

MACHINA

By

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FROM BLACK - Red REC flashes for a couple seconds in the upper right corner. A VOICE sighs and removes the lens cap.

AUTOFOCUS reveals

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The shoulder of a FIGURE dressed in all black fiddles with the camera. Through DIGITAL DISTORTION, the time/date/battery info are turned off.

The black-clad figure of 17 years sits at the center of a blanket. He is pale from white make-up and sports a hairless cue ball head.

Most people call him TIM PRICE, but he goes by MACHINA.

MACHINA
(looking at LCD screen)
In frame? In frame? Good.

He adjusts his headroom. Around him lies a NOTEBOOK, a framed PHOTO of goth metal musician AUDREY LOVEKRAFT, and a BOX-CUTTER.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
Hello, mom, dad. Surprised to see me breathing again? You should be since by the time you watch this, I'll have already killed myself. And yes, it's all your fault. After all your attempts to make us a picture perfect family, all the bullshit with "therapists," all the pills and vitamins you made me take... I'm *ending* it all.

A message flashes ON SCREEN: "SD STORAGE SPACE EXCEEDED."

Machina rips out the front page of his barely legible notebook. He tapes it to his chest.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
These are lyrics from my favorite Audrey Lovekraft song "The Hurting." It perfectly describes the pain you have brought to me for living in this suburban hellho...

CUT TO BLACK.

BOY'S BEDROOM - LATER

The camera flips back on, aimed up Machina's nostrils.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
...f a bitch.

After replacing it on the tripod, he rushes to the blanket. Lovekraft is already playing.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
Ok, hello, mom, *dad*. Surprised to see me breathing again? You should be since, I'm already dead... er, killed myself... shit...

He bolts to his camera, palm out for the record button.

LATER

Machina splays on the blanket. Take 3...

MACHINA (CONT'D)
Hello, mom, *dad*. Surprised to see me breathing again?

The EMPTY BATTERY LIGHT FLASHES.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
You should be since by the time you watch this, I'll have already killed myself. And yes, it's yo...

CUT TO BLACK.

BOY'S BEDROOM - LATER

The entire image is in a SEPIA tone.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
...ucking Chechnyan camera!

He rushes back to his blanket.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
(deep sigh) Hello, mother and father. Surprised to see your dead little boy talking to you? Well, you should be (notices sepia tone) *why is it like that!?*

He charges toward the camera.

LATER

Back to color. Machina is livid and perspiring.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
 Mom, dad, I'm killing myself
 because you both suck. And I'm
 gonna do it with this jank!

He waves his box-cutter around. He unlocks the safety and extends the blade. He pauses and examines the device.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
 And before I forget, I want Audrey
 Lovekraft to write my eulogy.

He looks back down at it. Another pause.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
 And Oblivion and Luminessa can come
 to the funeral, but that's it.

A final pause, then...

MACHINA (CONT'D)
 Well, bottoms up, I guess.

He STICKS the blade into his wrist.

Machina's look of commitment instantly evaporates into a face of shock and pain.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
 Ow ow ow ow ow ow ow!

He pulls the box-cutter out and chucks it away, grabbing his wrist. He hurdles out of frame and out of his room.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Tim, what is... *is that blood?*

MACHINA (O.S.)
 (losing it)
 It hurts! It hurts!

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 What did you do?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 You're getting it on my carpet!

MACHINA (O.S.)
 Do something!

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 You're going to get a sponge and
 soap for this, Timothy.

MACHINA (O.S.)
 Screw your carpet, old man, I'm
 bleeding like a fountain here!

Footsteps approach. A door swings open.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 What is going on? Are you taping
 something?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Get back here, you disrespectful
 little shit.

MACHINA (O.S.)
Don't go in my room!

Machina bolts to his room. The TRIPOD is knocked over and the
 camera careens to the floor. SMASH!

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE: "MACHINA"

INT. REFRIGERATOR - DAY

The door opens and a humming matriarch in her late 40's pulls
 out a jug of store-bought orange juice. She is KATE PRICE.

KATE
 See, I told you we had some left.

The door closes.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dozens of colorful magnets shelter the fridge. Enter her
 husband WILLIAM PRICE. He adjusts his tie, sits at the head
 of the table, and grabs his fork. Warm strawberry pancakes
 and eggs are already on his plate.

Next to him is his eldest son, BILL JR. (21), who is rarely
 seen not wearing a baseball cap and T-shirt of his favorite
 Illinois teams. Today, it's the Blackhawks.

BILL JR.
 I'm telling you, there wasn't any
 there yesterday.

As Kate pours his juice, his younger sister TIFFANY (20) glances over the business section of the paper.

TIFFANY

Orange juice and orange soda aren't the same thing, Bill.

BILL JR.

Actually, Tiffany, when you leave the soda open, it loses all the fizz and becomes juice.

TIFFANY

That's not true in the slightest.

KATE

(smiles)

Bill, Tiff... you want any juice hun?

WILLIAM

No. We got coffee?

KATE

About to perk.

She goes to the coffee pot. As she pours a mug, she regards her family at the table. All are eating and conversing... but there's one vacant seat with a meal getting cold.

INT. BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Holding her husband's mug, Kate makes a call.

KATE

Tim, breakfast is ready!

We WHIP 180 and fly up the stairs, make a hard left, soar through the hallway covered in family photos, past Bill Jr. and Tiffany's room, and through the door which bears a sticker: "STAY THE HELL OUT."

INT. MACHINA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Machina, wearing only black briefs, spreads his body across his lumpy bed. His room is littered with dirty clothes, goth metal posters, and an impressive CD collection. Color is forbidden here.

His EYE opens.

He growls.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Kate sits and enjoys her hotcakes.

KATE
So, what's the story today?

WILLIAM
A main from the city broke and
flooded a water park.

KATE
That's a shame.

Machina's big white bald dome enters, declining to sit.

MACHINA
What's this slop?

His family halts eating and gape at him in unison.

WILLIAM
Watch it, little man.

BILL JR.
Yeah, it's good stuff, creep.

KATE
Pancakes. Have a seat Tim.

MACHINA
My name is not Tim.

TIFFANY
Right, what was it again? Marigold?
Macaulay? Mechagodzilla?

MACHINA
My names Machina, what's yours,
"bitch-thighs?"

TIFFANY
Choke on a limp one, dick.

William sighs, shakes his head, and returns to his paper.

KATE
You guys, stop. Come and sit;
they're strawberry pancakes.

OPPOSITE- Revealing Machina. He is clothed in black leather
from neck to toe and white makeup coats his face.

MACHINA

I despise strawberry pancakes like
I despise this family.

He storms out, no breakfast today.

EXT. PRICE HOME - DAY

A beautiful two story residence in the heart of America. The fog of black leather emerges from the white door and hoofs to his MIVIVAN: a gold-colored Windstar from yesteryear.

INT. FORD WINDSTAR - MOVING - DAY

Poker-faced Machina blasts his metal on his way to school.

He hits the railroad tracks. His CD player skips.

EXT. STILLMAN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL (SVHS). PARKING LOT - DAY

Establishing shot. A large sign proudly displays "Home of the Cardinals."

The Windstar jams on its brakes and kills the engine. The ambiance of metal music dies with it.

INT. COMMONS - DAY

A large painted cardinal spreading its wings overlooks the start of a school day. STUDENTS cluster around their cliques, half-asleep but alive.

Machina hastens by, making sure his heels make the most noise. He strides to his only two comrades in the world, also clad in black: OBLIVION (17, male, dyed hair) and LUMINESSA (17, female, ripped dress).

LUMINESSA

(to Oblivion)

So I said, 'cell phone policy?' No one's even watchin' this film.

OBLIVION

That sucks.

LUMINESSA

Hey, Machina, you ever get kicked outta the theaters?

MACHINA

(sits)

One time I brought a Chinese dagger. The cinemas took it away.

OBLIVION

Blowhards... You finish the periodic table crossword?

MACHINA

No, Oblivion. I have better things to do than Ms. August's busy work.

OBLIVION

You can just copy offa mine. Luminessa found that August just scanned it out of Weekly Reader.

LUMINESSA

They put all the answers on the last page. Major flaw if ya ask me.

Just as they're getting comfortable, the bell RINGS.

INT. BIO ROOM - DAY

The pleasantly plump MS. VERONICA AUGUST wobbles around the tables passing out graded homework. Judging by her wardrobe and sunny demeanor, she's a child of the 1980's.

MS. AUGUST

Haha hoho! A minus, nice job, Charlie. Ooo, an A for 'A'-mber.

Machina and Oblivion occupy the table in the back by the sink. Oblivion whips his hair out of his eyes.

OBLIVION

So, me and Luminessa we're talking about prom. Usually, we'd skip these school sanctions, but she wants to make us all prom clothes.

MACHINA

Go on...

OBLIVION

Like some really freaky shit from this European magazine. Anyway, we should go together, none of that one boy, one girl conformist stuff.

MACHINA

I could be persuaded if we egg some cars and go to Hot Dawgs afterward.

OBLIVION

Hell yeah, man.

Ms. August hits the back table with her stack.

MS. AUGUST

Ah, Tim Price and Seth Wilkinson; a righteous duo. If only your grades were alike. Seth, A. Tim, D+.

She hands them back. Machina crumples his homework.

MACHINA

Thanks for saying my grade to the class, Ms. August. That's not a violation of privacy at all.

Ms. August scowls, then turns.

OBLIVION

So I've got this coupon for a lady hair place, but nowhere on it does it say it has to be a girl...

THE DOOR

slowly opens and in enters a teenage goddess. Machina's attention drops. Her stride is delicate, her hair is magic. Her name is BECKY PIERCE. Machina is bewitched by her blond hair, slender figure, and movie star face.

OBLIVION (CONT'D)

...you're not paying attention to me are you?

MACHINA

(transfixed)

Yeah, coupons are great, huh.

Ms. August's skipping is temporarily halted.

BECKY

I'm sorry, Ms. August. I was practicing with the volleyball team. I have a note from Mrs. Grey.

MS. AUGUST

That's fine, Becky. Just have 'A plus' seat. Hoho haha!

MACHINA

watches her amble to her seat in the front. She is unnaturally sullen for a pretty face.

For a brief second, the two share a GLIMPSE. She sits.

MACHINA

You know, Oblivion, it's a damn shame that nature is fraught with opposites: day and night, dark and light, beautiful women and major douchebags.

OBLIVION

You talking about Becky and Bob? They might not be a thing anymore.

MACHINA

What?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Luminessa and Machina sit on a bleacher in school gym clothes and makeup. Both are out from dodgeball.

LUMINESSA

Yeah, Becky and Bob are ba-roken. They're no longer listed as "in a relationship" online.

MACHINA

What happened?

OPPOSITE ON THE GYM FLOOR

A HULK of a man chucks dodgeballs at bony STUDENTS. Each launch of a ball is accompanied by a war cry. This seventeen year old titan is BOB STENSON.

LUMINESSA (O.S.)

I dunno, but it musta been rough.

A petite GIRL gallops to a ball for protection, but Bob ends her with a deadly lob to the head.

MACHINA AND LUMINESSA

MACHINA

You think they'll get back together?

LUMINESSA

Can't say. All I know is the locker room says it's splitsville for beauty and the beeftard.

MACHINA

Splitsville? Do people actually say that in real life?

Bob takes his last victim. He roars in victory, with pent-up frustration.

A bell RINGS.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

On the menu today is macaroni and something, but Luminessa brought a bag of pudding. Machina chokes down the school lunch and Oblivion enjoys his home-catered panini.

LUMINESSA

My opinion? She got pregnant, she couldn't get on one of those teen mom shows on cable, and he freaked.

OBLIVION

Why are we even talking about this?

LUMINESSA

I dunno, Machina's the one who brought it up.

MACHINA

I did *not*.

OBLIVION

You have a thing for Becky?

MACHINA

No. You have a thing for Bob?

LUMINESSA

There's nothing wrong with that, M. Sure, she's as fake as her tan, but there's no truer human emotion than the libido.

OBLIVION

You should stay away from her. There's a reason why they don't keep swans in with the jackals at the zoo.

Machina launches to his feet, he's had enough.

MACHINA

I don't have a *thing* for her, okay?
And I'm only a jackal in the
metaphorical sense.

He turns and SPLAT! Becky's macaroni plate and tray are all over Machina's chest.

BECKY

Oh my gosh! I am so sorry!

Machina spouts bits of words from his mouth. Becky is mere inches from him and there's a hot feeling in his chest that's not from the macaroni.

MACHINA

Um, it's... ug... f-f-fine. You're
fine. Yo fine, Beck-ee.

After her gaffe, she smiles. A benevolent moment between the two. But Bob kills it and stomps into their fray.

BOB

What's going on here, Becky?

BECKY

Nothing, Bob.

BOB

You step in my girl's ozone,
Crowman?

MACHINA

Crowman? What are you talking...

BOB

It's an old movie with Bruce Lee's
son. Don't change the subject.

BECKY

Geez, Bob. It's just an accident.
Leave us alone.

BOB

Who's this 'we,' Becky? There's
only us; as in you and me.

MACHINA

Sorry, I'll just sit...

Bob PUSHES Machina. Many STUDENTS spy on the scuffle while Luminessa beguiles the drama, spooning pudding in her mouth.

BOB
You wanna go, dark pansy?

BECKY
Bob! Stop! (to Machina) I'm sorry.

She walks away from the mess. Bob pierces Machina's gaze, then pursues her. Machina, still covered in gunk, collapses in his chair. Silence only for a moment.

LUMINESSA
Don't worry, I know a guy who dry
cleans leather.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

ON TV: A recap of a White Sox game on Channel 14 News.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
And after a double play, the Sox
clench the game. Boom-zonga, Good
night chimi-chonga.

Fade to the well-suited sports anchor: William Price.

WILLIAM
We'll see how they do against the
Angels tomorrow.

Kate folds laundry as she watches the TV, proud of her man. Tiffany noodles through an algebra book next to her. Then, Bill Jr. strolls in.

BILL JR.
Hey, mom. Can I bring Collete to
the restaurant tomorrow night?

KATE
Absolutely. How is she?

BILL JR.
She's good. And she says 'hi.'

KATE
I can't wait to see her again.
She's a real sweetie.

TIFFANY
(playfully)
Yeah, we all know Collete dates
Billy for the free meals.

BILL JR.
(smiles)
Shut up.

Kate chuckles with her picturesque family... then Machina punctures the room. Their banter dies.

KATE
How was school, Tim?

MACHINA
What do you care, sweetie?

He withdraws as Bill Jr. And Tiffany collectively sigh.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Machina flushes the toilet then checks himself in the mirror. Makeup: intact. Mascara: okay. Lips: problem.

After puckering, he opens the medicine cabinet full of woman's cosmetics (all black). He snags the lipstick, but finds nothing left in the tube.

Sighing in disgust, he speed-dials on his phone.

MACHINA
Hey, Oblivion. You want to go to
the mall tomorrow?

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK EXPLODES onto screen: "21 hours, 51 minutes later."

INT. FORD WINDSTAR - MOVING - DAY

Oblivion in the passenger seat, Luminessa in the back, Machina cruises to the mall. As they hit a speed bump, the CD player skips.

INT. CHERRYVALE MALL. WALKWAY - DAY

Clothing stores upon clothing stores with the occasional fro-yo stand among lite rock hits on the sound system.

Machina and friends pace past the colorful stores before turning into their dark little nook: MEPHISTOPHELES.

INT. CHERRYVALE MALL. MEPHISTOPHELES - CONTINUOUS

This is their store: a dark boudoir of overpriced black clothing, death metal CDs of bands you've never heard of, and licensed trinkets from 90's television shows.

ABOVE, several TV's play a loop of goth videos and news.

Lollygagging around, they hit the pants section and pull out some pre-ripped slacks. Oblivion laughs and puts on a hat.

LUMINESSA

(looks up at TV)

You guys, check it out. They're talking about Audrey Lovekraft.

Oblivion and Machina drop the fun and gaze at the screen.

IN STORE ADVERTISEMENT VIDEO

In front of chromakey, a chubby goth introduced as SCARY LARRY sits in a chair and addresses the screen.

SCARY LARRY

A setback for Audrey Lovekraft and his European tour: it seems the forty three year old was injured in Budapest during a show.

BUDAPEST STAGE

The controversial shock rocker AUDREY LOVEKRAFT (possibly in his 40's, but hard to tell with all the make-up) shrieks a song of bitter sadness in metal form. He dons a leather bondage suit with many fetish accessories.

His onstage antics include rubbing his privates against any moving thing.

SCARY LARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The incident started when a water bottle was thrown at the multiple MTV Video Music Award nominee.

Indeed, a WATER BOTTLE is tossed at Lovekraft's head. He halts screeching and scans the audience, then motions for his guitarist NECRO-PHIL to stop playing.

AUDREY LOVEKRAFT

Who the f(bleep)k threw that?!

No answer, he drops his microphone and LEAPS into the crowd.

STOCK FOOTAGE of Hungarian ambulance pulling away.

SCARY LARRY (V.O.)
 Concerts in Luxembourg and Munich
 have been canceled, but Lovekraft
 is already back in the studio.

MUSIC STUDIO

A recording microphone dangles in front of the singing
 Lovekraft. He is planted in a wheelchair and neck brace over
 his unusual leather attire.

AUDREY LOVEKRAFT
 Music is my life, my blood, my
 whore. Even though we're all
 insignificant molecules, an injury
 will not stop me loving my whore.

END VIDEO

Oblivion and Luminessa are all smiles. But the very quiet
 Machina, whose mouth is agape and eyes are wide, has seen
 something revolutionary.

INT. CHERRYVALE MALL. FOOD COURT - DAY

The three gorge on junk, talking a million miles an hour.

MACHINA
 Audrey Lovekraft is a genius. I
 mean, he *is* a genius.

OBLIVION
 And a badass. Gets nearly killed by
 Hungarians and goes right back to
 the studio. Like a boss.

LUMINESSA
 He is so right. We really are all a
 buncha insignificant molecules.

Machina contemplates his curly fries... oily, crusty, and
 endlessly twisted. Then, the idea.

MACHINA
 It is obvious what we must do...

Oblivion and Luminessa's chomping enters a cease-fire.

MACHINA (CONT'D)
 We must start a band.

His compadres think it over, slowly chewing again.

MACHINA (CONT'D)

C'mon. Aren't you tired of this phony town and its phony country music about tractors and sex on tractors and sex with tractors?

LUMINESSA

Hey, I hate tractor sex too, but I can't play any instruments.

MACHINA

You don't have to, Luminessa. A band is more than just the music; it's the image. You can be our manager; design our clothes, get us gigs, spread the word.

After consideration, her face melts to contentment.

MACHINA (CONT'D)

And Oblivion, how much of our dark poetry can we easily turn into b-sides?

OBLIVION

That's great, M. But like Luminessa said, I don't play anything either.

MACHINA

Welcome to the digital age, loosey goosey. All music is done on computer. You ever see Lovekraft playing with a guitar?

Oblivion is turning on to the idea.

MACHINA (CONT'D)

Ever since I was born in this drab suburban nightmare, I've always felt a part of me was trapped.

He examines his friends and their tranquil faces.

MACHINA (CONT'D)

It's time for me to let it out.

Oblivion grins and puts his gloved hand out.

OBLIVION

Bandmates?

Luminessa puts her hand on top of his.

LUMINESSA

Bandmates.

Machina wastes little time putting his hand on top.

MACHINA

Bandmates.

The three's bond forged, they shake. Faces beam.

LUMINESSA

So what are we gonna call us?

Faces morph to quizzical. Silence. Awkwardness.

INT. MACHINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Machina splays across his bed, staring up at his posters. Phone in one hand, rubbing tummy with the other.

MACHINA

"Black Daiquiri." "Lost Incognito."

INT. OBLIVION'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Oblivion downloads music software of questionable legality on his laptop, randomly pulling band names out of his ass.

OBLIVION

"Bush of Dark Pity." "The Morbid."

INTERCUT BETWEEN MACHINA AND OBLIVION

MACHINA

This is so hard. We need something that says we're completely original and hasn't been picked already.

OBLIVION

"Audrey Lovekraft's Illegitimates?"

MACHINA

No, but I like the Lovekraft-ian approach, after all, he's why we've made this band... wait, I got it.

KATE (O.S.)

Tim! Come downstairs.

MACHINA

Not now, dammit!

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

From the bottom of the stairs, Kate sighs. She looks ravishing in her evening gown. Bill Jr., still donning a baseball cap, pulls up his tie as Tiffany zips her purse.

DING DONG.

BILL JR.
I'll get it.

He rushes to the front door. William enters, wearing a much nicer suit than his day job.

WILLIAM
Kate, how does my hair smell?

KATE
I'm sure it smells fine, dear.

WILLIAM
Of course it does; I had to use your strawberry stuff. It doesn't smell too feminine, does it?

TIFFANY
Are you afraid someone's going to smell your hair tonight, daddy?

WILLIAM
Worst case scenario, yes.

Bill Jr. emerges from the foyer with his beautiful starlet girlfriend in her early twenties COLETTE.

BILL JR.
Look who's here.

KATE
Hello, Colette. You look beautiful.

COLETTE
Thank you, Mrs. Price. You as well.

WILLIAM
H'lo, Colette. We ready to go then?

KATE
Yes, just have to get Tim.

Kate goes to the stairs again. William sighs.

WILLIAM
Just leave him, Kate.

KATE

Tim! We're ready to go now!

INT. MACHINA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Machina, amidst conversation, exhales deeply.

MACHINA

I'm sorry, Oblivion. I gotta go to this stupid ethnic restaurant with my equally stupid family.

He hangs up, rolls off the bed, and escapes his bunker.

KATE (O.S.)

Tim, we are leaving now.

MACHINA (O.S.)

I'm coming, you slave driver!

INT. SAKURA NIPPON RESTAURANT. VESTIBULE - NIGHT

The Hostess sits the Price party among COUPLES on a double date. Machina sits at the end and fiddles with his headphones.

HOSTESS

I will be back with your drinks.
Please make yourselves at home.

As she leaves, the Couples look up from their menus and whisper amongst themselves.

BOYFRIEND 1

(to William)

Excuse me, sir? Sorry, but are you William Price from Channel 14?

William smiles, being quite used to this.

WILLIAM

Yes, I am.

BOYFRIEND 2

I told you. Who do you think's gonna win at Wrigley tomorrow?

GIRLFRIEND 1

Rick, he's with his family. Let them eat in peace.

WILLIAM

No, that's okay. I'd bet on the home team.

GIRLFRIEND 1

See? I told you so.

GIRLFRIEND 2

Your wife's gorgeous... and four beautiful kids.

KATE

Thank you so much. But we only have three children.

BOYFRIEND 1

Oh? Which ones?

William turns and eyes Machina at the far end strangling his portable CD player.

WILLIAM

(out of Kate's earshot)

The three by my wife.

A CHEF wheels out his cart and cuts chicken and veggies on the hibachi. As the Hostess returns with drinks, Machina notices Bill Jr. gets a saké bottle to share with Colette.

MACHINA

Hey, why does numbnuts and his flavor of the week get alcohol?

BILL JR.

Because we're 21, dipshit.

MACHINA

That's not fair! I can get drafted in the military and die but I can't have one drink?

TIFFANY

Oh really, Tim? You ever fight for our country?

MACHINA

...no.

TIFFANY

Then shut up and drink your Sprite, O Dark One.

Machina grabs his CD player and blasts the volume to max.

The Chef dazzles all at the table, except Machina. He is transfixed by the saké.

COLETTE
(to Bill Jr.)
I think it's time, Billy.

BILL JR.
I thought you wanted to wait til
after dinner.

KATE
What is it?

BILL JR.
Well, no use hiding it now.

An ONION VOLCANO is constructed. Fire erupts from its mouth.

BILL JR. (CONT'D)
Here goes point blank: Mom, dad,
Tiffany... me and Colette are
getting married.

Kate SQUEALS with joy as Tiffany gasps at Colette's newly revealed engagement ring. William smiles. The Double Date claps for them as Colette kisses Bill Jr. on the lips.

WILLIAM
(to restaurant)
Hey! My boy's getting married!

A disinterested Machina eyes the saké. With no one paying attention to him, he leans across the grill, arm out for the beverage, not seeing the onion volcano below him.

COOK
No! No! No!

Machina's leather CATCHES FIRE. He SQUEALS higher than Kate.

The happy family's excitement surrenders to confusion.

Machina BOLTS from his chair, his chest and stomach aflame.

He runs past the

EMPTY KARAOKE BAR

where he finds no relief to his burning dilemma.

KATE

Timmy! Roll on the floor!

Other PATRONS have stopped eating, stopped breathing. A few EMPLOYEES chase him with pitchers of water, but Machina confusingly sprints away from them, including

THE SUSHI CHEFS

who have quit making their artistic designs in fright.

SUSHI CHEF 1

(Japanese, subtitled)

The legends were true!

With his sashimi knife, he points to a painted picture of

CUTAWAY: A white-headed black serpent surrounded by flame.

A plainclothes GUEST grabs a fire extinguisher on the wall and hunts Machina, ripping away the safety tabs.

As Machina maneuvers around a corner, an unlucky DISHWASHER careens into a dessert cart, spilling many mochi balls.

Luckily, the shrieking Machina sees the

OUTDOOR KOI POND

and charges toward it, with COOKS and SERVERS in pursuit.

The Guest with the fire extinguisher trips on the mochi balls.

Yards away from the pond, then

BAM!

Machina hits the glass, leaving no shatter to it.

The Hostess throws a table cloth over Machina's body as the entire restaurant kicks at his chest.

THE PRICE FAMILY'S GRILL

As most are mortified, deadpanning Bill Jr. picks up his empty saké bottle and motions to a restaurant EMPLOYEE.

BILL JR.

Can we get a refill of this?

INT. FAMILY SUV - MOVING - NIGHT

Stone-faced and embarrassed, William drives his family home.

Bill Jr.'s arm is around Colette. Tiffany texts away.

Hating the silence, Kate breaks it.

KATE

On the bright side, our meals were free.

TIFFANY

I know I ate two hundred dollars worth of sushi.

In the backseat, Machina looks like a drowned cat. His leather is ruined, his makeup is muddled, and he has the biggest frown ever.

Bill Jr. WHISPERS into Colette's ear. She giggles.

MACHINA

What's so damn funny up there?

Eyeing Machina, Bill Jr. whispers again. Another snicker.

MACHINA (CONT'D)

(aggravated)

I just think we should share it with the entire car.

BILL JR.

I shouldn't say, I don't want to add fuel to the fire.

Tiffany giggles.

MACHINA

Shut up!

BILL JR.

Oh, sorry for angering you. I shouldn't be playing with fire.

KATE

Billy, stop it.

BILL JR.

Hey, dad, you should slow down. You don't want a cop to pull you over and say "Where's the fire?"

Bill Jr., Tiffany, and Collete are fully guffawing.

MACHINA
I hate this family!

He SCREAMS and rapidly kicks the seat in front of him.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The SUV parks and Machina flees the vehicle and slams the door behind him.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Machina throws open the medicine cabinet. He tosses the toiletries on the floor, then picks the HAIRSPRAY.

CUTAWAY: The warning on the can: "FLAMMABLE"

He showers his entire body with the spray.

On top of the toilet next to the candles, a LIGHTER is snatched.

Machina sits in his tub. He looks at the lighter. This is it... again. He pulls the ignite tab.

Nothing. He tries to ignite again, but no spark is produced.

MONTAGE- MACHINA'S NUMEROUS SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

--EXT. GRADUATION PARTY - DAY: Suicide Attempt #1 (subtitled in lower right corner)- Machina tries to slit his wrists with a plastic knife.

--INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT: Suicide Attempt #2- Machina tries to drown himself in his sink, but keeps coming up for air.

--EXT. PRICE HOME - DAY: Suicide Attempt #4- Machina jumps out of his bedroom window.

--INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT: Suicide Attempt #7- Machina drinks a whole bottle of Nyquil.

--INT. MACHINA'S BEDROOM - DAY: Suicide Attempt #9- Machina tapes himself putting a box cutter in his wrist, a callback to the first scene.

--INT. GARAGE - NIGHT: Suicide Attempt #10- Machina sits with his running minivan... the garage door goes down.

BATHROOM

Sitting in the tub, Machina chucks the damn lighter away.

SUBTITLE: "Suicide Attempt #12"

Many furious KNOCKS on the door.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
Get out. I hafta use the bathroom.

MACHINA
Leave me alone!

TIFFANY (O.S.)
Tim, you can rub one out in your
own room. Leave now.

MACHINA
I said leave me alone, you spray-on
tan bimbo bitch!

Tiffany throws open the door, casting her shadow on the saturated Machina.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
...is that my good hairspray? *My
nine dollar hairspray?*

As he pants, she scurries to her room.

O.S., a jar of changed is EMPTIED into a SOCK.

She returns quickly and BASHES him in the body with the heavy sock. Machina SQUEALS in agony with each strike.

INT. ART CLASS - DAY

The instructor MR. LANDIS (50's, beard) paces through his students' masterpieces. Some are impressive, much are okay. In the corner, two are using a ton of black paint...

LUMINESSA
"Satan's Call Girl?"

MACHINA
Yes. "Satan's Call Girl." Oblivion agrees it's a great name. Lovekraft said music is his whore, so it kind of fits.

LUMINESSA
Yeah, I like it. I should get started on making stickers that say "SCG." Oh, and the S could have red devil horns.

MACHINA
We should post them on sidewalks and telephone poles... that'll get our band name out there.

LUMINESSA

Yeppidy. So, whatcha paintin'?

MACHINA'S PAINTING- Audrey Lovekraft nailed to a cross, but with the skill of a third grader.

LUMINESSA (CONT'D)

Whoa, it's dark Jesus.

MACHINA

No, it's Audrey Lovekraft on the cross. Man, it's edgy... I can't wait until the board of education gets a load of this.

Machina grins, closes his eyes, and draws himself into his own fantasy world.

MR. LANDIS (V.O.)

Machina? Audrey Lovekraft on the cross? What disrespectful garbage! I'm reporting you to the principal!

SUPERINTENDENT (V.O.)

What is the meaning of this, Machina? Who in their right mind would defile our Lord and Savior?

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)

Machina, I'm a psychiatrist from downtown. I've seen your painting and I think you can use my assistance. I've called your parents and they agree.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Breaking news, a student was expelled from Stillman Valley High School after painting a picture of the shock rocker Audrey Lovekraft depicted on the cross. More at 11.

AUDREY LOVEKRAFT (V.O.)

As the real Audrey Lovekraft, I think Machina is a tortured artist. He's clearly a gifted child prodigy in this philistine society.

KATE (V.O.)

Machina, are you in here? I brought brownies... Oh my god! He's killed himself! Why? What could I have done differently? *Why!*? Now I have no choice but to kill myself too!

GUNSHOT. Machina's eyes pop open.

Mr. Landis strolls by Machina and Luminessa. He pauses.

MR. LANDIS
What are you painting, Melina?

LUMINESSA
Oh, it's sadness... in general.

MR. LANDIS
That's nice. And Tim?

MACHINA
It's Audrey Lovekraft... *on the cross.*

MR. LANDIS
Well, keep at it. Maybe it will be something someday.

As Machina's smile wanes, Mr. Landis escapes to another painting by advanced artist TAYLOR MILLS (17, ginger hair).

MR. LANDIS (CONT'D)
Taylor, what is *this*?

TAYLOR'S PAINTING- A beautiful, sun-filled paradise with a waterfall; a pristine Garden of Eden.

TAYLOR
It's just a landscape I dreamed up.

MR. LANDIS
This is amazing; I can't even make shading this intricate.

Machina grumbles and literally PAINTS harder.

INT. LOCKER HALLWAY - DAY

Machina throws his never-opened textbooks into his locker. A magazine POSTER of Audrey Lovekraft is taped to the door above a not-so-hidden HIT LIST.

A vexed Becky rushes by, Bob in tow. They stop auspiciously in proximity to Machina's locker.

BECKY
I told you to leave me alone, Bob.

BOB

I just asked you a question, why do you have to be a bitch about it?

BECKY

Do *not* call me that.

BOB

I can call you what I want. What are you doing Friday night, bitch?

BECKY

You know, Bob, I just realized I have plans with someone.

BOB

That's a joke. With who?

Becky looks around for someone, anyone. Their two eyes meet.

BECKY

(points to Machina)
With him.

Machina stops, forgets to breathe.

BOB

With Darkheart... you can't be serious, Beck.

BECKY

I *am* serious, Bob. He invited me out... where are we going?

Blank. Machina restarts at seeing Becky's puppy-dog eyes.

MACHINA

Oh, just going to... the car wash... to get the car... then eating... something... warm.

BOB

I'm gonna rip his nip rings off.

As Machina shields himself with his book bag, MS. AUGUST interrupts the fun.

MS. AUGUST

Oh, Bob. I did some double-checking online and I was correct. "Igneous" is a type of rock.

Becky grabs Machina's arm and flees the opposite way. Bob can't evade the rock conversation.

INT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Becky and Machina enter double-checking to make sure Bob hasn't followed.

BECKY
He's gone. Look... thanks.

MACHINA
No problem.

BECKY
I, uh, better go while I still have a chance.

She backs away.

MACHINA
Becky.

BECKY
Yes?

MACHINA
...the flowers are pretty, aren't they?

BECKY
Yeah, they are.

She looks at one of them, beaming a bit.

MACHINA
Look, Becky. I have to ask this and you can say no if you want. But did you actually want go out Friday?

BECKY
Um...

She struggles, knowing she's holding his heart in her hand.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Sure.

MACHINA
Really?

BECKY
Yeah, you got my number?

MACHINA
Of course.

BECKY

Well, call me later.

She skips out of the foliage. The door latches. Machina is left alone.

He DANCES! Quite sensual and frantic for a goth kid.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A tuna melt is set on Bill Jr.'s plate, who digs in immediately. Machina is unusually peppy.

In the background on the TV, William is running through baseball scores on his sports newscast. Cubs lose again.

Kate scoops the sandwich on Machina's plate. He transforms.

MACHINA

I'm a vegan. I won't eat this.

KATE

You're vegan? You had turkey bacon this morning, honey.

MACHINA

Well, I'm a vegan now, *honey-poo*.

TIFFANY

That's perfect. Next he'll be telling us he's straight.

MACHINA

For your information, jailbait, things have changed since I became a musician.

BILL JR.

You, a musician?

MACHINA

Yes. Music is my life.

BILL JR.

Music is your life, huh? What instrument do you play? Pink triangle?

MACHINA

(gets up)

I will not dine with you lowbrow anti-intellectuals. Enjoy your enriched flour French Silk Pie.