

Running to Places

Pilot

By

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NOTE: written as director's
screenplay. Camera notes are
included where necessary for
story development and
juxtaposition

TEASER

OVER BLACK

Jagged and heavy breathing.

CUT FROM BLACK

1 EXT. NEW BRUNSWICK. DAY.

A drone shot follows a country road as it slithers through a frigid, snow-covered landscape until finally we see a woman, CHRISTINA, running below on the road.

The woman's running is pathetically slow, little more than glorified walking. She jaggedly exhales vapor illuminated by the cold and makes determined huffing sounds to keep herself going through her body's rebel. Ice covers her eyelashes as tears spill from the corners of her eyes.

She squints with determination.

A drop of blood falls from her nose. She tries to wipe it away with a sleeve but only manages to smear it. Then, suddenly and without warning, her eyes widen as joy floods her weathered and bloody face. She cries out a primal and belabored shriek of euphoria as she throws her hands up into the air.

Victory.

Whatever she sees ahead of her, it's truly magnificent.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: RUNNING TO PLACES

ACT ONE

OVER BLACK

UNKNOWN INTERVIEWER, O.S.
What made you want to put yourself
through that... incredible turmoil?

Audience laughter.

A moment of silence.

CUT FROM BLACK

2 INT. TALK SHOW STUDIO. DAY.

A TV camera records Christina as she sits on a talk show stage. She wears a nice but plain dress.

A bubbly interviewer sits across from her dressed to the nines, talk show chic.

Christina nervously shakes, clearly out of her element, and briefly glances out at the studio audience. Several dozen faces stare back.

CHRISTINA V.O.
I guess I was, for the first time in
my life, running to something. Not
from something.

The host nods, overly engrossed, with eyebrows squinted in over-exaggerated interest.

INTERVIEWER
So the story of how you got here--why
you ran a transcontinental race--is a
pretty unique one. The adversity and
challenges you overcame.
(laughs)
Pretty impressive!

For those unfamiliar, could you tell
us a bit more about your backstory?

A tense moment of silence, and Christina looks noticeably uncomfortable.

CHRISTINA
Um... yeah. Sure.

Another moment of silence as Christina struggles to find her words. Then, she lets out a little laugh, and her shoulders finally relax as her mind is caught in a different time and place.

CHRISTINA

I guess... I mean, I was compelled to run ever since I can remember. It made me feel rooted in the moment. My only measure of time was the sound of my breathing, and everything else just... fell away.

3 EXT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY.

17 years prior.

A muffled, intense argument between a man and a woman is audible from behind the door of a ram-shackled apartment. Suddenly, the door bursts open and a 6-year-old Christina flies out from behind it, escaping.

Christina begins to run down the street.

4 EXT. STREET. CONTINUED.

Christina runs past houses and complexes, and as she rounds the a corner of a shop, she bumps smack into an old man.

Christina tries to move past, but the old man grabs Christina by her elbow.

OLD MAN

Woah woah, not so fast!

The old man laughs a kind laugh.

Where're your parents?

Christina frowns up at the man, saying nothing. Concern seeps into his eyes.

OLD MAN

What's your name?

CHRISTINA

Christina.

OLD MAN

Where are you running to, Christina?

Christina thinks hard about this for a moment.

CHRISTINA
(Frightened)
I don't know.

5 INTERCUT - INT./EXT. - MONTAGE

The old man and Christina walk into a police station.

Christina gets into a cop car.

Christina innocently stares out the window of the cop car as she's driven home.

V.O. | O.S. (TALKSHOW INTERVIEW)
We all have little moments stacked up
that define us. Like the moment we
first see dark things complicated and
new. Or when we lose someone we love.
Or when we fail ourselves. Or fail
another. And we hate ourselves for it.
And we hate those who've betrayed us,
who said it'd be a happy life, that
we'd be okay. We resent our pain. So
we resent people. And these
experiences, they stack up.

We crave a blank slate.

END INTERCUT

6 EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS

The police car pulls up to the rundown apartment complex. An officer lets Christina out, and Christina's mom, CHARLENE, runs up and grabs Christina into a ferocious hug.

CHARLENE
(to officer)

Thank you.

Charlene's eyes are red, and she has a black eye.

CHARLENE
It's okay, baby.

Christina glances over her mom's shoulder. Garbage bags full of clothes and a child-themed backpack sit on the curb. Christina's brows furrow with confusion.

CHRISTINA
(confused)
Where are we going, Mama?

A tear runs down Charlene's cheek, and she dresses her face in a fake smile.

CHARLENE
(mock-happy, through tears)
Baby girl, from now on, we are going
to have the best lives!

7 INT. APARTMENT - PRESENT DAY

A cramped, horribly messy apartment.

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
(from interview)
So, for a while, I sought numbness
over reality.

8 TITLE CARD: 3 YEARS BEFORE TRANS-CONTINENTAL RACE

A 24-year-old Christina sleeps on a sofa in the messy apartment, an empty vodka bottle and empty pill bottle adjacent on a cluttered table.

A phone rings five times before Christina wakes up and yells at it.

CHRISTINA
Shut up!

It stops, but the person calls back.

Christina groans and finally answers it.

CHRISTINA
(sassy)
Hello?

CHARLENE (O.S.)
Christina?

Christina rolls her eyes and says nothing back for a moment.

CHRISTINA
Mom.