

REFUSE TO GO DARK

Written by

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07.11.25

Based on my dreams

NOTE ON MUSIC

Throughout this script, musical references are written "in the spirit of" certain songs or artists. These are intended only to suggest tone and atmosphere, and may be replaced in production. One exception: Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart" is woven into multiple sequences and is essential to the storytelling.

PRE-OPENER - 10 YEARS AGO

ON SCREEN: DENVER - 10 YEARS AGO

INT. MAKESHIFT OFFICE - DAY

A folding table for a desk. A buzzing fluorescent light. BRIAN (City Planner, mid-40s) sits across from ANGELO (35) and GUNNER (26). A secretary types faintly outside.

On the wall: a hand-painted sign - "A&G Building Consultants." A photo of Angelo and Gunner on a muddy job site.

The conversation is already heated.

ANGELO

Look, Brian, if you'd just see it my way-

BRIAN

(flat)

I don't have to see it your way.

Angelo's jaw tightens. Gunner presses a hand to his chest, steadying him.

GUNNER

Brian, you know Angelo's just... *passionate*.

(beat, forcing a smile)

We can deliver.

Angelo flashes teeth. Brian doesn't buy it.

BRIAN

Fine. I'll sign. But I want to deal with you, Gunner.

Your partner, Angelo, he makes me uneasy. Like a wild dog - always ready to bite.

Angelo's smile is sudden. Sharp.

ANGELO

Brian, come on - you cut me to the quick. I don't bite... much.

Brian stiffens. Gunner forces a grin to smooth it over.

Brian nods, doubtful. Signs. Exits. Silence.

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

Hours later. Bottles. Shots. Victory drowning in whiskey.

In the parking lot, Angelo jingles his keys.

GUNNER
(laughing, drunk)
No way, brother. Not you. I'll
drive.

They collapse into Angelo's massive truck. A beat. Angelo
just stares at Gunner.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
What?

ANGELO
(slurring, raw)
I want you.

GUNNER
You're drunk.

ANGELO
Not enough.

He kisses Gunner. Hard. Messy. Gunner shoves back.

GUNNER
Hey. Buddy. What the hell—

ANGELO
I'm not gay.
(beat, locked on him)
I just want you. Forever.

Angelo's head drops heavily into Gunner's lap. Passed out.

ANGLE ON GUNNER — frozen. His hand lifts, hovers just above
Angelo's head. Almost tender. Almost protective. But it never
lands.

He pulls back. Clenches his fist. The weight of it presses
down — and will never leave.

He exhales, voice barely a whisper.

GUNNER
(afterthought)
Oh, Ang... just ask me.
Say it.
You can want me.
(MORE)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
But look me in the eye when you do.
Want me – not the fantasy.

Silence. Angelo snores, dead to the world. The ache hangs in the air.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: REFUSE TO GO DARK

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO

ON SCREEN: IN THE NEAR FUTURE

Frankie (30) wipes paint from his hands, packs a bag, kills the lights. Warmth lingers.

EXT. SIDE STREET – NIGHT

A dark van idles, headlights off.

QUICK WTF
FLASHES:

- A gloved hand pulls a mask down over Frankie/
 - A door SLAMS open.
 - Heavy boots hit the pavement.
 - A roll of duct tape pulled tight.
 - A child's scream bleeds into the night – wrong place, wrong time – drowned under the van's screeching tires.
 - Tires screech against asphalt.
- The van disappears into the night.

BLACK SCREEN.

SILENCE.

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDIO – NIGHT

ON SCREEN: Present day

A sultry, soulful love anthem – in the spirit of Barry White's "You're the First, the Last, My Everything" – plays

Frankie paints barefoot, laughing softly to himself. Vinyl crackles. Sydney's skyline comes alive on canvas.

Gunner enters, still in his work clothes. Loosens his tie. Just watches.

FRANKIE
Gunner, you're early.

GUNNER
Frankie, I couldn't wait.

Gunner pins Frankie to the wall. The camera pulls back. The song fades and then mashes up with a vibrant beat.

INT. GUNNER'S OFFICE - 4:00 PM

ON SCREEN: NEXT DAY

The afternoon sun ignites the Rockies. The Denver skyline gleams with promise.

FRANKIE perches on Gunner's desk, smiling.

GUNNER leans in and kisses him, deep. A soft growl.

The door SLAMS open.

ANGELO storms in.

Frankie and Gunner separate, fast.

Tension crackles.

ANGELO
(scoffing)
God, Francine, give it a rest.
Don't you have an older man with a
foot in the grave to shank?

GUNNER
(firm)
Angelo—

Frankie raises a hand, gently covering Gunner's mouth.

He stands, crosses to Angelo. Face to face. One inch apart.

FRANKIE
You don't scare me.
You better watch out for Francine.

ANGELO
You're as dumb as you look.
You should be afraid of me.
Very afraid. I don't come this far
to only get this far.

FRANKIE
Angie you are a lost boy with no
moral compass.

Frankie touches a finger to Angelo's lips.

Then—whispers in his ear.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
All this big talk... confirms
you've got— (glances down) —a
little dick.

He kisses Angelo on the mouth.

Gunner stiffens — jealous, protective, aroused? Even he
doesn't know.

Frankie steps back. Smiles.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Now.
Fuck off.

Silence.

Gunner starts to smile. Angelo sees it.

A twitch behind Angelo's eye. A breath he holds too long.

Angelo wipes his mouth.

ANGELO
(low)
Like I said...
Be very afraid of me.

GUNNER
You boys done?
Or should I give you the room?

(grins)

Stillness. A stare-down.

ANGELO
Francine, We are far from done.

FRANKIE
(sighs)
Like Mrs. Snee said in 6th grade—
"Food gets done. People finish."
(shrugs)
Guess apes are still evolving.

He gives Angelo a once-over.

Angelo lunges—

Gunner steps between them.

Frankie laughs.

He winks at Gunner.

FADE OUT.

EXT. STREETS OF DENVER - DUSK SAME DAY

Gunner and Angelo are driving in the KIA.

ANGELO
(irritated)
This KIA is insulting. For all the
money we make and you drive this
cheap brand. You gotta show them
what your worth.

GUNNER
(laughs)
And you think the oversized, over-
loaded, mag-wheeled-truck tells
people who you are. Fuck you don't
even own a pair of boots.

ANGELO
(defiant)
I own boots.

GUNNER
Yea, Prada.

ANGELO
What?

GUNNER
Oh, God, wait till I tell Frankie
that one! (he laughs)

They park and get out. Gunner thinking about the meeting and Angelo thinking about his next move.

WHOMP. Gunner collides with a body.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
What the Fuck?

Tommy had been racing down the block. The collision with Gunner knocked him flat

ANGELO
(aggressive)
Jesus, kid - what the hell were you thinking?

He yanks TOMMY up like a rag doll.

GUNNER
(easy, calm)
Hey - you okay?

Tommy nods, eyes wide... but hardening.

GUNNER kneels to his level.

ANGELO paces, fists clenched, lighting a cigarette. Still fuming.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
He's just a kid, Ang.

ANGELO
(gritting)
Careful, kid. I'm the Big Bad Wolf.

TOMMY locks eyes with him.

No fear. Just fire.

GUNNER sees it. So does Angelo. A long beat.

GUNNER
(smoothing it out, gentle)
Wait... I know you.

TOMMY
You came to my school.
You're Mr. Gunner.
Your boyfriend, Frankie - he teaches art.
He's amazing.

GUNNER smiles. It's real.

Gunner smiles.

ANGELO

Kid

GUNNER

Tommy this is my friend, Angelo.

Tommy holds out his hand. Angelo looks like WTF. Gunner gives Angelo a look. Angelo then shakes hands with Tommy.

ANGELO

You gotta watch where your going.
Why were you running?

GUNNER

Tommy you sure your ok?

TOMMY

Mr. Gunner, I am ok.

Angelo peels back a \$10 and hands it to Tommy.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Oh I shouldn't take money from
strangers.

ANGELO

Kid, take it. I was ruff on you.

TOMMY

Mr. Gunner I see you around here.
I see a lot of what goes on, and
nobody sees me.

ANGELO

Nobody like a snitch.

Tommy and Angelo lock eyes. Angelo threatens with his look.

GUNNER

(change up)

Well, Tommy, we gotta go. If you
see me be sure to come up and see
hello. And if you ever see
anything not right you know where
I am.

Tommy nods and then walks away.

ANGELO

Kids. Glad I am not a father.

GUNNER
Shit and I was just about to call
you Daddy. Come on time for
drinks.

There is an alley and Angelo pulls GUNNER in and pins
Gunner's back against the wall.

ANGELO
I don't like Francine and/

GUNNER
And I don't care. I am the one
sleeping with him not you.

ANGELO
Yea, well (pause)

Gunner leans in just a breath away. His eye brow arches

GUNNER
(sly)
Wait a minute. You mean after all
these years, you got something for
me? (Gunner growls, smirks)

Angelo release his grip and steps back. Claiming space.

ANGELO
I am not like you.

GUNNER
Say it all you want, Ang.
You're still the one who kissed me
first.

Gunner moves back to the street.

GUNNER (CONT'D)
(he speaks easy)
Angelo, I always got your back.
Gay or straight or whatever you
want to admit to, I got you
unconditional. Now come on, let's
nail this deal.

Angelo looks defeated. Being accepted unconditionally is not
something he is used to.

SFX: Faintly and weirdly "*Total eclipse of the Heart*" is
playing in Angelo's head.

Gunner walks towards the bar. Angelo stops for a moment and breathes in his arm that just pinned Gunner to the wall. Smelling in the scent.

CLAP CLAP - the song abruptly stops.

Gunner just clapped his hands twice (like you would for a dog)

GUNNER (CONT'D)
Where the fuck are you? (he laughs)

Gunner walks on.

ANGELO
(low and under his breath)
Turn around bright eyes.

INT. THE WOLF'S TAILOR - LOUNGE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN LAST WEEK, FRIDAY NIGHT.

Gunner and Angelo enter.

Low hum of wealth. Waiters twitch, like animals before a quake.

Frankie having a drink at the opposite end of the bar. Low key.

Doors part.

PANDORA WHITELEY (50s) enters - red coat whispering across the floor, black gloves, eyes like scalpels.

She doesn't enter. She claims the room.

A waiter sees her - can't look away - and bumps into a woman in a **bias-cut silk gown**.

Off-white. Clinging. Impossibly pristine.

The Bloody Mary splashes across her hip like a wound.

The sound - *wet, intimate* - cuts the room sharper than a scream.

Pandora sees it. Winks at the waiter.

He flushes - equal parts shame and pride.

She plucks a cigar from a man's table without looking.

He lights it, trembling.

She exhales smoke like a curse.

PANDORA
(to Gunner, smooth)
You've been avoiding me.

GUNNER
(grinning, growls)
Or making you chase me.

ANGELO pushes into her eyeline. She barely registers him.

PANDORA
(dry)
You brought the bulldog.

Angelo stiffens. Gunner slings an arm around him, masking the sting.

Across the bar, Frankie catches it. A smirk. Just enough to needle Angelo deeper.

Angelo clocks Frankie's smirk. It burns deeper than Pandora's words.

GUNNER
In business, it's always Angelo and me.

PANDORA
(cutting)
No. It's you. Then scraps for him.

Pandora motions for Frankie to come over. He does and he and Pandora lock arms.

PANDORA (CONT'D)
(beat, to Gunner)
Bring Frankie Friday. He has taste.
You? Style. Him? Sparkle.

She brushes Gunner's chest, then turns – the whole room following her like smoke.

Angelo simmers. Bulldog humiliated.

FRANKIE
Gunner I have a client in 30 minutes.