

The Cell

By

Jessica Engs

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

TEDDY, early 20s with long hair and a beard, sits in his dirty apartment, writing lyrics, singing, and tapping a beat on a desk with his pencil.

There is a loud pound on the door and Teddy notices police lights flashing outside. He slowly puts his things down and walks to the door to open it.

OFFICER SCHULTZ

Teddy Wilson. I'm officer Schultz and I have to arrest you. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to have an attorney present during questioning.

TEDDY

(Stuttering) But, what? Wait... no, please.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Teddy turns around to put his hands behind his back. Officer Schultz, bald with a large belly, handcuffs him.

They walk down the stairs of his apartment. Teddy is lead into the backseat of the cop car.

INT. COP CAR - NIGHT

Teddy scrunches his face in anger and we see he suffers from pain and sadness. His eyes turn watery.

TEDDY

(To himself) Why... why did this have to happen? I just wanted to get to Seattle for a weekend.

OFFICER SCHULTZ

What was that kid? Be quiet back there.

Teddy, scared, winces in fear, zips his mouth shut and stares out the window.

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT - DAY

FLASHBACK:

Teddy plays the guitar in his messy COLLEGE apartment. College papers and textbooks are scattered around.

TEDDY
(Singing) Oooh la la ooh, hmmm.
Yeah that's good.

Teddy has a pencil in his mouth, takes it out, and scribbles song lyrics down on a notepad.

A phone vibrates. Teddy picks it up. The caller ID reads "mom". His facial expression immediately changes from happy to mad. He throws the phone on the ground.

Immediately after the phone call he hears pounding on the door.

STEPHANIE (O.C.)
Teddy, open up. It's mom. Hello?

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Teddy is escorted by Officer Schultz into the waiting area of the jail. His handcuffs are taken off by Officer Schultz.

Officer Schultz is breathing down his neck. Teddy is uncomfortable and scared.

TEDDY
(To Officer Schultz) It's fine
Officer. I'm not gonna do anything.

OFFICER SCHULTZ
Hey, I don't know what you're
capable of. Actually, yeah I do ha
ha ha. Now shut up.

Teddy turns away, scared, and finishes the papers.

He gets a fingerprint, takes a mug shot and changes into a jumpsuit.

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT - DAY

FLASHBACK:

Teddy plays his music, humming along some words to the sound of the guitar.

(CONTINUED)

His phone buzzes incessantly and the pounding on the door continues. He finally gets up to open the door.

STEPHANIE

Teddy! My goodness I have been calling you and knocking on the door for the past ten minutes. What have you been doing? You cannot ignore me like this. It is ridiculous.

TEDDY

Yeah, sorry mom. I was watching TV I couldn't hear.

STEPHANIE

Well, you really shouldn't be doing that son, you should be doing your work. You're not going to become a wealthy entrepreneur by watching pointless TV. And we don't want you ending up like your Uncle Ben. (Talking to herself) He doesn't care about anything in the world except for surfing. And he smokes too. It's disgusting. I don't get it.

TEDDY

Well I get Uncle Ben. He's fucking awesome. I sure know why you don't...

STEPHANIE

Excuse me? You better be respectful to me. I'm paying for your college education.

TEDDY

(Whispers) Yeah, whatever.

STEPHANIE

You know you really need to spend more time on your schoolwork and your father agrees. You need lots of money to live a happy and fulfilling life. There really is no other way. (Pause) I'm spending all this money for you to joke around with that stupid guitar stuff. It's really getting in the way of your grades.

(CONTINUED)

Teddy is extremely angry after he hears this from his mom. His face turns bright red.

 TEDDY
(Whisper) Stuff? Are you fucking
kidding me?

 STEPHANIE
What did you say?

 TEDDY
Nothing, whatever.

 STEPHANIE
Well listen, you....

Stephanie starts to say something, but Teddy pushes her out the door while she's still talking.

 TEDDY
Last thing. Stop coming over here
mom. I'm a fucking senior in
college. Stop checking on me and do
something else with your life. You
have a shit load of money, go spend
it.

Teddy slams the door in his mom's face, storms off and knocks things over on his way out.

 TEDDY
(To himself) All that bitch cares
about is money. So fucking selfish.

We see Teddy's roommate, NICK, in the corner smoking weed out of a bong on a reclining chair.

 NICK
What was that about man?

 TEDDY
Nothing.

Teddy picks up his guitar and gets right back into playing.

INT. JAIL WAITING CELL - NIGHT

Teddy sits in the waiting cell of the jail next to scary looking people.

MONTAGE:

Dreamy/nightmarish shots of Teddy in the waiting cell. People stare at him, getting closer and closer to him, trying to talk to him. The cell seems to get smaller and smaller, caving in. Teddy gets up and walks around. Kind of like a time lapse, but more in real time.

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT - DAY

FLASHBACK:

Teddy sits down in a chair at a desk with a computer open.

We hear the keys type as we see text on the computer screen in the Google search bar that says "alternative rock audition".

Teddy scrolls and clicks on a link, which takes him to a website for an audition for alternative rock musicians in Seattle, Washington.

TEDDY

(To himself) Shit, this is perfect.
This is just what I need to make it
to the big leagues.

Teddy continues to scroll through this website, checking out the details of the audition. His mouse scrolls over the price of the audition and his hand stops and clenches up.

TEDDY

(To himself) One-hundred fucking
dollars... just to register! And a
plane ticket and hotel on top of
that. Fuck, this sucks. But I need
this. I don't want to do anything
else with my life except play
music.

Teddy's phone buzzes at that moment and he sees "Mom" in the text screen.

TEDDY

(To himself) Oh god, not again.

Teddy pushes his phone aside and ignores the call.

Determined, but nervous, Teddy taps the desk with his pen.

TEDDY

I'm gonna do this. I'm gonna get to
that audition... somehow... some
way...

INT. JAIL WAITING CELL - NIGHT

Teddy is in the jail waiting cell. A man, obviously a drug user, inches toward Teddy. He looks like he wants to start a conversation.

DRUG-USER MAN

Hey man, so what're you in here for. You look so scared. Suck it up, it's jail.

TEDDY

(Nervously) Oh, um yeah, just some stupid thing.

Teddy slowly scoots over to a different part of the waiting cell.

He sits down next to a pregnant prostitute in her mid 40s. She has scabs and track marks on her body. Her teeth are missing and the ones that are left are yellow.

PREGNANT PROSTITUTE

Hey baby. What are you doing here? Gimme your number. Maybe we can hang out once we get out of this shit hole. Whaddya say?

TEDDY

No thanks.

Teddy, even more uncomfortable and scared than before, quickly gets up and sits near the front entrance of the jail waiting cell.

MONTAGE:

Time passes and there is another dreamy/nightmarish sequence of Teddy in the waiting room. His head is spinning and pounding and his heart is beating faster and faster. He curls up in the corner on the bench of the jail waiting cell and closes his eyes.

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

FLASHBACK:

Teddy is playing the guitar and humming along. He puts the guitar down and grabs a pencil and paper. He writes on the top of the paper, "How to get money for Seattle".

(CONTINUED)

TEDDY

(To himself) So how am I gonna do this?

He taps his pen on the coffee table and starts scribbling ideas down. We see him write in a list "sell stuff on eBay, babysit, yard sale..."

TEDDY

(To himself) Ugh, none of this will get me a plane ticket plus a hundred bucks in less than two weeks. I'm screwed.

We see Teddy's roommate sitting on the reclining chair, listening to what Teddy is saying.

NICK

Dude, what's the problem. You want money quick? I made three-hundred and fifty bucks in the past three days by selling my cocaine. Drugs... that's the way to go.

Teddy laughs at first because the idea is ridiculous. He would never break the law. Even though he rebels against his parents, he is a rule follower compared to his roommates.

TEDDY

Yeah man, I don't know. Doesn't seem like the best idea seeing as I can go to jail for that shit.

NICK

Well what else do you plan on doing? Lemme see your list.

The roommate grabs Teddy's list of ways to get money, scans it with his finger, stops on a phrase and laughs.

NICK

Dog-walking? You're kidding right? You seriously think you'll make money by walking dogs? No one even has dogs, idiot, we're in college.

TEDDY

(Embarrassed) Well, I don't know. It could work.

NICK

Whatever man. Good luck with your little project. All I'm telling you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
is drugs are where the big bucks
are at.

Nick walks out the front door and the door closes behind him.

Teddy, very disappointed, shrugs his shoulders and throws his head on the coffee table in his folded arms.

TEDDY
(To himself) Ugh, what am I gonna
do. I need to get to that audition.

MONTAGE:

Teddy searches places to work on Google, makes phone calls, walks around his apartment, takes a couple hits of a joint, and drinks coffee into the latest hours of the night until morning.

INT. JAIL WAITING CELL - NIGHT

Another large, middle-aged black police man, OFFICER WEISS, walks to the door of the waiting cell and unlocks the door. He scans a clipboard with his finger.

OFFICER WEISS
Teddy Wilson?

Teddy lifts his head up in an instant and looks at the police man.

TEDDY
Ya, ya that's me. What's going on?

OFFICER WEISS
Come with me.

Officer Weiss escorts Teddy to a small booth with a pay phone.

OFFICER WEISS
You have five minutes. You get two
calls only.

TEDDY
Oh, great! Thank you so much.

Teddy picks up the phone and dials a number quickly.

The phone rings and rings and rings. It goes to voicemail.

(CONTINUED)

NICK (O.C.)

What's up. This is Nick. Can't get to the phone, but leave a message at the beep and I'll get back to ya. Peace.

Teddy hangs up the phone in frustration and shrugs his head and shoulders.

OFFICER WEISS

Three more minutes.

TEDDY

(To himself) Fuck, who am I going to call that will actually pick up?

Teddy taps on the pay phone box and thinks about who to call for a couple of seconds.

TEDDY

(To himself) Oh god, I wish I didn't have to do this, but there's no other way of getting out of this place. Here goes nothing.

Teddy pauses for a second to think, then dials a number very slowly.

The phone rings and rings and and we hear a man's voice.

BILL

Hello?

TEDDY

Hey dad, it's Teddy. I'm in a little bit of a situation here.

BILL

What is it, son?

TEDDY

I'm in jail right now and...

BILL

What the hell?

TEDDY

Please dad, I will explain. If you or mom could just come down and bail me out, I would appreciate it so much. There's no other way I can get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

Silence for a moment and then we hear the phone hang up on Bill's end.

TEDDY

Hello? Fuck, are you kidding me?

OFFICER WEISS

Ok kid, times up. Back to the waiting cell. Anyone coming for you?

TEDDY

Nope.

The police man escorts Teddy back to the waiting cell and locks the door behind him.

Teddy notices a few new people in the waiting cell. He scans the room and notice the back of the head of a certain man from afar and sits on the bench. After a few minutes, he gets a clear look and realizes the man is his uncle, Ben.

TEDDY

Uncle Ben!

BEN

(Excited and embarrassed) Teddy!
What the hell are you doing in here?

TEDDY

Um, well, it doesn't matter. I'm just happy to see you.

BEN

Happy? You should not be happy, you're in jail!

TEDDY

Yeah, but you know.

BEN

Teddy, you really need to tell me what you're in here for.

TEDDY

Well I'm here because I was trying to get to Seattle for a once in a lifetime audition to get a record deal with this alternative rock label. But, I kinda had to sell a few drugs to get the money.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

What are you doing messing with drugs? You're a young kid, Teddy. Don't get involved in that stuff or you'll end up like me.

TEDDY

Uncle Ben, you're in here for drugs too? I didn't know you did that.

BEN

Well, yeah. It's just a part of the surf culture. I'm stuck in the cycle and I can't really get out of it. (Stern) That doesn't mean you should use drugs though.

TEDDY

I mean, just to make things clear, I don't use drugs that much. I smoke some weed, but nothing crazy.

BEN

So you got caught smoking? That's why you're in here?

TEDDY

No. Remember, I told you I was selling drugs.

BEN

Oh, right. Come on Teddy. There's so many other ways you could've gotten to that audition.

TEDDY

I know, but music is all I care about, Uncle Ben. My parents want me to be a damn businessman, but I can't pursue a career in something I hate, you know?

BEN

Yep, I know exactly what you mean. I know you know this, but your Aunt has cancer and our bills our piling up. To be honest with you, I'm in here for selling drugs. I actually started selling a while ago so I could pay for all her medical stuff. She's the love of my life and there was no other way I could get good money fast. She hates me

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEN (cont'd)

for doing this, but there's no other way for her to continue her treatment if I don't bring in any money. And my minimum wage job sure isn't doing the trick. (Pause) Don't tell anyone this, please.

TEDDY

Wow, of course I won't. I feel like an asshole for complaining about not getting to go to this small audition. I forgot about Aunt Rachel. I hope she gets better soon, Uncle Ben.

BEN

No worries man, I get it. You're young and I understand you have this great love for music that you're willing to do anything for. I say go for it. Chase your dreams. You only get to do life once and you might as well make it a crazy one with no regrets. You may not have gone about it the right way, but mistakes happen. Always pursue what you love, though. I'm telling you, man.

TEDDY

Wow, why don't I see you more often? You're like the only person who actually understands where I'm coming from. There is nothing that compares to music in my life. It's everything to me.

BEN

That's good, but don't get stuck in this shitty cycle. Drugs and prison are not what you're gonna want to deal with for the rest of your life, I promise you. You're not gonna be able to play music in here, are you?

TEDDY

Yeah, you're right. I guess there are a lot of other ways I could get up there without doing all this illegal shit.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

So many other ways. But I believe in you. You seem like a good kid. Go get what you want, man. If nothing makes you happier than music, then do it. That's why I still surf. It's the second love of my life.

Officer Weiss walks up to the waiting cell and unlocks the door.

OFFICER WEISS

Can Ben Jones and Teddy Wilson come with me?

Teddy and Ben look at each other confused, but kind of relieved. They get up and walk to the door.

OFFICER WEISS

Teddy, your parents are coming now, wait here. Ben, I'd like to talk to you for a minute.

Teddy, very confused, waits where he is told.

Ben talks to Officer Weiss outside of the waiting area of the cell.

OFFICER WEISS

Ben, we're letting you off. Now don't come back. You're a good guy, we don't want you wasting your life in here.

Teddy's parents walk up to him at this point and do not even notice Ben.

BILL

Teddy, you're a fucking disgrace to our family. You're coming home immediately. We've had enough of your bullshit.

Stephanie starts to say something, but we are directed to the conversation between Ben and Officer Weiss again.

BEN

Yes Officer, of course. I'm doing it for my wife and family, but I know there are other ways it can be done. I appreciate it.

(CONTINUED)

Ben continues to talk, but we go back to Teddy's conversation with his parents.

TEDDY

You know what mom and dad? Fuck you. I'm not coming home with you. Everything you say and do goes against what I believe in and I've had enough of it. I know it might be hard for you to believe, but I had one of the best experiences in this jail tonight and got the best advice of my life. (To Ben) Hey Uncle Ben!

Teddy waves Ben to come over to him and his parents.

Teddy's parents are shocked that Ben is in jail. Their jaws drop to the floor and they are speechless.

TEDDY

I know you don't agree with me, but Uncle Ben is a good fucking person, I don't care what either of you think. He taught me a lot in the last hour, more than I've ever learned from you. Life isn't about making money, it's about doing what makes you happy, but neither of you would know because all you care about is your money. (Pause) So I'm gonna leave with Uncle Ben (To Ben) if that's alright with you.

Ben looks slightly nervous, but he nods his head yes.

TEDDY

Bye mom and dad.

Teddy's parents stand there, shocked, still speechless.

It is early in the morning at this point and Teddy and Ben walk down the hallway and out the double doors of the jail.

Teddy and Ben walk into the sunrise together and light a cigarette while laughing.