

ANIMAL HEARTS

Original Screenplay

by

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WGAw

FADE IN:

EXT. A CITY STREET - DAY

Gray skies. Grimy, brick buildings. Pedestrians crowd busy sidewalks.

The passing cars are 2025 era Teslas, Camrys, Fords. They are old, rusted.

A cop car moves along in the queue. It's much newer, high tech, from ten or twenty years into the future.

Behind the cop is a large, beat up van.

INT. VAN - DAY - INTERCUT

Two hands rest in the lap of the driver. Calm. A message comes over an audio system.

SYSTEM
(filtered)
Traffic delays on current route due
police air traffic. Please select
an alternate route or manual
guidance.

New ROUTES A B C are shown on the van's large, in-dash screen, each in a different color on the map.

The shadow of an approaching finger moves toward the screen.

SYSTEM (CONT'D)
(filtered)
Route B selected. Re-calculating.

The van turns at the next corner.

INSERT: UNDER THE VAN - INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

Strapped to the brake line is a bomb. Small. RED blinking light.

A traffic LIGHT turns RED, and the van stops in a queue of other vehicles.

The red blinking light on the bomb reflects in a pool of water between the front tire and the curb. Light rain begins, lands in the water, rippling the red light.

The traffic light turns green.

The van moves, following other cars. Picks up speed.

It approaches a traffic light that turns yellow.

Under the car, the tiny bomb detonates. Brake fluid squirts.

The van barrels toward the intersection as the traffic light turns RED.

The driver's foot moves from an idle position to the brake pedal and presses, but the pedal goes straight to the floor with no resistance.

The driver's hands reach for the steering wheel.

The van spins, sideways, enters the intersection, smashes into a smaller car, spinning it in a circle and creating a chain reaction of LOUD smash ups.

Glass flies.

The van rolls, crashes into a truck and comes to an abrupt stop.

Blood falls from the driver's door, lands in a pool of water.

A car avoiding the pile up flies over the curb into a fire hydrant, projecting it into a store window.

PEDESTRIANS scream, scramble, fall to the sidewalk.

Water gushes upward from the displaced hydrant.

The rain intensifies. It washes the blood falling from the van away.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

Distinctly modern. Tall buildings with garden rooftops that kiss the sky. The city is gleaming, new, modern.

The Hudson and East Rivers are each the foundation of a bright column of BLUE LIGHT known as "The Wall."

SUPER: ONE WEEK EARLIER.

EXT. FIFTH AVE - DAY

VIKKI LOURDE (40), carries a briefcase. She's thin, elegant, beautiful, like every face in the crowd. That's the norm.

Holo Screens float in the sky with news, ads, and public information.

At street level, the walls of every building are giant advertisements bombarding PASSERSBY with media.

Storefront windows display beautiful holographic MANNEQUINS modeling outfits that change every few seconds.

GREATA WINSLOW (50), just ahead of Vikki, stops to admire a pencil skirt on a thin, holo-mannequin. RED laser LIGHT scans Greata's face, and the mannequin speaks.

MANNEQUIN

Hello, Ms. Winslow. This skirt comes in many colors. Would you like to try it on? I can arrange a personal holo shopper to visit your home.

The mannequin now looks identical to Greata, wearing the skirt, sized to fit over Greata's larger hips.

A new screen appears next to the mannequin showing a drone bearing an Amazon logo descending vertically. It hovers above a suburban driveway, drops cardboard packages.

The rocket driven props drive the drone upward, straight into the troposphere.

MANNEQUIN/HOLO GREATA

And remember we deliver to any address in the world within minutes via transatmospheric drone.

The mannequin shifts, lets a hip slide to one side.

MANNEQUIN/HOLO GREATA (CONT'D)

This blue color matches our eyes. Don't we look fabulous? And there is an eighteen percent discount for Platinum Prime members like us. Don't we just love it?

Vikki stands next to Greata, admires the skirt.

MANNEQUIN/HOLO GREATA (CONT'D)

To complete the purchase, you must pay the supplemental property tax bill on your Park Avenue co-op. Payment is overdue, and a penalty has been applied. Would you like to settle this bill?

Greata raises her middle finger to the holographic representation of herself in the window.

GREATA
Go fuck yourself.

VIKKI
Isn't that apropos.

Fuming, Greata walks away.

The mannequin now looks like Vikki, the skirt now GREEN to match her eyes.

MANNEQUIN/HOLO VIKKI
Hello, Ms. Lourde. This skirt
matches our eyes. Don't we look
fabulous?

Vikki continues on her way.

EXT. VIKKI'S BUILDING - DAY

Vikki's face is scanned. A soothing, robotic VOICE named AIME (Amy) welcomes her.

AIME
(filtered)
Welcome home, Ms. Lourde.

A door dissolves and Vikki enters.

INT. VIKKI'S BUILDING - DAY

AIME, holographic, androgynous, plainly beautiful, in a skin tight jumpsuit, escorts Vikki toward a bank of elevators as the exterior door RE-APPEARS.

AIME
(filtered)
Do you require services?

VIKKI
No. Has Elie seen the med-bot yet?

Vikki enters the elevator. AIME stands outside the car.

AIME
(filtered)
Dr. Landon is inside your
apartment.

VIKKI
In person?

AIME
(filtered)
Yes. He passed all viral and
bacterial scans subsequent to the
elevator car's infrared
decontamination protocol.

Vikki is bathed in RED LIGHT as the elevator door closes,
and AIME gently dissipates.

INT. VIKKI'S APARTMENT - DAY

The heavy wooden door displays Vikki's image as her face is
scanned. The words "entry approved" are spoken softly from
an indistinct source. The door dissipates, and Vikki
enters.

The "wooden door" is recreated. Vikki drops her purse and
briefcase on a sleek counter.

VIKKI
Hello?

She heads down a long hallway.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A corner room in the sky. Three of the four walls are floor-
to-ceiling glass displaying a full moon and scattered
clouds.

DR. WILLIAM LANDON (64), a touch of gray, distinguished,
stands next to a bed resting at the foot of the only solid
wall in the room.

ELTON "ELIE" RAY (40), long wavy hair, baby face, earrings,
rests comfortably in the bed, propped up, alert but tired.
Elie eyes the doctor who reads various floating holographic
displays of data: heart rate, EKG, BP, PSA, CRP, etc.

ELIE
It's not a stock ticker, Doc. The
same information as ten minutes
ago. You should just enjoy the
view.

Dr. Landon glances out the window.

DR. LANDON
It's lovely. You've got a great
spot.

ELIE

You know even from this height, you
can't see over the wall.

Elie points toward the artificial, wall of blue light
rising from the East River where the city somehow ends.

ELIE (CONT'D)

We bought this place before they
projected that smoke screen. And I
don't mind telling you, I like the
old view better.

DR. LANDON

My God, why? All those exposed fire
escapes from another century.

ELIE

Don't you think we should
modernize, rather than conceal
their existence?

DR. LANDON

You're an activist, Elie. I'm a
physician. I offer only medical
opinions.

Vikki enters.

VIKKI

Then give us one.

ELIE

Dr. Landon, my wife, Vikki.

DR. LANDON

A pleasure to meet you, Ms. Lourde.

They shake hands.

VIKKI

And you. To what do we owe the
privilege of a house call from a
genuine human being?

ELIE

Mother's meddling, dear. Need you
ask?

DR. LANDON

Mrs. Ray was concerned, like any
loving mother.

VIKKI

Any mother with the juice to invade our privacy.

ELIE

Indeed, but I'm betting Dr. Landon here has a stellar resume.

VIKKI

Of course. Why would Mother Ray hire a quack?

Vikki eyes the display info. Notices something.

VIKKI (CONT'D)

The CRP is still elevated. Did you run a vessel scan?

DR. LANDON

I did.

VIKKI

And?

The doctor hesitates.

ELIE

Just spit it out, Doc. We have no secrets in this house. None medical, anyway.

DR. LANDON

The drug therapies are not preventing accumulation of sclerotic blockage. And there's significant arterial inflammation.

VIKKI

The med-bot should have picked-up on that and adjusted his dosage.

DR. LANDON

It did. But the pharmaceutical intervention is proving insufficient.

She looks closer at the screen showing the contents of the IV line.

VIKKI

My God the bot has three different statins in this mix. Steroids. An Angio blocker. And it's not working?

ELIE

Ah, proof that the machine medics have destroyed our health care system, as long ago predicted. I believe it was published in your own newspaper, darling.

VIKKI

Among many. So, doctor, what's the diagnosis here?

DR. LANDON

Well, I did a more detailed genetic scan. It shows an anomaly.

Now Vikki grows a concerned.

VIKKI

What kind of anomaly?

DR. LANDON

There is a giant cell arteritis.

VIKKI

That's not genetic. What caused the arteritis?

DR. LANDON

The marker is an atypical form of Kawasaki syndrome.

VIKKI

In an adult? He's forty years old.

DR. LANDON

It is, as I said, atypical. So rare that the marker is not part of the standard scan. Which is why the A-I-M-D was inadequate.

VIKKI

Did you begin intravenous tracer solutions?

DR. LANDON

You're quite knowledgeable for a journalist, Ms. Lourde.

VIKKI

Three years of medical school. Harvard. Mother Ray didn't mention that?

DR. LANDON

In fact, she did. And she also told me about your father. Please know that this is a completely different circumstance.

VIKKI

(angry, but even)

Yes, I understand the differences, thank you. So, the tracer solution?

DR. LANDON

I administered it. But I'm fairly certain that it won't stop the deterioration. My treatment recommendation is a transplant.

A bit of shock.

VIKKI

Does the bot concur?

DR. LANDON

It does. I ran the diagnosis module twice.

VIKKI

So it's approved? Did you submit an organ request and schedule the procedure?

DR. LANDON

There's a minor delay. It seems the request was rejected by the scheduling A-I.

VIKKI

(surprised)

Why?

DR. LANDON

The response code has no detail. But I'm sure we'll get it resolved quickly.

VIKKI

Did you inquire?

DR. LANDON

The A-I referred me to Stemtech, the organ farm, and I received a chat invitation from their A-I.

ELIE

Sweet Jesus! It's finally happened. Our intelligent machines are passing the buck to one another. They have achieved human dysfunctionality. A true test of sentience. Aberrant robot sexual conduct is looming, dear. There's a story pitch for your editor.

VIKKI

Elie, this isn't a joke. You're not going to have a mole removed.

Vikki notices something in the floating numbers. She moves closer, stares, speaks to the doctor.

VIKKI (CONT'D)

The CRP delta is accelerating.
You're correct, doctor. The tracer solution is inadequate.
(realizing)
Is time an issue here?

Dr. Landon hesitates. It's obvious both he and Vikki are very concerned. Elie's demeanor changes. He can't help but show the fear.

Vikki and Dr. Landon focus on the floating numbers. They watch as Elie's heart rate and BP rise.

DR. LANDON

Until we secure the transplant organ, it's important that Elie stay free from undue stress. Why don't we let him rest?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

High ceilings. Tall windows everywhere.

Vikki moves toward a wall displaying a Picasso, she speaks to no one in particular.

VIKKI

Wet bar.

The wall dissipates to reveal a wet bar. She pours a Scotch into a glass from a fancy bottle, drops in a large ice cube.

VIKKI (CONT'D)

Can I offer you a drink, Doctor?

DR. LANDON
Whatever you're having.

She pours another for him, hands it to him.

VIKKI
Scotch. Twenty year.

DR. LANDON
Thank you. Cheers.

They stand in front of the massive view.

VIKKI
Elie needs his new heart rather quickly, doesn't he?

DR. LANDON
Yes. And I will make it a priority to secure the transplant organ. In the meantime, the new medication regimen --

VIKKI
-- It's just a heart. They harvest thousands of them every day. What's going on here?

DR. LANDON
I don't think anything is... going on. Some patients have needs that fall outside the ordinary parameters, and in those cases a farmed organ can be contraindicated.

VIKKI
Then why didn't they say that? And tell me, please, what's outside of the ordinary in Elie's chart?

She speaks upward, toward the ceiling.

VIKKI (CONT'D)
AIME, display Elie's medical records.

A chart floats in front of them.

VIKKI (CONT'D)
(to Dr. Landon)
Show me a flagged risk factor.

Vikki moves closer to the chart, her eyes scanning rapidly.

VIKKI (CONT'D)

No markers associated with transplant rejection. No fever reactions or contraindications to immunosuppressants. No inflammatory or allergic reactions. Something's amiss, doctor.

DR. LANDON

I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation. And I will get it.

Elie walks slowly into the room, all his medical monitoring data floating along beside and above him, the bag of saline and drugs hanging from the pole on a wheeled stand.

Elie eyes the data floating above him, frowns, removes a ring from his finger and puts it down on the bar.

The data windows fade.

Elie looks out the big window.

DR. LANDON (CONT'D)

Elie, you really should rest.

ELIE

Oh, my goodness. I'm doing it again. Making it all about me. How self absorbed.

Vikki stands next to Elie, takes his hand in hers. Both of them look to Dr. Landon for an answer.

VIKKI

We are both are eager to hear the reasonable explanation.

DR. LANDON

I'll submit a request to escalate the case. We'll find a suitable heart and schedule the procedure. That is my priority. And yours --
(to Elie)

-- Is to rest. With that monitor on your finger.

After a beat, Elie picks up the ring and puts it back on. The holographic readings REAPPEAR.

Then Elie turns and faces the window, stares.

ELIE
I really did like the old view
better. A shame I can't drink with
the two of you. I'd offer a toast.

He holds up his empty hand.

ELIE (CONT'D)
To yesterday.

A long beat.

VIKKI
Thank you for the house call,
Doctor. I'll show you to the door.

She leads him to the door.

VIKKI (CONT'D)
And do send warmest regards to
Mother Ray.

She touches the jamb and the door fades. The doctor leaves,
and the door re-appears.

Vikki turns back to Elie as small screen pops up in front
of them showing a call from: LINDA RAY with her picture.

VIKKI (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil.

ELIE
She's calling on my cloud. I'll
take it in the bedroom.

He heads down the hallway, singing.

ELIE (CONT'D)
Hey, hey, you, you, get off of my
cloud...

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Elie rests in bed. LINDA RAY (60), well preserved, thin,
dripping with understated elegance and wealth, stands at
the foot of the bed.

ELIE
Hello Mother. You're looking well.

HOLLO MRS. RAY
Thank you. What did the doctor say?

VIKKI

Doesn't he report directly to you?

Holo Mrs. Ray turns to see Vikki in the doorway.

MRS. RAY

I'm not his patient, Victoria.

VIKKI

You look lovely, Linda.

MRS. RAY

Thank you.

ELIE

So, Mother, you want to know if your detective inspector dressed up as a cardiologist offered me a diagnosis that he didn't disclose to you?

MRS. RAY

Well, did he?

VIKKI

Doubtful.

MRS. RAY

You should trust Dr. Landon. He's the finest cardiologist in all Manhattan.

VIKKI

And I'm sure he'd agree. I'm curious, Linda, how did you know Elie needed medical attention?

MRS. RAY

Please follow the doctor's counsel.

VIKKI

And why would we not do that?

MRS. RAY

I cannot imagine. But my son, despite his genius IQ, sometimes employs a rather mysterious logic. Like wasting his considerable talents making silly games.

ELIE

I've licensed those games for tens of millions, mother.

MRS. RAY

And you give the money away.

VIKKI

Elie has a social conscience.
Perhaps because you raised him
right.

MRS. RAY

You know, Victoria, I too am aware
the weight of my responsibility to
the less fortunate. It is as big as
the checks I write to the tax
authorities every quarter.

Vikki takes a deep breath.

VIKKI

Linda, why don't we put our
differences aside for now? Elie's
more important, don't you think? We
both love him and want him to get
better. We should focus on that.

MRS. RAY

Very well. What is Dr. Landon's
treatment recommendation?

VIKKI

A heart transplant. But there's an
issue. Perhaps you're already
aware?

MRS. RAY

I'm sure it's soon to be resolved.

VIKKI

Some kind of problem at the organ
farm. Aren't you a big stockholder
at Stemtech?

MRS. RAY

I'm one of many.

VIKKI

Perhaps an inquiry from you will
speed the process.

MRS. RAY

To whom? It's a foreign entity.
Impossible to know who has any real
authority. But I'll inquire. In the
mean time, we should rely on Dr.
Landon.

VIKKI

And on ourselves, of course.

INT. VIKKI'S OFFICE - LATER

Vikki has several Holo screens floating in front of her. Each shows a Google search query regarding farmed organs and causes of rejection and the associated insurance code.

VIKKI

Call Susan.

A new screen appears.

After a BEAT, the screen morphs into a holographic representation of SUSAN HANSON (52) in a suit, well groomed, pretty, streaks of gray. She sits in a chair opposite Vikki.

HOLO SUSAN

Hey, Vik. I'm about to give a lecture. We have to make this quick.

VIKKI

Elie's sick. And his mother sent over a Cardiologist named William Landon. He's an arrogant shit. Probably why she picked him. Can you check him out, please?

SUSAN

Sure. What's up with Elie?

VIKKI

I sent you his chart. You tell me. Landon wants to do a transplant. But Stemtech won't give him a farmed heart, and they won't explain why.

HOLO SUSAN

That's odd.

VIKKI

Very. It worries me. Something's wrong about it. And Elie's really sick. His numbers aren't good at all.

Susan glances at a screen visible only to her, reads.

HOLO SUSAN

This denial code requires
explanation. But I don't see it.

(beat)

I'll get it. Okay? Gotta go. I got
a lecture hall full of first year
med students waiting on me. Any
that aren't hooked on Adderral will
fall asleep if I'm even a minute
late.

Susan stands, puts on a business suit jacket.

HOLO SUSAN (CONT'D)

Vik... Kawasaki is genetic. You
know that, right? This isn't like
Dad.

VIKKI

(pissed)

Everyone's a psychiatrist all of a
sudden. Bye, Suz. Get back to me.

Susan's image fades. Vikki types STEMTECH PHARMA into a
search bar and goes to their web site. She touches MEDIA
RELATIONS.

A picture and a short bio of Dr. William Guy appears. She
touches the contact icon.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Elie sits upright in bed, reads on a floating screen. Vikki
enters. He pushes the screen filled with text to the side.

VIKKI

Good morning, darling. Sleep well?

ELIE

You're dressed for business.

VIKKI

I'm heading out for a bit.

ELIE

The organ farm?

VIKKI

You've been snooping.

ELIE

It's a hobby.

VIKKI

I hate to leave you here alone.

ELIE

I have AIME. And Dr. Landon, lord of this bloody ring.

He holds up his hand, the ring aglow with lights.

ELIE (CONT'D)

The doctor is officially engaged to my medical condition. Perhaps you should publish an announcement.

VIKKI

Elie, can you scan me like we do when we play that game you made?

ELIE

Isn't that a little overkill?

VIKKI

It's private, right? Not even that ring can eavesdrop?

ELIE

I use WhatsCommon and their end to end, one pad encryption. Very private.

VIKKI

Perfect. It'll be like I'm right here with you.

ELIE

Yes, but I will also be with you, and I have no desire to visit a vast collection of pigs gestating human organs.

VIKKI

Then why don't you take a nice long nap?

ELIE

I just woke up. Remember that phrase you used to start this conversation? Good morning, I believe it was.

VIKKI

It'll be noon before I get inside the place. Perfect timing.

ELIE

And it's certain to be a rather unpleasant experience. I have a suspicion your beating heart will awaken mine.

VIKKI

(warm smile)

That sounds romantic.

ELIE

Indeed. Aren't you worried that our holographic avatars will have better relationship chemistry than the two of us? I fear we'll become jealous of our doppelgangers.

Her eyes glow, and a phone screen appears.

VIKKI

I don't think even you can code holographic jealousy. What do I do?

His eyes glow and his screen appears.

ELIE

I'm sending you a link.

Various apps are highlighted on Vikki's screen as her pupils move to highlight them.

VIKKI

It's running. Now what?

ELIE

Scan.

Multiple GREEN LASERS emerge from Vikki's phone control screen. The light wraps around her stunning figure.

An exact holographic copy of herself APPEARS.

Elie scans himself. The green lasers wrap around him.

Holo Elie APPEARS, stands next to the bed.

Elie raises a hand. Vikki's hand meets it, like a high five.

The two holographic doppelgangers mirror the high five and light radiates from their intertwined hands.

ELIE (CONT'D)
Doesn't this remind you of old
times?

Vikki's demeanor shifts, a look of intensity on her face
that is mirrored by Holo Vikki.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. WOODED AREA - MORNING

YOUNG VIKKI (10) runs through the trees, distraught. RED
LIGHTS from emergency vehicles flash in the distance behind
her.

She reaches a tall, sturdy tree with ladder rungs nailed
into the thick trunk.

Young Vikki calls upward toward a plywood floor, high in
the canopy.

YOUNG VIKKI
Donnie? Elie? Are you guys up
there? Donnie, please be there.

YOUNG DONNIE peeks his head out from the tree house floor.
He's stocky, short hair.

YOUNG DONNIE
What's the password?

Young Donnie's smile turns to concern when he sees tears
streaming down Vikki's face.

She tries to climb. Get two rungs up and falls. Lays in a
heap, crying.

YOUNG DONNIE (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Young Vikki, on all fours, looks up, shakes her head.

YOUNG ELIE (10) peeks his head over the wood floor. He's
smaller than Donnie, skinny, a mop of curly hair.

YOUNG ELIE
Dude, go help her.

Young Donnie scampers down, quickly.

Elie follows, more careful, a bit fearful, clingy on every
rung of his descent.

When Young Elie reaches the ground, he notices all the flashing lights, more visible outside the canopy above.

Vikki stands, one arm around Donnie's shoulder, tears streaming down her face.

Elie looks back at the lights, knows it's serious.

YOUNG ELIE (CONT'D)

What happened?

YOUNG VIKKI

My dad --

A long beat.

She weeps.

Elie hugs them both, draws all three of them close together.

END FLASHBACK: