

INT. 11TH FLOOR ELEVATOR - NIGHT

DING! DING! DING! A hunched FEMALE FIGURE bangs on the down button of the elevator with one hand--the other clutches a very recent looking BULLET WOUND lodged in her abdomen. We can hear the sounds of voices echoing from the hallway, as the steel doors haven't closed yet:

MAN (O.S.)

Where's my money, Carmen?! When I find you I'm going to lodge a bullet in your--

CARMEN frantically presses buttons on the elevator as the steel doors accelerate to close--we can see the faint sliver of a BLEEDING MALE FIGURE before they shut completely. Carmen deflates as she sighs with relief. She presses the lowest button in the elevator--to the parking lot.

The elevator rumbles as it begins it's descent. Carmen tends to her wound, hissing as she slowly lifts her coat to get a better look at it. A digital clock above the floor buttons READS 11:55pm.

Suddenly, the elevator stops. Carmen's heart drops as she looks up to see she's only made it to the 9th floor--only two below where she was. Carmen slowly reaches for the SMALL SILVER GUN tucked into her pant ankle...

...and quickly tucks it back away as the steel doors open to reveal A COMPLETELY NAKED MAN, covering his privates with what appear to be his clothes--a white button down, slacks, a tie and suit jacket crumpled in a ball. He dashes inside; he's sweating and heaving--it's apparent that he was running down the hallway. It becomes clear who from when a shrill, female voice calls out to him:

NAKED MAN'S WIFE (O.S.)

Yeah, you better run! You cheating son of a bitch! Spend New Year's Eve with one of those male prostitutes you love so much, you queer--

The steel doors close. Carmen says nothing as the NAKED MAN catches his breath.

NAKED MAN

(deeply embarrassed, yet still polite)  
1st floor, please.

Carmen presses the button with her free hand. A silence falls between the two; each embarrassed for themselves and curious about the other. Finally, Naked Man speaks up:

NAKED MAN (CONT'D)  
Happy almost New Year's?

CARMEN  
Huh?

Naked Man gestures to the clock. It reads 11:57pm.

CARMEN (CONT'D)  
Oh. Huh. Three minutes and it's all over.

NAKED MAN  
(nervous laughter)  
Good riddance, huh?

CARMEN  
(returning nervous  
laughter)  
I know, right?

As Carmen laughs, SOME BLOOD splatters on the floor. They both stop laughing immediately and stew in awkward silence. Carmen tries not to wince with embarrassment.

NAKED MAN  
Are you...going to die?

CARMEN  
What? No, of course not. Don't worry about that man, just got into a pretty bad accident. It's a lot of blood, but I didn't hit anything vital or anything like that. Besides, the adrenaline is still kicking, so I can't feel a thing.

NAKED MAN  
Oh, that's good. I mean, not good but...yeah that's good.

CARMEN  
(beat)  
You got any resolutions?

NAKED MAN  
Oh, nothing crazy. I wanna start running again, maybe spend more time pursuing my hobbies. Maybe I'll--

Naked Man's voice breaks as his face grows red again. He can't stop it as much as he wants to: he starts crying. Carmen says nothing, though looks viscerally uncomfortable.

NAKED MAN (CONT'D)

(blubbering)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I knew this would happen. I was hoping there would be no one in the elevator because I knew this would happen the second I saw that I saw someone else--

CARMEN

No, no it's fine. I mean it happens, it's cool--

We hear an excruciating clamor from outside the elevator, and a tremor ripples throughout the tiny space. The elevator has stopped moving entirely--stuck in between floors. As the realization of this hits Naked Man, he begins wailing loudly. Carmen slumps down in the corner, energy entirely deflating from her body.

NAKED MAN

(in between sobs)

I'm a failure. I'm a waste of people's time and space--

CARMEN

C'mon, don't be like that.

NAKED MAN

It's true. I would need a million resolutions to even qualify as a somewhat decent person. Look at me, stuck in the elevator on New Year's Eve, completely naked and blubbering like a six year old girl to some poor woman who I've literally just met. But I can't even be mad at anyone, because I bring all this...this bullshit upon myself! I cheat, I sneak, and I *LIE!* I lie to my wife, I lie to my kids, and I delude myself into thinking I can keep up with it all! This entire year, I've done nothing but lie straight through my teeth, and suffocating in this tiny metal box is my punishment!

At this point in Naked Man's rant, he has sunken low enough to meet Carmen's level on the floor.

CARMEN

I'm not going to try and offer you advice or anything, seeing as I don't know you but...I've been on the run this entire year. I can't count how many people want me dead. All for what? Money? Money that I'll never see again in a couple of days? I've tried to find ways to rationalize it--that I'm stealing from evil people, that it's better in my hands than someone else's, that I'll stop doing this eventually. But you know where that got me? Leaking from my insides in an elevator.

Naked Man's lips begin to quirk up to a smile.

NAKED MAN

(beat)

So what do we do, then? How do we become better?

Carmen looks up to the clock. 11:59.

CARMEN

In one minute, everything horrible we've done will all be a year away. It's a fresh start.

NAKED MAN

A fresh start? How do you know that not just another rationalization? At 12:00, you're still going to need to go to an emergency room, and I'm going to need miracle-working alimony lawyer. No amount of balls dropped in Time Square can change the fact that we're hopeless screw-ups.

CARMEN

(beat)

Maybe. But there's nothing we can do about the past. We can't change what we've screwed up--we can only stop screwing up, I guess.

They both seem to consider this. The clock shifts silently--it now reads 12:00. Naked Man notices first, nudging Carmen.

NAKED MAN  
(genuine)  
Happy New Year.

CARMEN  
(equally genuine)  
Happy New Year.

NAKED MAN  
(beat)  
How about you, then, you got any  
New Year's resolutions?

CARMEN  
Just a lot less bleeding and  
running.

Naked Man laughs, Carmen smiles.

CARMEN (CONT'D)  
How long do you think before  
someone comes to get us?

NAKED MAN  
Well it can't be much longer--we've  
been up here a year already.

Carmen rolls her eyes and snorts, playfully pushing Naked Man as he laughs. Even in the dreary, dim light of the elevator, the two appear brighter, more hopeful.

**END OF SCENE.**