

THE CALL
(Short Film)

by

Kevin Li

Email: Li_mentality@hotmail.com

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FADE IN:

1. EXT. Hotel - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Tall expensive Hotel next to some smaller hotels. The hotel has approximately 40 levels of apartments.

2. INT. HOTEL APARTMENT - NIGHT

Inside, there is a small kitchen area with one bedroom and a study desk with a chair. There is a view from the bedroom window that overlooks the bright lights of the city. Throwing his clothes on the bed is the tall, dark and handsome man, CARTER JAMES, 21. He puts on a silver necklace with the symbol C.J on it then grabs his mobile phone and sends a text to confirm the details for the night with his friends. He puts down his phone and then receives a call from a private number. He answers the phone.

CARTER
Hello, who's this?

He starts to change his clothes while talking on the phone.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(Shocked)
April? Oh my god, It's been years since we spoke. How have you been?

There is a sign of disbelief on Carter's face.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Don't tell me that you're still mad at me for what I said to you years ago when we were still together? I just can't believe it's really you.

Carter stands by his window as he watches the cars drive by in the city.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Well, how sick are you?
(Worried)
I don't understand how you could have gotten this sick. Is there a chance that I might also get this as well? I don't want my life to end anytime soon.

He goes through his drawls and finds a picture of them two together at a party years ago.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(Concerned)

I don't know what to say. You only have a few more days left? This is just ludicrous. Never, have I known anyone who's been in your situation. Why did you leave me out of the blue?

Carter has now finished dressing. He is wearing jeans and a nice formal top.

I loved you so much and it seemed to take an eternity to get over you. All my dreams have come true but it never felt right without you here with me.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(Surprised/Angry)

No, no, tell me this can't be true. There is no way that is true. How could this happen and you never told me? Fuck, fuck, I can't believe this. So that's why you left? How could you keep this from me?

(Furious)

I would've been too young to deal with it in my life? Damn right I was and I still am. I can't have this budding into everything that I've worked so hard to get. You leave me, then call up years after and tell me about this? I just cannot have this big distraction in my life. What do you want me to say? This isn't fair at all.

Carter walks around the room furious and kicks a chair out of frustration.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(Looks up at the ceiling)

Kill me, this cannot be happening to me right now. Do you even have the decency to tell me his name and his age?

(Angry)

Bryce? Are you fucking kidding me?
(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

How dare you name him after my grandfather? What gives you the right after what you did to me? He's 4 years old. And you wait until the last minute to tell me about him? What do you mean it's either me or a foster home? How am I supposed to react to this huh? I just cannot take care of him, please understand.

(Surprised)

What? Why would you even send him here? I don't want to break the little guy's heart. You know when I was a kid, my dad treated me like shit. I don't want to do that to him as well.

(Now calm)

The responsibility is just too much for me, April just tell him to head back. Plea-

Before Carter could say please, April hangs up the phone. Carter lies down on his bed trying to congest all the information.

3. INT. HOTEL FRONT RECEPTION - NIGHT

In Reception there is a counter with a chair and some plants in the background. Sitting at reception is CLAUDE, 18 years old, watching a show on a small television.

4. EXT/INT. HOTEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Little boy BRYCE, 4 years old, gets out of a taxi and walks into the hotel.

5. INT. HOTEL FRONT RECEPTION - NIGHT

Claude leans over the counter as Bryce approaches.

CLAUDE

Hey lil guy, can I help you? Are you lost?

BRYCE

(Shy)

I'm here to see my daddy. Mummy told me his name was Carter.

Claude moves further inside the reception area, so Bryce cannot hear the conversation.

CLAUDE
(Surprised)
No way! He can't possibly be yours
Carter, could he?

CARTER
It looks like it, Claude.
I seriously don't know what I
am going to do.

CLAUDE
(Aggressive)
You can't do this to yourself
Carter. You're living it up right
now and if you go through with
this, one day when your old, you
will regret this decision.
You've worked so hard to get to
where you are right now.
For God's sakes, I look up to you.

CARTER
I know what you're saying Claude
and it's not fair that I only heard
about Bryce today but his mum is
going to die soon and he will be
alone and after all, he is my son.

Carter picks up a photograph of him and his mother.

CARTER (CONT'D)
It's just that I know what it's
like to go through life not having
a father that cared for you.

CLAUDE
Now come on, Carter, pull yourself
together. Don't you remember what
you told me on my first day?

CARTER
(Reminiscing)
I saw you with your girlfriend and
I asked you if you were using
condoms. You said sometimes, I
told you that you're best to use
them all the time because...

CARTER/CLAUDE
once you get a kid your whole life
is over.

CLAUDE

Exactly sir. You see, your life would be over, no more going out every night. There would be a strict no drinking policy because there's a kid with you and you just won't be able to do all the exciting things you normally do because you have to baby sit. Do you really want that life at such a young age?

CARTER

(Convinced)

You're right, Claude. I've been through too much shit for it to be all in vain. Thank you, Claude for knocking me back into the real world. I'm just way too young to have the pressure of a child in my busy life schedule.

CLAUDE

Plus you don't even know the kid, could not even be yours. So you want me to tell the kid to fuck off?

CARTER

No that won't be necessary. I will come down and tell him myself. Just tell him to keep tight and I'll be there soon.

8. INT. HOTEL FRONT RECEPTION - NIGHT

CLAUDE

As you wish, sir.

Claude leans over the counter once more to talk to Bryce

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Alright he's going to be here but let me just warn you right now.

(Angrily)

You better not try anything stupid or else, okay?

Bryce stands there scared and doesn't say a word.

9. INT. LOBBY ELEVATOR/HOTEL FRONT RECEPTION - NIGHT

Carter enters from the elevator. As Carter passes, Claude gives him a fist pump to his chest.

CLAUDE
(Proudly)
Stay strong

Carter walks by and gives Claude a fist pump back. Carter now stands face-to-face with Bryce.

CARTER
So you must be, Bryce? I'm Carter.
(Calm)
Sooooooo apparently you're my son.

BRYCE
Mummy said you would be taller

CARTER
Haha, well maybe I've shrunk a little.
(Condescending)
I'm sorry to break the bad news to you in this way buddy, but I can't take care of you. At least not right now. It's just... It's just I can't.

Bryce starts to cry.

BRYCE
You don't want to be my daddy?

Carter kneels down.

BRYCE (CONT'D)
(Upset)
Please don't leave me, I don't want to be alone anymore. Mummy told me that you would take care of me. I don't want to be alone.

CARTER
(Carter stands)
Hey look buddy, life is hard and is an eternal struggle. You're best to learn it right now then later on in your life when not everything is going as planned. Now go on, someday you will thank me for this.

Carter walks away while Bryce stands there crying. Bryce runs to Carter and clings onto him.

BRYCE

No, don't go daddy. You're the only thing I have left in this world.

CARTER'S POV- Freeze frame at Carter turning around and looking at Bryce.

CARTER (V.O.)

Daddy? That's me? I'm a dad?

(Smiling)

I'm a dad. Haha, listen to myself, why do I suddenly feel weird. I know why, it's because I'm a dad.

(Serious)

Look at him. I'm a daddy. I'm his daddy. I'm a dad.

(Curious)

Only thing I have left in this world? It couldn't be that April still remembers, could it?

Carter looks down at his necklace.

FLASHBACK- 5 years ago

10. EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

A beautiful young girl wearing a hooded jacket and tracksuit pants, APRIL, 16. She is sitting on top of a dark & handsome young, CARTER, 16. He is wearing a jumper and torn jeans. They sit on the playground swings and Carter is holding April tightly as they gently sway side-to-side on the swings. April looks up and notices a tall building far away.

APRIL (YOUNG)

Do you ever wonder how much money those people make in that building, a day?

CARTER (YOUNG)

Probably more then we make a year.

APRIL (YOUNG)

Oh that reminds me.

(Reaches into her pocket)

I got this for you.

April gives Carter a necklace that has the symbols C.J on it.

APRIL (YOUNG) (CONT'D)
I know it isn't nothing special,
but it's the best I could get with
money I make.

CARTER
You are the best you know that?
Thank you so much.

April looks at the building again.

APRIL (YOUNG)
I wonder if they ever notice people
like us.

CARTER (YOUNG)
What, low life's who live in the
slums?

APRIL (YOUNG)
(Punches Carter)
No idiot, as in people who have got
the talent to make it in the real
world but don't have the money or
publicity to be exposed.

CARTER (YOUNG)
(Sarcastically)
Yer, it's called Idol and So you
think you can dance.

APRIL (YOUNG)
Yer, but they've got a really good
background story like "they've been
diagnosed with a disease and
survived it as a child". Stuff like
that. What have we got? Grew up
in an ordinary neighbourhood where
nothing ever really happens.

CARTER (YOUNG)
And you don't think that's a good
enough background? Us being poor
all our lives and having to wear
the same clothes all the time?

APRIL (YOUNG)
Probably, how would I know?

CARTER (YOUNG)
Poverty is a joke to people who
have never experienced it.
(MORE)

CARTER (YOUNG) (CONT'D)
Rich people just pretend like we don't exist because they don't want to know that one day they're all going to end up just like us. They know the inevitable is going to happen sooner or later. When I'm older, I'm going to be a millionaire and shower poor people with money. But right now you're the only thing I have left in this world and I'm with you, everything feels right. We'll just have to wait until our time comes. Nothing is going to hold us back from our dreams. Nothing.

Carter looks up at the building with a grin while April stares down faintly at her stomach.

APRIL (YOUNG)
(Worried)
Yerp, nothing...

END FLASHBACK

Carter turns to Bryce.

CARTER
Bryce, who told you that?

BRYCE
Mummy used to always say it to me before I went to sleep.

CARTER
(Shocked)
That's what I used to say to her. I can't believe this. She still remembers.

BRYCE
Mummy said that I would meet my daddy today and everything would be alright because he would take care of me.

Claude is shown in the background crossing his arms. Carter puts his hands on Bryce's shoulders then hugs him. Carter notices that there is a note inside Bryce's pocket. He takes the note out.

CARTER
(Opens the note)
What's this?

APRIL (V.O.)

Dear Carter, I hope this all doesn't shock you too much. This was the reason I left you 4 years ago. I saw that you had so many dreams and I knew that if you were to take care of Bryce that it would destroy those dreams. Someday I was going to come back but the distractions of my illness prevented it. I'd been reading the newspaper and seen the type of person you've become. If you are reading this I just want to remind of the things you said you'd do when you became rich, you seemed to have lost your way somewhere along the track and forgot what you fought so hard for. Just remember that there is people who are lower then you and don't let poverty become a joke to you as well. You now have probably met Bryce. He looks just like you. He's also smarter then he looks, must have got it from you. Anyway I hope you take care of him because he should be with his father. I'm sorry to bring this up all of a sudden but he needs you. I will always love you, Take care Carter. Love April.

CARTER

Hey Bryce, I'm sorry that I haven't been part of your life. Truth is, I couldn't deal with being a parent back then and probably right now. But when I think of how I grew up with only my mum taking care of me, I remembered telling myself to never let that happen to my children. And if your mother was willing to trust and believe in me to parent you, then I might as well give it a try. I owe it to her.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(Hugs Bryce)

Come on buddy, I've waited way too long to miss out on this opportunity. Let's go find your mum.

Bryce and Carter start to walk outside. Claude stands there astonished.

CLAUDE
(Angrily)
But sir, What happened to being strong?

CARTER
(looks back and laughs)
Oh Claude, get a life

Claude looks in disbelief as Carter and Bryce walk out the door.

THE END