

Influence

Written by
Grace Rucci

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gracerucci16@gmail.com
203.321.7380

EXT. MANHATTAN - SUNRISE

SFX. Sounds of New York.

INT. DARK BEDROOM

SFX. Alarm clock "Slow Rise" starts

It's the bedroom of Cali Cook. She is lying perfectly under the sheets as if she is a corpse lying in her coffin (think Sandra Bullock in the Proposal when she goes to sleep).

Hair is perfect, sheets are perfect, the room is perfect. The room is still except for the alarm going off. It's serene, an intimate moment watching what someone does in their first moments of waking up.

CALI
(with eyes closed)
Should I go now?

There's a moment before the producer decides to respond.

PRODUCER
Yeah, you can get up, just pretend
we aren't here for this part.

Cali turns off the alarm and gracefully pulls back the sheets. She sits at the side of her bed and stretches. She goes on her phone and turns on music that starts playing throughout the whole apartment.

It's Beethoven. It feels like the opening to a Disney princess movie.

START MONTAGE: The shades rising around the entire gorgeous apartment. The light hits the furniture for the first time that day. Beethoven at full blast. This is luxury.

Cali washed her face, makes coffee, opens up the doors to the wrap around balcony. She sits and sips her coffee and overlooks Central Park

EXT. BALCONY

CALI
I like to rise with the sun every
morning. It just feels like the
most natural way of life. I used to
have one of those sun alarms to
wake me up but it just felt
superficial.
(MORE)

CALI (CONT'D)

So now I set my alarm to go off just five minutes before sunrise. I love feeling like I start my day before anyone else does. It gives me that feeling of control over my day. Plus I think Oprah said she gets up at five and Meryl Streep maybe - like all the most successful people get up at five, it's like this thing.

PRODUCER

Do you feel the need to always have control over the things you do?

CALI

Well I think before, when I had a lot less things on my plate and people relying on me I think I was able to have control over everything. But now it's literally impossible to have total control...because I'm just too busy, and there's people asking me to do things left and right so it's just impossible at this point. But I still try (she laughs, kind of a nervous laugh, trying to be relatable)

PRODUCER

Where do you think that sense of control comes from?

CALI

(breaking) I'm sorry I thought I was just like taking you through my day, I didn't really prepare for serious questions...

PRODUCER

Yeah of course, we can move on.

INT. CALI'S VANITY - DAY

Cali sits and gets her makeup done.

CALI

So I have a really exciting shoot in a few hours, but first I'm going to my friend's runway show which is so exciting. It's just so cool to succeed with your friends ya know?

PRODUCER

What did you think you were gonna be when you were younger?

CALI

I wanted to be a lawyer actually (she laughs again, but it's a bit sadder)

PRODUCER

Why?

CALI

Well I really loved arguing with people, my parents were always saying I should be a lawyer, and I actually applied to colleges for pre-law...

PRODUCER

What happened?

CALI

Well, It's kind of a lot of work for a lot of years - like it's not like Legally Blonde hahah...But then I started posting and making content and that took off, now I'm here-

Cali's phone rings. She looks down at it.

CALI (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Oh hold on let me get this - it's my manager

Cali picks up the phone and puts it on speaker

CALI (CONT.) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Hi! I'm just -

MANAGER

(On phone) Are you getting ready?

CALI

Yeah just gettin glam and also that film -

MANAGER

Melissa's manager just called and they can't get you that extra ticket to the show, it's just they don't have the right contacts and I can't get in touch with anybody over there-

Cali immediately takes the phone off speaker and turns slightly away from the cameras.

CALI

(to makeup artist) Stop! Stop it!
 (To manager in an intense whisper, this part can be ad libbed/improved but this is the rough text))

Laura, Laura listen to me I'm fucking filming right now you know that I literally thought we were done with this bullshit! Call them a million times if you have to, I'm showing up - I'll stand if I fucking have to...no I don't care...no...give me the number...no stop I'm calling Melissa right now I just talked to her!

Cali has gotten up by this point and is trying to get as far away from the cameras as possible but they are following her closely.

CALI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(at some point she realized how closely they are following) Can you please just stop. Please!

PRODUCER

Guys, let's cut.

Camera cuts quickly down but keeps rolling.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE WINDOW.

Camera catches Cali on the balcony. She's hung up now and is just standing outside. Camera tries to zoom in closer.

She tries to compose herself. She looks over her shoulder and sees the camera/crew. She makes her way back inside.

CALI

Sorry about that! Just a change of plans but that's the job right!

PRODUCER

Are you okay to move on?

CALI

Yeah.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

PRODUCER

So tell us the change of plans -

CALI

So it's actually so funny because before I planned to go to this show I actually had a meetup planned with this other big creator in the city that I had to cancel, but that's where we're heading now which is great because it's actually going to be much more realistic to what I do everyday. It's just like something happens and I have to move on to the next, you have to be flexible and ready for anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Cali stands at an apartment building. She rings the buzzer. It rings and rings. Nobody picks up. Cali glances back at the cameras quick then turns away.

She hits the ringer again and checks her phone to make sure she's at the right place. Nobody answers. Cali makes a phone call.

CALI

(to producers) One second -

She walks away from the cameras. They follow.

CALI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Hi! Alex! So I'm here at your place
 right now but maybe I got the
 apartment wrong? Or the meeting
 spot wrong? Um yeah so just call
 back ASAP - if you can - and yeah
 so just let me know!... This is
 Cali by the way... yeah call me
 back.

Cali hangs up. She's flustered again but starts to try and
 calm herself down.

CALI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 (under her breath)
 Pull it the fuck together Cali,
 don't cry, don't cry, don't cry.

She takes some really deep breaths and then shakes it out a
 little.

CALI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Okay! Shall we go on a little
 adventure!

EXT. NYC STREET - CONTINUOUS

Camera tries to keep up with Cali.

PRODUCER
 Can you tell us where we're going
 now?

CALI
 I thought, since we have more time
 on our hands, I could show you some
 of my favorite spots in the city? I
 haven't been able to have a day
 like this in a while because I've
 been so busy so this will be nice
 for me too!

PRODUCER
 How do you feel about the meet up
 being canceled?

CALI
 Like I said, It will be good to
 have a day filled with all my
 favorite things.

PRODUCER
 So where to first?

CALI
HMMMM...The park!

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Cali is sitting on a rock, she honestly looks very awkward and uncomfortable, and upset.

PRODUCER
Do you come to this spot often?

Cali is in kind of a daze. She doesn't respond.

PRODUCER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Cali? Let me know if you want to stop -

CALI
This is the first spot I ever came to in Central Park when I moved here.

PRODUCER
Oh wow, okay.

Cali takes off her massive shades.

CALI
I've been laughed at, made fun of, told I wasn't interesting enough for people to watch, not funny enough, that I was just "kinda weird", but like to be disrespected like that? Stood up by someone who literally has way less followers than me...I just don't get it. (under her breath) Can't get away with that.

PRODUCER
Okay...Um, Cali? Do you want us to come back another day maybe?

Cali's eyes turn animalistic.

CALI
No! Of all the days you could have come I'm glad it was today. Because today is the day I stand up for myself!

She gets up. She's at the top of this rock, wind blocking through her hair, it's kind of like a superhero moment.

Cali takes a step, slips, and falls. Camera down, the producer is running to help.

PRODUCER

Oh my god, are you okay?

Cali grabs her leg, then the other, writhing in pain.

CALI

OW OW OW!!! Oh my god.

PRODUCER

Cut the cameras.

Camera Cuts.

INT. CALI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Cali is in bed. Her head is stitched up and bandaged. She's a little out of it. Her face is splotchy and her makeup is ruined.

PRODUCER

Are you sure you wanna do this?

CALI

I'm so good. I'm amazing.

PRODUCER

Okay then. I guess...hmm. Why don't you tell us about your nighttime routine.

CALI

Well, I get in bed - hey look I'm already here! Hahahaha. Ow.

Beat.

CALI (CONT'D)

There's really no point to any of this is there? Like I just wake up and do some stuff and then sleep, and then I wake up and do some more stuff and then go to sleep. I just want to BE someone. I want people to want to hang out with me and follow me and give a shit about me. What am I even doing?? Like I'm not happy! I hate posting about stupid moisturizers, and superfood smoothies and whatever the fuck they ask me to promote! It's dumb!

(MORE)

CALI (CONT'D)

I hate consumerism - I should have just been a fucking lawyer! People always need lawyers. Nobody needs me.

Beat.

Silence but the tension could be cut with a knife. Cali's phone buzzes. She takes a slow look to it.

CALI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

AHHHHHGHHGH!

She chucks the phone across the room and it smashes against the wall. Cali realizes what she's done but doesn't move. She's almost relieved. Her eyes meet the camera.

CALI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I'm done now.

Camera pans to the ground, but doesn't cut. There are five seconds of silence.

CALI (CONT'D)

Get out!!!!

CUT TO BLACK.

END.