emitting from the headlights of the motorcycle, we see it is a car transporter truck.

L) The upper track of the rear overhang of the truck is slowly being lifted back into its elevated position.

M) We see the rider skidding towards the sharp edge of the upper track that is slowly being lifted.

N) A wide shot of the rider's body coming to a stop as it hits the sharp edge of the upper track of the car transporter truck.

2 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

JONATHAN, 18, sits upright in the hospital bed of his single, clinically white hospital room. His short, dark brown hair is disheveled. He disappointedly stares at his elevated legs as they are enclosed in casts.

City sounds stream into the room from the open window: taxis hooting, loud conversations, street vendors calling out to passersby.

JONATHAN inhales deeply, the sharp smell of chemicals fills his nostrils as a cleaning lady passes by the open door of his hospital room. His gaze turns to his left arm, also in a cast, as he reads the only passage written on it in black marker.

JONATHAN

(reading)

"Enjoy the pit stop. When you're ready, get back in the race! I know you can do it! Dad."

(sighs deeply)

But what do I do in the meantime?

With his right arm, the only limb not enclosed in cast, JONATHAN covers his dark green eyes as he lays his head back hopelessly.

NURSE ADELE comes striding into the room with a bright smile. In one hand she holds a yellow gift bag. She places the bag on JONATHAN's bedside table. He removes the arm covering his eyes.

NURSE ADELE

Good afternoon, Mr Botha. How are we today?

NURSE ADELE moves around JONATHAN's bed to take a closer look at all the monitors to his left. JONATHAN sees the yellow gift bag on the bedside table to his right.

JONATHAN

That answer depends on who this is from.

NURSE ADELE

(smiles)

Your uncle dropped it off before visiting hours this morning.

NURSE ADELE moves to the big book taking up all of the space on the movable table at the foot of JONATHAN's bed. She starts writing in it as JONATHAN grabs the gift bag with his free hand. He places the bag on his lap and starts emptying its contents - racing magazines, motorcycle magazines, a soft-bound A5 journal and a black Parker fountain pen.

JONATHAN places the magazines back in the bag and places the bag next to him on the bed. JONATHAN opens the journal to the first page and sees a white envelope with his name neatly written on the front.

JONATHAN tries to open the envelope with his one good hand to no avail. He sighs at his struggles, then looks towards NURSE ADELE.

JONATHAN

Nurse Adele, could you help me get the letter out?

NURSE ADELE puts her pen down, smiles, and assists JONATHAN in getting the letter out. She then goes back to writing in JONATHAN's patient book.

JONATHAN opens the single sheet of paper with the same neat handwriting as on the front of the envelope.

UNCLE BENNIE (V.O.)

My boy! We were all so shocked to hear about your accident. Your dad and I

(MORE)

UNCLE BENNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
taught you better than that!

JONATHAN smirks. The only sound in the room apart from machines beeping is NURSE ADELE's scribblings in JONATHAN's patient book.

UNCLE BENNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Alright, scolding - check. Your dad and I thought you might be bored now that you can't zoom around on your Harley, so we got you a journal to document your rehab. We both know how hard it can be to feel stuck in the hospital - God knows we've both had our fair share of it.

(sighs)

Anyway, we both started documenting our rehab and training a few years ago after that unexpected round of bumper cars in the Grand Prix. We thought it would help motivate you like it did for us! The whole team is rooting for your quick recovery, my boy.

(whispering)

Your dad wouldn't want me telling you this, but... After we visited you last night, he was so worried about leaving you in South Africa this time. So, I asked Lucas to stay with you until you're back on your feet - that seemed to lessen his worries a bit.

(normal voice)

I'll be sure to keep his mind on the training as long as you call him often. Deal?

JONATHAN smiles and gives a small nod.

UNCLE BENNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Remember, as your dad always says:
this is just a pit stop in the race of life. We love you! Uncle Bennie.

JONATHAN looks to the message on his arm cast again and smiles warmly. He closes the letter and pits it with the envelope in the paper pocket at back of the journal.

NURSE ADELE then taps her pen on the book before putting it in the front pocket of her scrubs. She sees the journal on JONATHAN's lap. She closes his patient book and puts it on his bed. She rolls the movable table she had been writing on around his elevated legs. She slides it into place in front of him.

NURSE ADELE

Now you have something to write on.

She gives JONATHAN a warm smile and places his patient book in the compartment of his bedside table.

JONATHAN

(kind)

Thanks, Nurse Adele.

NURSE ADELE

It is my pleasure, Mr Botha. The doctor will be with you soon. Is there anything you need before I go?

JONATHAN

(shakes his head)

I'm good, thanks.

NURSE ADELE exits the room.

JONATHAN holds the journal in his free hand and looks at it thoughtfully. He places it on the table in front of him and opens it to the first page. He places his heavy left arm on the interior page of the cover and grips the Parker pen in his right hand. He gently unscrews the pen cap.

LUCAS, 18, energetically enters the room. His neatly styled spiky blonde hair stands out against his bulky attire. His oversized black shirt and loose black jeans are both sporting the 'Levi's' brand name in bold lettering.

LUCAS' brown eyes zero in on the journal in front of JONATHAN.

LUCAS

(excited)

Hey! You're writing again!

JONATHAN puts the pen down - not a single word on the page.

JONATHAN

I was about to, yes.

(looks at LUCAS)

Dad and Uncle Bennie think I should keep logs of my rehab to 'keep me motivated'.

(laughs; under his breath)

Daai twee is soos vinkel en koljander.

LUCAS

(smirks; jokingly)

My Afrikaans is a bit rusty but I'm sure you said something about our dads being joined at the hip.

LUCAS' American accent from Nevada is clearly distinguishable from JONATHAN's South African accent.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
And I agree.

JONATHAN closes the journal and moves it to one side.

JONATHAN
(curious)
How was South Korea?

LUCAS takes a seat in the visitor's chair behind him.

LUCAS
It was good. The language was a pain.
I want to go back there after I learn
to speak Korean properly.

JONATHAN
(playful)
So, that's how many languages now?

LUCAS
(counting them off on his fingers)
English, Spanish, French, isiZulu and,
now, Korean.

JONATHAN clears his throat loudly and gives LUCAS a pointed stare.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Yeah, yeah. And Afrikaans.

JONATHAN, satisfied, runs his hand through his dark hair.

JONATHAN
(serious)
What's the damage?

LUCAS
I regret to inform you that you have
done as much damage to your Harley as
you've done to yourself.

JONATHAN's hand runs over the bandaged wound running from just below his right shoulder to just above his left hip.

JONATHAN
(with distant eyes; saddened)
So, it also got cut in half?

A heavy silence passes.

LUCAS
 (pleading)
 Please don't say that so nonchalantly.
 (making eye contact with JONATHAN)
 You were this close to being gone,
 Jonathan.

JONATHAN looks down and nods. LUCAS looks JONATHAN over slowly, then his gaze falls on the A5 journal again.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
 You know, our dads might be onto something.
 (LUCAS points to the A5 journal)
 It might not be a bad idea to live in your imagination for a little bit.

JONATHAN lets out a deep sigh and lets his gaze fall onto the journal.

JONATHAN
 I might just give it a shot. There's not much else to do anyway...

LUCAS
 So stop contemplating and do it! You used to love writing our bedtime stories!

JONATHAN and LUCAS share a nostalgic laugh.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
 Man, those were the best part of my childhood.

DR NKOSI enters the room.

DR NKOSI
 Mr Botha. Nice to see you sitting up.

JONATHAN gives a respectful nod towards DR NKOSI.

JONATHAN
 Doctor.

DR NKOSI moves to stand closer to JONATHAN's bed. He gives a nod to LUCAS, who returns it.

LUCAS
 What's up, Doc?

DR NKOSI
 (to LUCAS)
 I have some news for Mr Botha.
 (to JONATHAN)
 I think it would be best if we
 (MORE)

DR NKOSI (CONT'D)
discussed it alone.

LUCAS
Alright, then! That's my queue!
(to JONATHAN)
I'll bring the insurance documents
tomorrow. Rest up!

LUCAS quickly leaves the room with a final wave before
closing the door.

JONATHAN
(slightly concerned)
What is it, Doctor?

DR NKOSI
(serious)
As I've mentioned before, the damage
from the incident has not just
resulted in broken bones but some
nerve damage as well. One of the tests
we ran was an EMG which tests for
nerve damage. Most of the nerve damage
we have found will heal during your
rehabilitation, however the nerve
damage at the bottom of your spine
concerns me.

JONATHAN looks expectantly at DR NKOSI.

DR NKOSI (CONT'D)
Those nerves will heal as well, but
their ability to function as they did
before may not return.

JONATHAN
(slightly irritated)
Get to the point please, Doctor.

DR NKOSI
(unwaveringly)
There is a high risk of impotence.

JONATHAN
(shocked)
Im... Impotence?

DR NKOSI
Yes. It means--

JONATHAN
(cold)
I know what it means.

DR NKOSI
I would like to--

JONATHAN
(cold)
I'm sorry, Doctor, but can you give me
some time to process?

DR NKOSI
Of course. If you have any questions,
Nurse Adele will be able to answer
most of them.

DR NKOSI leaves the room. JONATHAN closes his eyes with a heavy sigh. After a moment, JONATHAN opens his eyes and runs his eyes all over his body. His gaze stops at his crotch.

JONATHAN	SUBTITLES
Wat gaan ons doen, my maat?	What are we going to do, buddy?

JONATHAN's gaze drifts toward the A5 journal. He picks up the pen and opens the journal once more. He looks at the pen in his hand, then starts writing.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JONATHAN'S SUCCESS THROUGH THE YEARS

- A) JONATHAN, 19, signing books at a bookstore with a long line of people in a queue.
- B) JONATHAN, 20, walking onto a talk show's set with a crane for support. People are applauding him loudly and he is smiling.
- C) A display in a bookstore filled with JONATHAN's book series, Blanc, that all has black and white covers and is selling out quickly.
- D) Posters of Blanc book covers in the windows of bookstores.
- E) A slim floor-to-ceiling white bookshelf with two Blanc books on display on each shelf. All the black and white covers have numbers on them, indicating which book in the series they are. As the camera pans down, we see that there are nine Blanc books thus far.
- F) A silhouetted figure of a man sitting at a desk. In front of him on the wall are many handwritten sticky notes and what looks to be a timeline. The camera slowly nears him and pans over his head. We see a blank piece of paper in front of him and a black Parker fountain pen in his right hand.