

Shoot from the Hip

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - LOG CABIN - NIGHT

WIND HOWLS as RAIN falls heavily. Together they batter a rundown, old, isolated log cabin.

A family saloon GROWLS its way up the dirt track leading to a parked identikit model.

INT. LOG CABIN - LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Small, barely decorated, no frills.

Raw, passionate lovemaking SOUNDS fill the air, emanating from the bedroom.

The front door opens. NICK LEE (38) enters.

He acquaints himself with the surroundings, bows his head. Gently WEEPS.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

CREAK. Nick peeks into the bedroom.

Watches the O.S. sex activity.

Pulls a GLOCK from his jacket pocket. Points it at the scene of the crime.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

A dimly lit hellhole of an old western saloon. No barman, no life, no sound.

Just a solitary figure sat in a cubicle at the far end, who faces away from us.

NICHOLAS, a carbon copy of Nick, stands at the stall doors. He wears a pristine all white suit.

NICHOLAS

Thought I'd find you here.

Tentatively, he enters, eases towards the table.

NICHOLAS
You realise the enormity of this?

He reaches the cubicle.

The figure turns, revealing NICKY, another carbon copy of Nick, wearing a black suit.

He smirks.

NICKY
(mocking)
Nicholas. Nicholas. Nicholas.

Reluctantly, Nicholas sits down opposite Nicky. Observes a GREEN and RED button fixed into the table on either side. His side the GREEN side.

Nicky takes a swig from his glass. Winks.

NICKY
Didn't think you'd make it.

Regards Nicholas' white suit.

NICKY
White was never your colour.

A self-conscious shuffle.

NICHOLAS
There's no time for small talk,
Nicky.

NICKY
Small talk? That would indicate
we're avoiding a subject. Since I'm
avoiding nothing, I take it you
have something to say.

Nicky lets out a menacing CHUCKLE.

NICHOLAS
I want you to know that you cannot
toy with me anymore.

NICKY
Who says I ever did?

NICHOLAS
You always thought of yourself as
the clever one, didn't you.

NICKY
I am the clever one.

NICHOLAS
You're pathetic.

NICKY
No, I'm about business.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - AS BEFORE

Nick points his GLOCK O.S. as before.

NICK
I drove up on a whim. You are at
"work", after all. Shame the
weather is so desperate. Anyway, I
had this nagging feeling. Couldn't
shake it. Like I always knew what
was going on, but I kept
suppressing it.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT - AS BEFORE

Nicholas sits head in hands.

The SOUND of a toilet FLUSH O.S. prompts Nicky's return from
a previously unseen 'Gents'.

NICKY
You know I've got a spare black
suit, right?

Nicholas SLAMS his fist down on the table.

NICHOLAS
This is important.

NICKY
Temper, temper. I just think it'd
be more suitable.

NICHOLAS
Why did you release -

NICKY
I didn't release anything.

NICHOLAS
- you released the memory of...

Nicky places his arm down on the table, prepping for an arm wrestle.

NICKY
I've always been a fair man, a lenient man.

NICHOLAS
You drew the inconsistency -

NICKY
And let the little fucker work it out for himself. You thought I'd let him make a fool of himself? Of me? How long did you know it was going on for?

Nicholas bows his head.

NICHOLAS
It doesn't matter.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - AS BEFORE

Nick paces the room, keeps his GLOCK focused on the O.S. target.

Nick closes his eyes.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT - AS BEFORE

Nicky points at the two buttons on the table.

NICKY
You notice there are two buttons?

Nicholas nods and sighs.

NICKY
Did you ever wonder what they were for when you breezed in?

NICHOLAS
I assumed you were making a point.

NICKY
You could say that. And you noticed the colours? You noticed that one was red?
(beat)
And that was one was green?

NICHOLAS

Yes.

NICKY

And what conclusion did you make?

NICHOLAS

That you were playing games.

NICKY

Did you think it was pertinent to our situation?

NICHOLAS

Do you even care about what happens?

NICKY

Firstly, I'm offended by that accusation, well, insinuated accusation would be the correct term. Secondly, it really does depend on how you frame our problem.

Nicky pulls another arm wrestle posture.

Nods his head towards the gesture.

NICHOLAS

No.

NICKY

What do you mean, no?

NICHOLAS

I told you already, I'm not playing your games. We've had this "duel" for 38 years. I'm done reasoning with you.

NICKY

You cannot eradicate balance. Disagreement is the base on which we grow. Remember?

NICHOLAS

Nick doesn't deserve this.

NICKY

Don't forget your place in this world. You are nothing but a thought process.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - AS BEFORE

Nick stares ahead, motionless.

Zombie-like.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT - AS BEFORE

Nicky and Nicholas continue their face-off.

NICHOLAS

A thought process? That's all we are to you?

NICKY

That is exactly what we are.

NICHOLAS

We're all one. We're in this together.

NICKY

Really, and yet you kept me in the dark about this cheating, and enjoyed the power, didn't you. Until I found out, and then obviously, I made sure Nick found out.

NICHOLAS

Exactly, I knew your reaction would be knee jerk. You'd play your little games. Your bitterness and unforgiving nature fuels his bad decisions.

NICKY

You forget that is my function. You have yours. I'm just more successful at mine.

NICHOLAS

Treading old ground again.

NICKY

How can I let you forget that you're the reason Dad didn't speak to him, us, before he died.

Nicky abruptly stands up, grabs Nicholas from the table.

Shoves him against the wall.

NICKY

What did we have after that? Huh?
You made the decision, you led him
up the garden path, and I've been
trying to sabotage that decision
ever since.

NICHOLAS

He's been confused and indecisive
'cos you couldn't accept who he is,
and we make those decisions for
him. That's our job.

NICKY

He? He is me, he's you. We're all
the same. We have to live out what
we decide, or in this case what you
decided -

NICHOLAS

I didn't make that decision. It was
the natural choice for him.

NICKY

- We have to live with who he is.
Experience it every single day. And
I've had enough. Enough of him, you
and the pressure.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - AS BEFORE

Nick stands over the bed.

NICK

You know what my father would say
now, don't you. He'd say I told you
so. It wasn't what you were that
bothered him, but the person you
are.

JAMIE (O.S.)

Nick, baby, please put the gun
down. I love you. I'm sorry.

We now see that JAMIE, a butch man in his late 30s, cowers
under the duvet with STEVE, a young lad in his early 20s.

JAMIE

There's nothing I can say right now
to make this better, but please put
down the gun.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT - AS BEFORE

Nicky nods over at a set of SHOTS that have mysteriously appeared, releases his grip on Nicholas.

NICKY

Look, I'll be straight with you. I want to do those shots, and then I am ready for us to reach a decision.

NICHOLAS

If we let him pull that trigger, then our decisions are made in prison.

Nicholas squares up to Nicky.

NICHOLAS

We're deciding he drives home. Which button sets us free?

NICKY

We choose the red and, well, you know how that ends. As do Jamie and Steve.

Nicholas eyes the table.

NICKY

We hit the green light and let him go, leave his, and our, problems behind at the cabin.

EXT. FOREST - LOG CABIN

The first signs of sunrise peek through the heavy foliage.

An eerie calm and silence.

BANG.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The limp, dead body of Steve lies covered in blood.

BANG.

Nick falls from O.S. onto Steve. Blood trickles down his forehead.

Jamie stares ahead, motionless.

Plucks the GLOCK from Nick's lifeless hand.

Points it directly at himself.

FADE OUT