KILLING TIME

Written by

Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen

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Contact:

For Greenberg
Derek Zasky
William Morris Endeavor
DZasky@WMEAgency.com
(212) 903-1396

For Rosen
Leah Hamos
The Gersh Agency
lhamos@gersh.com
(212) 634-8153
SCENE 1

A TROPICAL ISLAND – THE GARDEN OF A BRITISH COLONIAL MANSION SOMEWHERE IN THE WEST INDIES

In the distance, a propeller plane BUZZES through the sky on final approach to the small airstrip that borders a golden beach. A BUTLER dressed nattily in a white suit with slicked back, jet black hair, exits the house and screams at the sky.

BUTLER
(French accent)
Ze plane! Ze plane!

A Cockney HOUSEKEEPER with full uniform and beautiful curly hair looks on quizzically.

HOUSEKEEPER
What’s with the French accent?

BUTLER
(posh British accent)
Don’t know. Just sounded right for the moment.

HOUSEKEEPER
Cor! ‘es flyin’ a bit low, doncha fink?

BUTLER
Must be the wind. You have all the orchids? Remember, everyone gets an orchid.

HOUSEKEEPER
Yeah, yeah. We’ve been over this a thousand times with the boss.

BUTLER
I thought this day would never come. All that hard work. Seems a bit extreme just to see a few old friends, but still...impressive.

HOUSEKEEPER
All I knows is, I ‘ad to open up every room in the bloody ‘ouse. I tell you, I’m knackered. My dogs is barkin’.

The airplane flies lower, getting louder and LOUDER. It comes toward them.
HOUSEKEEPER (CONT’D)
You really fink it’s the wind? It’s headed straight for us!

BUTLER
Bloody hell! Get down!

It skids over the palm trees and slides into the side of the house, smoking and sputtering.

HOUSEKEEPER
I’ll get a mop.

She slowly walks toward the front door, ducking under the plane, which now leans up against the side of the house like a surfboard. A PILOT sticks his head through a tiny window at the nose.

PILOT
Sorry bout that.

BUTLER
High winds?

PILOT
Nah, just a little drunk!

BUTLER
Well at least it’s door to door service then, I suppose.

PILOT
Everybody off!

The side door slowly opens, and a staircase unfolds, allowing disoriented passengers to disembark. CAROL BRAND, with blue pants suit and Birkin bag, slightly bedraggled and highly miffed, makes her way down the rickety stairs. She mats down her hair and straightens her Jackie O oversized sunglasses.

CAROL
What the hell kind of airline is this?

BUTLER
Apologies for the unorthodox landing, Ms. Brand. We recently moved the house.

CAROL
What? Just show me to my car. I have a meeting in...(checking phone) What’s wrong with my phone?
BUTLER
Reception here is spotty. But don’t worry, we’ll get you back to your meeting in Buffalo before you can say ‘hot wings.’

CAROL
Where am I?

BUTLER
Think of it as a free holiday.

CAROL
I don’t have time for this. I’m finishing a major merger this afternoon.

BUTLER
Deep breaths. How about a nice glass of Rosé?

CAROL
I’d prefer a Xanax?

BUTLER
Of course. Here you are.

He hands her a bottle of pills as she exits into house and STU, a blue collar type from Long Island dressed in a Spectrum Cable polo shirt, appears.

STU
Whoa, bro, that was frickin’ awesome. We gotta do that again.

BUTLER
Certainly. Just give us a day to fix the plane.

STU
You do what you gotta do. I’m in no rush. I work for the cable company. Where’s the box at?

BUTLER
On the other side of that wall, somewhere between the wing and the cockpit, I believe.

STU
Oh. That’s a whole other department. You gotta schedule another appointment.

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STU (CONT'D)
How ‘bout six weeks from now
between eight a.m. and ten p.m.?

BUTLER
I’ll run it by the boss. In the
meantime, room three.

STU
I get a room? Cool.

KIM KARDASHIAN, dressed all in black, sneers as she walks
down the stairway.

KIM
(all vocal fry)
Uhhhhhhhhhh……you guys! That was
NOT funny.

BUTLER
I’m sorry?

KIM
(shielding eyes from sun)
Rubin? Where are the cameras? Y’all
are hilarious. I’m so not laughing.

BUTLER
I don’t believe anyone is filming,
Ms. Kardashian.

KIM
Are you telling me you MISSED
that?! Did you see that terrifying
nose dive? We almost died. It was
AMAZING. Uch, my hair is so dry.

BUTLER
Sorry.

KIM
Okay, now I’m annoyed. I’m going
back to L.A. Kourtney can stand in
for me.

BUTLER
Unfortunately, I need to keep you
here. Our host has personally
requested you.

KIM
Does he know how much I charge for
personal appearances?
Butler  
He has great resources.

Kim  
He better. This place is giving me Fyre Festival vibes.

As she enters the house, famed Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy exits the plane and descends the stairs. He has a long disheveled white beard and a thick Russian accent.

Tolstoy  
Bozhe (Good lord)! That train ride was longer than my last novel. And almost as painful.

Butler  
It was an aeroplane.

Tolstoy  
I don’t understand.

Butler  
You have been through a sort of tear in the space-time continuum.

Tolstoy  
Who is boss here? I will to compose elaborate letter of complaint! Bring me a Remington Understroke and a ream of paper! Seychas (Now)!

Butler  
There’s a typewriter in your room, Mr. Tolstoy. But first, if I may; you appear to have what I believe is a...Pepperidge Farm Goldfish? In your beard?

Tolstoy fishes it out.

Tolstoy  
Spa-see-ba (thank you). I have thirteen children. Snack time is not pretty.

He pops it in his mouth and wanders in to the house.

Butler  
So the only person left should be...
A very cute 17-YEAR OLD GIRL decked out in a fluorescent pink Gunnysack prom dress, AMY LIEBERMAN, peeks her head out of the airplane door.

    AMY
    Are we, like, alive?

    BUTLER
    Very much so, Miss Lieberman.

    AMY
    Where are we? This doesn’t look like Bergen County.

    BUTLER
    You say that like it’s a bad thing.

    AMY
    Am I still at the prom?

    BUTLER
    You’ll be returned to the Woodcliff Lake Hilton eventually. For the moment, make yourself comfortable inside. (beat) And the wine cooler in your purse can be our little secret.

Amy clutches her purse under her arm as she makes her way into the house. The Housekeeper returns.

    HOUSEKEEPER
    They’re all a little on edge, they are. What do you fink he’s gonna do wiv ‘em?

    BUTLER
    After ten years, I hope it’s something good. Now help me lift this plane.

SFX: GOTHIC SYNTH ORGAN MUSIC A LA PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

SCENE 2

THE PARLOR — A round room with floor to ceiling french doors, open to the breeze. Sheer curtains billow, softening a view of the palm garden and the sea beyond it. Sunlight pours in, and we can hear the crashing waves in the distance. All of our characters are assembled. Carol is on the beige overstuffed linen sofa, furiously typing on her laptop.
CAROL
Damnit. Still no wifi.

Stu scours the walls and floors for cables.

STU
I can’t find the freakin’ modem anywhere.

CAROL
So none of us knows why we’re here?

KIM sits in a peacock wicker chair, scowling into her phone, shaking it aggressively.

KIM
My producers aren’t texting back. How do they expect me to act spontaneous if they don’t tell me what’s gonna happen?

Tolstoy sits at his typewriter.

TOLSTOY
Mees Kardashian – it seems we’ve entered...someone else’s story.

Amy is sitting on the floor cross-legged in her prom dress, drinking her wine cooler.

AMY
Should we at least like go to the beach? This is supposed to be a night to remember.

EDMUND DANTE, a dashingly handsome man of about 50 with a thick mop of hair and sun bronzed skin, appears at the top of the stairs, holding a cane he doesn’t need. He is prone to histrionics.

EDMUND
Oh, you’ll remember tonight, alright.

AMY
Sure. The night I missed my prom.

SFX: THUNDER.

EDMUND
SILENCE, AMY LIEBERMAN!

AMY
You know my name!
EDMUND
I know all of your names. (beat)
Except the cable guy.

STU
Stu.

EDMUND
NOW I know all your names.

SFX: THUNDER.

EDMUND (CONT’D)
And you all know mine; EDMUND DANTE!

SFX: DRAMATIC MUSICAL CHORD.

ALL
Gasp!

KIM
Actually I have no idea who you are.

STU
(referencing tablet)
According to this, I’m supposed to install a new cable box for you in Buffalo today, but--

EDMUND
But you DIDN’T, did you? You WASTED my time!

STU
Huh?

EDMUND
ALL OF YOU WASTED MY TIME. And now I’m going to waste yours.

AMY
On a tropical island?

SFX: ANOTHER CHORD. All the giant louvered storm shutters SLAM closed, darkening the room to a faint eerie glow.

TOLSTOY
Cool.
EDMUND
I’ve spent the past ten years figuring out how to violate the laws of space and time so I could get you all here and exact my revenge. Now your destinies are in MY hands! Hahahaha!

CAROL
Ed? Is that you? What are you talking about? Why aren’t you in Buffalo? When did your hair go gray?

EDMUND
Years ago. You haven’t seen me in a very long time, Carol.

CAROL
Is this some kind of joke? I thought you wanted to make partner.

EDMUND
Of course I WANTED to make partner! But you didn’t care, did you? You didn’t care that I worked eighty hours a week. That I slept in my office and billed more than anyone else. No - you went and promoted Prendergast!

CAROL
Oh, that’s what this is about. Eddie, I was helping you. You were too special for that place. You want to spend your life buried in legal briefs and snow drifts?

EDMUND
That’s not the point. I wasted all that time trying to make partner, and you passed me over like seafood at the Golden Corral.

CAROL
(looking around the house)
For your own good. Think about it. If you’d stayed in Buffalo, your life would have been very different. Trust me. Prendergast is miserable. The job ruined his marriage and his health. Also, look at where you live.
AMY
Yeah, this house is insane.

EDMUND
Oh, uh...thank you.

TOLSTOY
Please to excuse, but why am I here?

EDMUND
War and Peace.

TOLSTOY
You know they make Cliffs Notes, right? Besides, you liked the musical with Josh Groban.

EDMUND
You’re right, damnit!
(turning to cable guy)
But you— you missed your window, which made me late for my train to Albany for my big case, which made me drive faster than I should have, which made me hit that telephone pole and shatter my leg, which meant I could never play golf again.

STU
Dude, I’m sorry I was late. If you got paid what I get paid, you’d be terrible at your job too. Seriously though, I didn’t make you drive too fast. That’s on you.

KIM
Besides, what about golf carts?

EDMUND
And you! Hours of my life wasted watching you argue with your family over carbohydrates and clothes! All you do is sit around the house!

KIM
That’s what makes me relatable, honey. Also, really rich. Because I help people like you forget what they don’t want to think about.
AMY
She’s right. Life’s hard. What’s wrong with a little distraction? Sometimes you just need a break.

EDMUND
Like you needed to break up with me right at the Prom? Within five minutes of getting there. We didn’t even get one dance together.

AMY
I know. But it had nothing to do with you.

EDMUND
Right, right. I know how this speech goes.

AMY
No Eddie, there was someone else I wanted to dance with.

EDMUND
I gathered that. Who was it, Dustin? Asher? Corey?

AMY
Sarah.

EDMUND
What?

AMY
It was becoming clear to me that I wasn’t meant to be...with a guy. At least not then. I planned to tell you because...well...because you were my best friend. And I thought you deserved to know.

EDMUND
Wow. Amy. I had no idea.

AMY
If you had let me finish talking, I was going to explain everything.

EDMUND
I don’t know why I ran away. I guess I was embarrassed. I’m really embarrassed.
AMY
Don’t be. I’m sorry if you feel like our time together was a waste.
I never did.

EDMUND
No, I don’t. Not at all.

AMY
Good. I’m glad. Because I’d be pretty bummed to lose you in my life.

EDMUND
Me too.

KIM
Are you happy now? You got it out of your system.

EDMUND
I’m not sure yet. This didn’t exactly go like I expected.

KIM
No doy. And how long did you spend planning all this?

EDMUND
Ten...ten years.

KIM
But you’re mad at the cable guy for making you wait 45 minutes? Seems like there are more productive ways to spend ten years.

TOLSTOY
It took me less time to write War and Peace and Anna Karenina.

CAROL
Gates invented personal computers, Salk cured polio, Mozart wrote symphonies – all in less time.

KIM
But inventing time travel so you can get revenge on your prom date...that seems like a good use of a decade.
EDMUND
You’re right. I’ve wasted my own
time stewing in poisonous
resentment. I thought the antidote
was revenge. So it became my whole
life. I thought I’d finally feel
good when I got you all here. I
wanted to rob you of the joy you
stole from me. But you know what?
That is not what I’m feeling now.
What I’m feeling is...regret. What
an unfamiliar sensation. I’m so
sorry. I spent so long obsessing
about the things in my life that
didn’t go right that I completely
missed all the things that did. You
all screwed me, sure. But it forced
me to learn patience,
forbearance... and time travel. So
there’s that. I just wish I’d had
this epiphany about nine years ago.
Wow. This is a very expensive
lesson. Okay, not gonna dwell on
that. This is now. And look at what
we all have right here in front of
us -

KIM
A beach?

TOLSTOY
A butler?

EDMUND
(welling up)
Friends.

KIM
I wouldn’t go that far. Can we
leave now?

EDMUND
Of course, of course.

He pushes a button and BELL rings. Butler enters.

BUTLER
You rang, sir?

EDMUND
Gas up the plane, Nigel. These
people need to get home.
BUTLER
Uh, sir? We just removed it from the side of the house. We’ll need a day to get it up and running again.

HOUSEKEEPER
Looks like you’ll all have to find a way to kill some time, then, won’t you?

EDMUND
I have a thought.

TOLSTOY
Cards Against Humanity?

EDMUND
Someone here was on her way to the Prom. The prom I walked out of. I never realized I could have stayed with no expectations other than having a good time.

AMY
I would ask you to dance, but we don’t have any music.

EDMUND
Good news. I also brought Katrina and the Waves. You know, just in case.

The infectious opening beats of “Walking On Sunshine” pulse through the walls. Edmund presses a button and all the shutters fly open, revealing the glistening turquoise sea, the afternoon sky at magic hour, and Katrina and the Waves. All the guests dance out toward them on the beach. With each step, their feet become just a little bit lighter until it becomes choreography. The butler and housekeeper join in. As Edmund watches, his eyes tear up. He doesn’t know how to contain the joy that is suddenly washing over him. Amy extends her hand and, finally, Edmund joins in the dance.

END OF PLAY