



Written by



FADE IN:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

New Orleans, USA.

Morning rush hour, heavy traffic, people running around, too busy to notice a beautiful sunny day. We go east on Magazine Street on West Riverside, we cut through Audubon Park and stop at number 5919 Covenant Nursing Home.

FADE TO:

INT. COVENANT NURSING HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Inside a bedroom, a grumpy black man, RICHARD TIMES (80) lays down in bed with his back towards the door, facing a wall.

The room is small and dark with a few personal items scattered around. On the nightstand, we can see a rotting apple next to an old mechanic clock. A walking cane sits next to the nightstand. A pair of dirty socks on the floor and a house slipper by the bed.

On the small desk, a pile of old newspapers covers a manuscript.

CU on the newspapers. We can see the date 1 June 1984. 

CU on the manuscript. We can see only three letters from the title "RED..."

Richard stares at the wall, listening to the sound of the clock.

TICK-TOCK, TICK, TOCK... 

KNOCK, KNOCK. 

Someone knocks at the door.

HOPE (O.S.)  
Richard, are you up?

Richard takes a deep breath.

Nurse HOPE (30's ) a strong, curvy, optimistic black woman, enters the room.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
Morning, gorgeous.

RICHARD

Go away!

HOPE

It's time to get up.

RICHARD

Why do you bother me every day?

HOPE

It's my job to "bother" you every day.

Hope pulls the curtains.

HOPE (CONT'D)

C'mon... it's beautiful outside.  
Your friends are waiting.

Richard stands up and looks around for his slippers.

RICHARD

Friends?

HOPE

Yes, Gloria and Marcus.

RICHARD

Marcus, that thief! He stole my  
pudding, ya know.

Richard can't find one of his slippers.

HOPE

It was a mistake.

RICHARD

Mistake, my ass! He's a thief and a  
liar.

Hope reaches under the bed and pulls out the missing shoe.

HOPE

Here now, c'mon. Today is a new  
day!

RICHARD

It's like living in the jungle...

HOPE

C'mon, now. You don't want him to  
steal your breakfast, too.

RICHARD

Better not... I'm getting tired of  
him pushing my buttons!

HOPE

Richie. Be nice.

EXT. GARDEN PATIO AREA - MOMENTS LATER

A yellowish wooden fence surrounds the garden. Different types of flowers and vegetation grow along the fence.

In the centre of the garden we can see two old wooden benches facing each other showing different shades of red, washed away by the rain.

A dozen old people have breakfast on the patio area. The tables and chairs are made of metal painted in white showing spots of rust here and there. The pavement is made out of some type of white stones. All the stones have marks and scratches on them from people dragging chairs left and right.

GLORIA (60's) a sweet, old lady, the perfect grandmother, wearing a black dress with red roses, and MARCUS (70's) a self-important man the type that demands respect but shows very little in return, sit at the same table.

Richard looks around for an empty seat.

GLORIA

Over here, honey! I saved you a chair.

RICHARD

Thanks, Gigi, but I don't sit next to sticky fingers over there.  
(pointing at Marcus)

GLORIA

Oh honey. You still mad about that?

MARCUS

C'mon, Richie.

RICHARD

Don't "C'mon, Richie" me, you hungry wildebeest!

MARCUS

Hey Mr. Blunose, I wasn't the only one at the table...

GLORIA  
So now it's my fault?!

RICHARD  
Yeah, you're supposed to watch him.

GLORIA  
Dear Lord. You've lost your mind,  
Richie!

RICHARD  
All right, all right... Just so you  
know... from now on, I won't get up  
until I'm done.

Marcus smiles.

MARCUS  
Not even to pee?

RICHARD  
I'll pee on you. How about that?!

MARCUS  
Beat it!

RICHARD  
Mind your potatoes, pimp nails!

GLORIA  
Can you two try to get along?  
You're driving me crazy.

RICHARD  
He started it!

MARCUS  
Started what?

RICHARD  
What do you mean, "what"?!

GLORIA  
Oh Lord, it's gonna be a long  
day...

Richard takes a seat and notices Gigi's dress.

RICHARD  
Red roses... it's Monday again?

MARCUS  
You don't even know what day it is?  
(smiling)

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Do you know where you are? Are you lost old man?

RICHARD

One of these days your mug is gonna meet my fist... "old man".

Doctor AMKAR (45), a self-righteous man, could have been easily an aristocrat, and nurse Hope walk into the garden area.

AMKAR

Morning, everyone! I have some good news to share with you.

RICHARD

Marcus is moving out?

MARCUS

Beat it!

GLORIA

Richie --

AMKAR

As I was saying... There is a school program called "A Friend In Need," where children --

RICHARD

No. I don't need that.

AMKAR

Mr. Richard, you'll have plenty of time to complain when I'm done.

RICHARD

No can do.

AMKAR

Yes you can.

RICHARD

I'm not baby-sitting no kid; I tell you that.

AMKAR

You are not baby-sitting. You are going to interact with them, play games, talk --

RICHARD

No. No time for that, ya know.

AMKAR

Mr. Richard, you have nothing but time!

RICHARD

I'm eighty. What're you talkin' about? My time is gone!

AMKAR

For the remaining time that you have left you are under my care.

RICHARD

Well, I don't like your cold treatment.

AMKAR

Like it or not, I decide what's best for you.

Doctor Amkar walks away.

LATE 

Richard turns to Gloria and Marcus.

RICHARD

Why we gotta listen to Doctor Dictator, anyway?

GLORIA

I think it's great to have some sweet, little angels around here.

MARCUS

Yes... someone to fetch me my slippers!

GLORIA

Get serious, Marcus.

Marcus smiles.

MARCUS

I am.

GLORIA

You better be nice to them children. I will slap that smile off your face... so help me God!

RICHARD

Now you gonna watch him, huh?

Hope comes over and puts her arm on Richard's shoulder.

HOPE

Do it for me, gorgeous. Please.

FADE TO:

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - DAY

A big living room with the couch facing a big TV set. A ray of light passing through an open window illuminates a family picture hanging on a wall. In the picture (black and white) we can see a beautiful couple and a four years old boy. The place is dead silent.

Ben (16) a white teenage boy, a rebel with long hair, sits on the couch reading a book.

CU on the book. We can see the title "Robinson Crusoe".

His mother(30) a strong and independent woman with a soft side towards her son, walks inside the house with groceries and goes into the kitchen.

BEN'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Ben, sweetheart come and give me a hand.

(a beat)

Ben do you hear me?

Ben turns a page from the book.

BEN

Chill, I'm coming.

BEN'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Take your time why not. By the way I'm making burgers today.

BEN

Awesome!

Ben jumps up and runs into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Ben helps his mother with the groceries.

BEN'S MOTHER

I have another great news.

BEN  
No salad today just burgers?

BEN'S MOTHER  
You wish. I signed you up for this school program.

She gives Ben a pamphlet.

BEN  
A friend in need, what's this?

BEN'S MOTHER  
You're gonna spend some time at a nursing home.

BEN  
That's lame, I don't wanna chill with old people.

BEN'S MOTHER  
Could be fun.

BEN  
I have lots of fun thanks.

BEN'S MOTHER  
If you don't do this, no more skateboard.

BEN  
Fine.

BEN'S MOTHER  
Or going to the library.

BEN  
That's not fair why am I being punished?

BEN'S MOTHER  
You're not.

BEN  
Yes way, ig time.

Ben runs away into his bedroom.

BEN'S MOTHER  
Ben come back!

BEN  
I'm going to my room, Jennifer!

Ben slams the door behind him.

JENNIFER

What about the burgers? You love them.

BEN (O.S.)

I don't like how they taste today.

EXT. GARDEN PATIO AREA - DAY

Richard, Gloria, and Marcus sit together as usual. Doctor Amkar walks in with a group of boys and girls, ages 14-16.

AMKAR

Morning, everyone! As we discussed, these are the volunteers that will be spending time with you. I will assign one for each resident.

(beat)

That includes you too, Mr. Richard.

RICHARD

I didn't say nothing. Why are you picking on me for?!

AMKAR

Just making sure that you are paying attention; that's all.

MARCUS

Yeah. Pay attention, you old fool!

RICHARD

I may be old... but I'm no fool, ya know.

GLORIA

Dear Lord... Stop it, you two! Listen to what the good doctor says.

AMKAR

Ok, let's begin!

RICHARD

(to: Gloria)

Just so you know, he was picking on me. The "good doctor" hates me!

GLORIA

He doesn't hate you.

MARCUS  
I hate you!

Doctor Amkar comes over to Richard with BEN.

AMKAR  
Mr. Richard, I would like for you  
to meet Ben. I hope that you'll  
become good friends.

MARCUS  
Ha! This grumpy, old fool?

RICHARD  
Mind your potatoes.

Doctor Amkar walks away.

GLORIA  
Don't worry, Ben. The toughest  
cookie has a soft interior.  
(beat)  
C'mon, Marcus. Let's go.

MARCUS  
(to Ben)  
Good luck, shorty.

Ben and Richard remain alone at the table.

RICHARD  
Well... sit down, boy!

BEN  
I don't have to listen to you.

RICHARD  
Good, so you're gonna stand there  
all day smart ass?

A moment of silence.

Ben takes a seat.

BEN  
I've decided to sit.

RICHARD  
Good for you, seaweed.

BEN  
What?!

RICHARD  
Nothing.

BEN  
So... do you want to play a game?

RICHARD  
No.

BEN  
Um... do you want to talk?

RICHARD  
No.

BEN  
How about a walk then?

RICHARD  
No.

BEN  
So we're just going to chill.

RICHARD  
What?!

BEN  
Chill, hang out.

RICHARD  
I don't feel like bumping gums with you.

BEN  
What?!

Moment of silence.

RICHARD  
How long you're gonna be here for?

BEN  
I don't know... an hour? Maybe two?

RICHARD  
Damn.  
(a beat)  
Did you see the Pelicans' game yesterday?

BEN  
Who?

RICHARD  
Pelicans? Baseball?

BEN  
I don't follow sports.

RICHARD  
What kind of kid doesn't watch  
baseball?! What's wrong with you,  
boy?!

BEN  
Chill, we can watch it together if  
it's such a big deal.

RICHARD  
No, you're supposed to watch the  
game with your father! What the  
hell is he doing, anyway?

A moment of silence.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Boy, I asked you a question.

BEN  
He... died.

A beat.

RICHARD  
Damn. I didn't know.

A moment of silence.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
How about a game of chess?

BEN  
That's lame, old people play that.

RICHARD  
What do kids do?

BEN  
I like to read books and--

RICHARD  
(sarcastic)  
You need?

BEN  
Totally, I'm a major reader.

RICHARD  
So you're a couch potato.

BEN  
I'm what?

RICHARD  
(sarcastically)  
Don't worry there's no couch around here.

Ben looks away.

BEN  
I don't think I like cookies anymore.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - DAY

KITCHEN

Ben helps his mother prepare dinner.

JENNIFER  
So did you make a friend?

BEN  
I met someone, yes.

JENNIFER  
Who?

BEN  
Richard a very old guy.

JENNIFER  
His probably a sweet old grandpa.

BEN  
So sweet it makes your teeth hurt.

JENNIFER  
He can't be that bad maybe he just needs some time to warm up to you.

BEN  
Maybe, from what I saw he's not warming up to no one.

JENNIFER  
So what did you do? Did you play a game or something?

BEN

No, I mean he wanted to play chess  
but no.

JENNIFER

So play chess next time, simple  
right?

BEN

Yes really "simple".

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

The library is a big old beautiful building, there is more  
empty space than books and bookshelves. Only a giant car  
reach the ceiling, light passes through large windows filing  
up the space and casting shadows here and there. In this  
magic place people whisper to each other.

Ben browsing around while carrying his skateboard.

CU on the skateboard, we can see the cartoon character "Lone  
Ranger" printed on the skateboard.

BEN'S POV - VICTORIA (16) a nerdy princess. She puts some  
books back on the shelf.

BACK TO SCENE

Ben approaches her nervously.

BEN

Hi.

VICTORIA

Hi, Ben. What are you looking for  
today?

BEN

You.

VICTORIA

Sorry?!

BEN

I need your help, I need a book  
about chess.

VICTORIA

You want to learn how to play  
chess?

BEN

Yes.

VICTORIA

Cool, it should be under the letter  
C or G for games.

Ben follows Victoria through the maze. They stop in front of  
large book shelf as Victoria begins to search.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Oh, here it is. Chess master, no,  
beginners. Here you go.

Victoria hands over the book to Ben.

BEN

Thanks.

VICTORIA

Your welcome. Anything else?

BEN

No.

VICTORIA

Ok catch you later.

Victoria walks away.

Ben talking to himself.

BEN

And a book about chicken out  
please.

FADE TO:

EXT. GARDEN PATIO AREA - DAY

Gloria and Marcus sit on a bench in the garden. Ben walks  
towards them.

BEN

Hello.

GLORIA

Hi, honey!

BEN

Ms. Gloria, have you seen Mr.  
Richard?

GLORIA  
No, darling. And call me Gigi.

MARCUS  
Nobody's seen Mr. Bluenose today.

GLORIA  
Marcus...

Hope walks by.

BEN  
Nurse Hope, have you seen Mr. Richard?

HOPE  
I think he's in his room. Why don't you go see if you can get him to come out of there?

BEN  
Okay. Which one is it?

HOPE  
Up the stairs, and first one on the left.

BEN  
Thank you.

HOPE  
Good luck, gorgeous.

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 

Ben knocks at the door and walks in.

BEN  
Mr. Richard, are you here?

RICHARD (O.S.)  
I'm on the toilet!

BEN  
Oh, sorry. Can I wait for you here?

RICHARD (O.S.)  
Damn it...  
(beat)  
Yeah, I guess.

BEN  
So, I learned chess, maybe we can  
play now.

RICHARD (O.S.)  
Boy, I'm trying to do something in  
here...

BEN  
Sorry!

Ben walks around the room, whistling.

RICHARD (O.S.)  
And stop whistling, damn it!

BEN  
Sorry!

Ben glances over the pile of newspapers. He sees the  
manuscript:

BEN (CONT'D)  
R, E, D...

Ben picks up the manuscript.

BEN'S POV - THE NEWSPAPER

Now we can see the full title: "REDEMPTION".

BACK TO SCENE 

BEN (CONT'D)  
Redemption.

Ben starts reading the script.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DOCKS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The New Orleans Docks, the busiest place in the city, this  
beast made of metal and wood, that is always hungry and never  
gets tired. Cargo ships coming and going, blowing their  
horns. Metal cranes dancing in the sky, people running around  
like ants loading and unloading merchandise while others are  
working on expanding the docks.

A young Richard, skinny, tall, wearing ragged cloths,  and his  
best friend, ABEL (16), small and skinny (a young preacher),  
sit by the docks under an old broken crane and are about to  
have lunch. Abel prays.

RICHARD (V.O.)

It was 1920, the beginning of the Jazz Era. I still remember those summer days working by the docks with my best friend, Abel. We were only sixteen. Kids these days are so lucky...

(beat)

Back to Abel: he used to say a prayer before every meal. What was more annoying, was that he actually convinced me to wait for him.

The busy docks make Abel's prayer sound like a whisper in the wind:

ABEL

Thank you, Lord, for the food we are about to receive.

RICHARD

Can we eat now?!

ABEL

Thank you, also, for giving patience to my friend.

RICHARD

I'm hungry, ya know?!

ABEL

Amen, Lord.

RICHARD

Forget patience... how about some money instead?!

ABEL

God doesn't give money.

RICHARD

Why not?

ABEL

It says so in the Bible.

RICHARD

Like you read the Bible!

ABEL

I didn't, but I'm telling you.

RICHARD

Yeah. Right.

ABEL

You're not much of a believer, are you?

RICHARD

Oh, I believe you're full of shit! I also believe that I'm gonna be rich some day.

ABEL

Yeah, you've told me. You've told everyone that...

RICHARD

Yeah, boy. That's why they call me Richie!

ABEL

What about her?

RICHARD

Who?

ABEL

Angela Love.

RICHARD

She's gonna be my wife.

ABEL

Yeah, sure. Who's full of shit now?!

RICHARD

Damn, she's fine. Just wait and see, boy!

BACK TO:

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Richard comes out of the bathroom and catches Ben reading his script.

RICHARD

Whatcha doin', boy? Put that back!

BEN

Sorry, Mr. Richard.

RICHARD

Who said that you can read my script?!

BEN

No one. I just... I saw it there  
and... I like to read... and --

Richard snatches the script from Ben.

RICHARD

Never go through my stuff again.  
Got that?!

BEN

Yes, Mr. Richard. I'm sorry!

RICHARD

Swear you won't tell no one?

BEN

Why?

RICHARD

Because I say so. Swear it!

BEN

Okay. I promise. Chill.

EXT. GARDEN PATIO AREA - DAY

Richard and Ben sit on the bench in the garden and play chess.

RICHARD

Why did you put the knight there?

BEN

What knight?

RICHARD

That knight, the horse.

BEN

Because that's how a horse moves.

RICHARD

I know that... but why there?  
What's your plan?

BEN

I don't have a plan. The book said  
you have to move the pieces around  
so you can win.

RICHARD

The book?! Listen boy, chess is like life. You gotta have a plan. A man has a plan... always!

BEN

Um... but I'm not a man. I'm only 16.

RICHARD

Boy, when I was your age, I already had a job... and a plan!

BEN

Don't you have to grow up to be a man?

RICHARD

So who's stopping you?

Ben looks up for a moment.

BEN

Okay, I will think about a plan.

RICHARD

Don't take too long. Sometimes, there's no time to think. Gotta act, ya know.

BEN

Dude, that's what I did when I moved the horse!

RICHARD

Dude?!

BEN

Sorry. I meant to say Richie.

RICHARD

Who said you can call me Richie?

BEN

Well everybody does it. Plus it sounds cool, Richie the chess master.

FADE TO:

EXT. GARDEN PATIO AREA - DAY

Richard, Gloria and Marcus sit outside in the garden.