

Relative Minor

Pilot: "The 9th in C"

By

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(Excerpt)

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - DAWN

William Penn holds his iconic vigil under the twin spires of Liberty Place as the opening notes to Schubert's 9th Symphony (4th Movement) sound.

Music builds - light and happy - as we move from the shine of Center City to a grittier part of the city...

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ALLEY - DAWN

The music continues - it's a stark juxtaposition as light dawns over a desolate, empty street in a rundown section of town.

In a brick-walled back-alley, a YOUNG BLACK MAN lies dead in a congealed puddle of blood, eyes frozen wide open in terror.

Other instruments fade slowly until we hear only a solo violin, continuing the same piece:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - DAY

CU on fingers as they play the first violin line of the piece. The music is fast, the fingers dance on the strings...

These fingers belong to DAVID NEVSKY, 35, dark-haired and intense. He's only practicing, but is clearly a master of the instrument.

Noticing the clock, David stops playing and opens his case to return the violin to its home.

Behind his spare bow is a black & white photo - ca. 1965 - of a man and a woman bundled up against the cold. The man bears a strong resemblance to David.

David snaps the case shut and grabs his jacket.

INT. DAVID'S BUILDING - HALL - CONTINUOUS

At the door, as he turns to lock it:

ADELE (O.S.)
(an old voice)
Oh hi David. Good luck today!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Standing above him at the top of the stairs is ADELE CHURCH, his nonagenarian landlord. David occupies the ground floor apartment of her converted townhouse.

The hallway is decorated as you would expect in a home with a nonagenarian landlord.

DAVID
(locking the door)
Thanks Adele.

She disappears into her apartment. David gets halfway to the front door - then realizes he forgot something. He heads back quickly.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

In his apartment, he runs over to a sideboard drawer unit and opens it, but - moving fast too fast - manages to yank it out of its slot. The contents splash out onto the floor:

Among the debris is a pill bottle and - most prominently - a GUN with a loose CLIP.

DAVID
(under his breath)
Shit.

He digs through to find some extra violin strings, then hurriedly dumps everything else back into the drawer.

The gun and clip go in last. David shoves the drawer back in its place and heads out.

END TEASER

FADE TO:

EXT. PHILLY STREET - DAY

From the POV of TWO ROUGH-LOOKING KIDS, CALVIN (18) AND MICHAEL (19), David approaches their corner, his violin slung over his shoulder.

CALVIN
Ready?

Michael nods. As David rounds the corner - they JUMP:

MICHAEL
Hand it over, Muthafucka!

David freezes, but he's surprisingly calm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID
OK, OK. Take it easy.

He slowly puts his hand in his pocket...

CALVIN
Nah, man...

Calvin moves closer, reaching for the violin.

DAVID
(confused)
What...? You don't need that..

MICHAEL
SHUT UP!

A stare down as Calvin advances. David lets the violin slowly slide off his shoulder to the ground...

Then, he SPRINGS: he attacks like he's done this before.

The kids are surprised to find someone so aggressive - and not very prepared for it. David pushes Calvin away and evades Michael - but then, just as he has an opening to get a fist in Michael's face...

..he hesitates, protecting his hands.

Michael capitalizes, barely. An inept slice catches David's shirt, then Calvin gets a punch into David's kidney.

With a grunt, David drops to one knee. It's just enough for Michael to grab the violin, and the kids dart off.

Now he's angry. David jumps up, grimacing as he pursues them, but Michael and Calvin reach a car, hop in and peel off.

DAVID
Goddamn you!!!

He watches the car squeal down the street, then looks down at his shirt: the front has a small tear, but no blood.

A SQUAD CAR turns onto the street, toward him, heading in the same direction as the kids - David doesn't move.

As the car passes him slowly, the officer in the passenger seat stares him down in suspicion, intimidating. David holds his gaze, weighing whether or not to stop them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The moment passes. The car continues down the street and turns onto another. David turns and stalks off in the other direction.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY HOUSE - LOBBY - DAY

TORI MIDLAND - 33, magnetic, dark haired, and of indeterminate race - carries a coffee into the small lobby of an old building.

Moving past FRANK, the gruff security guard, who sits sullen at his podium, she heads into the elevator and hits a button labeled:

"Liberty House Rehabilitation"

On Tori, in the elevator, ready to face the day.

INT. LIBERTY HOUSE - RECEPTION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Out of the elevator, into a madhouse. People rush by, some carrying stacks of notes, others carrying empty and/or full urine sample cups.

Tori moves through a small waiting area: several NERVOUS PEOPLE sit.

At the front desk, a LARGE WOMAN (Caucasian) lords over the receptionist.

LARGE WOMAN
(thick Philly accent)
And I TOL' that bitch I wuz sorry!
I ain't TRYIN' to stay drunk, it
just fuckin' HAPPENS...

Tori ignores it all and heads deeper into the chaos of the office. She reaches her door, and steps inside.

INT. LIBERTY HOUSE - TORI'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ALLISON, her office-mate, sits inside the cramped room at the desk they share.

ALLISON
Hi.

Tori takes off her coat and slides into her chair. Then:

DARIA (O.S.)
Morning guys!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIA KRAFT, 24 and animated - an up-talker - pokes her head in the doorway. Tori's shoulders slunk down imperceptibly.

DARIA
Ohmygod, I have *SO* many intakes today.

ALLISON
Yeah...Daria. Could you maybe finish the notes from yesterday's?

DARIA
Of course I will!

Daria disappears, leaving a trail of bubbiness. Allison grimaces as Tori suppresses a smile, then picks up the phone.

She dials a number from memory. It rings, then beeps to a voicemail.

TORI
(into the phone)
Hi, it's Tori. Just wanted to remind you about your next appointment. It's really important you don't miss this one after your, uh..cancellation last week. OK? See you soon.

She hangs up. Allison looks at her.

ALLISON
Was that..?

TORI
Yeah.

Allison looks at her.

TORI (cont'd)
What?

ALLISON
I don't know...just.. You sound a little....close.

TORI
I was reminding him about his appointment.

ALLISON
You weren't so nice to that crusty old pervert who missed a session...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TORI

(aggressive)

I can't treat every client the same - they respond differently, right? Don't worry. If he misses another one, he's out.

ALLISON

OK, OK... Calm down.

TORI

(a breath)

Sorry. You just, you know...you put energy into someone, and they just shit it all away.

ALLISON

Oh, that's in our brochure, though, didn't you know? "Come Shit It All Away. At Liberty House."

Despite herself, Tori smiles.

Suddenly, a WAIL sounds from the hallway. They jolt up in surprise.

RAVEN (O.S.)

(angry, sobbing)

WHERE IS SHE??? I NEED TO SEE HER!!! GET HER OUT HERE NOW!!

Allison looks to Tori: *Is that...??*

Tori runs out into the waiting area, and Allison follows.

INT. LIBERTY HOUSE - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

They arrive in the reception area to find RAVEN MEES, 17, a stunning but troubled African-American teenager, screaming at the top of her lungs in the middle of the room.

The Large Woman from earlier sits in a chair, scared. Other clients cower, trying to keep away.

RAVEN

(to nobody in particular)

I need to see her *now*!! Get her the fuck out here!!

TORI

Raven!

Raven jolts her head toward Tori who moves closer to her.

(CONTINUED)