

Method To The Madness

written by

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INT. TOM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom, late 20's, tall, medium weight, high fade cut, watches tv.

On the coffee table is a bowl of chips and a beer, which he keeps imbibing.

There's a knock on the door. He doesn't hear it.

The BELL rings. He turns his attention to the door.

The BELL rings again.

He hesitantly gets up to go see who it is.

TOM

Hallo?

SOPHIE (OS)

(sobbing)

It's me.

He knows her but is surprised.

He unbars the door.

TOM

Hey, come in.

She walks in shedding tears. It's not a pleasant site.

TOM

Have a seat.

SOPHIE

Sorry to come to you like this on short notice, I had nowhere else to go.

TOM

It's fine. Can I get you something?

SOPHIE

Wine, if you have any?

TOM

Sure.

He walks over to the open kitchen and grabs a bottle and glass.

He pours her a glass and hands it to her.

SOPHIE

It's Hector. He's lost his head again. I can't take it anymore.

She gulps the glass in one swoop, pours herself another, this time fills it to the brim.

Tom drinks his beer pretending he didn't notice.

SOPHIE
(drinking)
I thought he'd change, I tried my
best to make it work.

TOM
You should leave him if you think
that's best.

SOPHIE
Every time am about to, he promises
me he will change. I can't go back
there, it's not safe for me
anymore.

TOM
You don't have to, you can stay the
night.

SOPHIE
(sniffles)
Thanks, you always come through.

TOM
Don't mention it.

She lays back in the sofa, crosses her legs.

SOPHIE
What you watching?

TOM
Just animal fail videos, I find
them funny.

They both start laughing at what's on the tv.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Tom is at his cubicle going through an excel file. He's deep
in his work.

A disturbance can be heard at the reception a few feet away.

RECEPTIONIST (OS)
Sir, please calm down.

HECTOR (OS)
Don't tell me to calm down! I want
to see my wife!!!

Tom stands up to see what all the noise is about.

Concerned, he walks over to the scene of the disturbance.

INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

HECTOR, early 30s, tall, tipsy, in jeans and a jacket, is in an altercation with the receptionist.

TOM
(to the receptionist)
I'll take it from here.

HECTOR
And who the fuck! Are you?!

TOM
Am Mr. Goodman, welcome to MJS consultancy, how may I help you today?

HECTOR
Don't give me that shit! I want to know where my wife is, I know she works here, she hasn't been home since she left.

TOM
Sorry to hear that. What's your wife's name, sir?

HECTOR
Are you taking me for a joke? Her name's Sophie, everyone knows Sophie.

TOM
Oh, Sophie, she didn't come in to work today, am afraid.

Hector narrows his eyes on Tom.

HECTOR
What did you say your name was again?

TOM
Tom. Tom Goodman.

HECTOR
Tom Goodman, huh, you wouldn't be the Tom she's been talking about at work?

TOM
You got me. Guilty as charged.

Before Tom can see it coming. Hector yanks his head with his hand and smashes it on top of the glass table. BAM!

There is a RINGING in Tom's head. His mind tries to comprehend what's just happened.

Everything is in slow motion. We can't hear what Hector is says but we see a SECURITY GUARD separate him from Tom.

He stares down at the DENT, the impact his face has made. His nose is bleeding. The blood drips down to his open hands.

It comes back to him, the noise from Hector.

HECTOR

You think you can just fuck my wife as you please? Where is she? She needs to come back home! Where are you keeping my wife?!

Tom turns to him. The security guard smacks Hector to the floor, puts him in an arm lock.

HECTOR

(struggling)

This man is fucking my wife! Who's in-charge here? This fucker is fucking my wife!!!

RECEPTIONIST

(to Tom)

Should I call the police.

TOM

(holding his nose)

That won't be necessary

(to the Guard)

Let him go.

The guard glances at him as if asking him to re-think his options.

TOM

It's fine.

Hector is released from the Guard's grip. He walks up to Tom. He looks down on him. Tom peers up. No one flinches.

Hector smirks.

HECTOR

If you didn't have your security with you, I'd have done more than bash your face in.

TOM

(whispers)

Bourbon

HECTOR

What did you say to me?

TOM
Try it sometime, helps in losing
weight and bad breath.

Hector is silent, he then grins, pointing at Tom.

HECTOR
You think you're funny?

He turns to leave.

HECTOR
I ain't going nowhere until I see
my wife, Tom!

He exists to the parking.

Through the glass window, we see him stand next to his car.

He gestures with his hands that he is going to stand there.

GUARD
I could move him.

TOM
Let's not give him the
satisfaction, he'll give up
eventually.

TIME CUT:

TOM walks back to the lobby, he has a band aid on his nose.

He spots Hector outside lighting a cigarette. A few puffs
and he turns to get into his car, frustrated.

As hector leaves, Tom glances at his watch.

INT. TOM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sophie is on the couch, eating popcorn. The bottle of wine
is almost done.

She laughs as she watches tv.

We hear keys JIGGLE.

Tom makes his way into the living room.

He places his briefcase on the table.

SOPHIE
Hey, welcome back, hope I didn't
miss much at work.

TOM
Same old stuff, I told the
management to give you some time
off.

SOPHIE

Oh thanks. Hey I found more of those animal fails, really funny stuff.

Sophie looks at him as she laughs. She immediately sits up, her face frozen.

SOPHIE

Tom, what happened?

TOM

It's nothing serious.

SOPHIE

Nothing serious? You look like you just came back from a botched operation. What happened?

TOM

Am fine.

SOPHIE

What happened? Oh my God! Was it Hector?

Tom is silent.

SOPHIE

Jesus! Am so embarrassed!

TOM

You weren't there, so there is nothing to be embarrassed about.

SOPHIE

You don't know that.

TOM

Right now, you need to think about how you're going to leave him.

SOPHIE

(sobbing)

I can't. Now he's coming after my friends.

She drops to her knees.

SOPHIE

Am so sorry Tom, I'll leave first thing in the morning.

TOM

Where will you go?

SOPHIE

To my sister's maybe, stay there for a while until I can resolve the matter.

TOM

You can't go back.

SOPHIE

I have nowhere else to go. Not as long as he's alive.

Tom stares at her thoughtfully.

TOM

No need to go at your sister's, stay here as long as you like.

SOPHIE

(sobbing)

What about Hector?

TOM

There's always a solution for an arduous situation.

SOPHIE

(sniffles)

What do you mean?

He gently holds her face. Looks into her eyes.

TOM

We both know if you go back, it won't end well for you. You've taken years of abuse and believe it or not, I know what that feels like. People like Hector are all about control and installing fear, they feed on it. And no one can tell them they've had enough.

SOPHIE

I guess your right.

TOM

I can help with the problem. All you have to do is ask.

Sophie rises and steps back.

Silence. We hear the GIGGLES from the tv set.

Her back faces Tom.

SOPHIE

You mean get rid of him.

TOM
That's exactly what I mean.

SOPHIE
How would you go about it?

TOM
Best if you don't know.

SOPHIE
No, I don't think I'd be able to
live with the guilt.

Tom glances at his watch.

TOM
You have to make your decision now.

SOPHIE
Yes.

TOM
Ok then. I'll be right back.

Tom stands up to leave. He grabs a black coat by the hook.

SOPHIE
You're going to do it now?

TOM
I went out to get us dinner, that's
all you remember. Give me your
keys.

She grabs them from her purse and hands them to him.

Tom leaves. Sophie shakes with fear as she turns back to the
tv.

INT. HECTOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hector watches the news. Empty beer cans are spread all over
the living room.

A figure, we only see from the waist-down, walks into the
house from the kitchen entrance.

The figure has surgical gloves. A plastic water bottle of
about 350ml is revealed.

The figure walks to the sofa slowly.

Hector appears to be falling asleep. He opens his eyes as
his head tilts. He sits back up.

A HAND puts him in a choke hold. He struggles to get free.

The water bottle is forcefully placed in his mouth and the
contents squeezed out.

It's at that moment he makes eye contact with Tom.

TOM
Don't fight it.

Hector struggles, with one push, he manages to get free. Tom trips, landing on the floor.

INT. HECTOR HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom lays on the ground, pushing himself away from Hector.

Hector walks towards him slowly as he tries to cough out whatever was given to him.

He grabs Tom by the neck.

HECTOR
Am going to enjoy this.

He suddenly loses his balance falling beside Tom.

He can't comprehend his lose of stamina.

HECTOR
Wha.. What did you give me?

Hector's vision becomes blurry as Tom towers over him.

HECTOR
(slurred)
You fuck...

He goes unconscious.

TIME CUT:

TOM (O.S)
Wake up. Wake up.

Hector slowly opens his eyes.

TOM
There you are.

Hector's face is filled with rage, but he can't make any words. His mouth is sealed with duct tape.

He's sat on the chair with his hands tied behind his back.

Tom sits directly opposite him.

There's a shopping bag on the table.

TOM
Let's have a look at what you bought.

He pulls out a bottle of Wild Turkey 101.

TOM

Ohhhhh.. Someone followed my advice. It's no Belle Meade but beggars can't be choosers.

He cracks it open. Takes a sip.

TOM

That's the stuff! Want some?

Hector appears to be yelling at him.

Tom's eyes dart around the kitchen. He heads to the cabinets, grabs a funnel.

He walks towards Hector who's shaking his head.

He holds his head firmly as he makes an opening on the duct tape with a knife.

TOM

Don't move or I'll get your lips.

He gently inserts the funnel into his mouth as Hector struggles.

He adds more tape to the funnel making it firm.

He then pours some alcohol into the funnel and down his throat.

Hector chokes, Tom pulls the bottle back.

He sits opposite him.

TOM

Tastes good right?

Hector shakes his head as if pleading with him.

TOM

Why am I doing this? Is that what you're asking? Justice of course.

Tom takes another sip of the bottle.

TOM

The first slap, that's the one that wakes her up from whatever fantasy she thought she was living in. And then it becomes a common thing. Gosh, my mother suffered. He'd come back home late, my dad, look for an excuse to start a fight, drag her around, toss her in the air like she was a sack of potatoes, you could see that he enjoyed it. And then one day, I decided to step up,

(MORE)

TOM (cont'd)

be a man, mind you I was only 12 at the time. It was David verses Goliath and oh, boy did David get the whacking of his life. Smacked my head right into the wall, same way you did today Hector. I eventually stopped him, but it was too late, my mother had already taken her life. If only I'd done it earlier. That's when it dawned on me today, I can't let someone innocent suffer, not anymore, not if I can do something about it. And today, you gave me the right reasons.

Tom gives him a stun look. All Hector can do is shake his head.

TOM

So here's what happened.

Hector's eyes look on in fear.

TOM

You came to Sophie's place of work, drank, got into a confrontation with a stuff member, that would be me.

Hector nods his head accepting.

TOM

...waited outside the parking area for a while, hoping your wife would reveal herself. She didn't, so you left.

Hector nods his head.

TOM

..then you went to the liquor store.

Hector freezes.

TOM

Oh, you didn't know? I followed you. You left just at the right time I was getting off work. Almost lost you at the junction, but then I remembered there's only one liquor store in this area, so where would a drunk go.

Hector looks dumbfounded.

TOM

Believe you me, am as shocked as you are, I didn't think you were going to get the bourbon.

Tom takes another sip.

TOM

Where was I? Or yeah, the liquor store, you left the liquor store and headed home. Once you got home, you started drinking.

Tom stands up holding the bottle. He angles Hector's face upwards and downs the bottle down his throat through the funnel.

TOM

...and drinking, till you finished the whole bottle.

Hector chokes. Tom picks up Hectors phone.

TOM

(typing)

You texted you're wife threatening to kill her if she didn't come back.

(pauses)

Maybe that's too much.

(typing)

You texted her saying if she doesn't come back home, you'd kill yourself.

Hector appears to be throwing up.

Tom isn't bothered. He places the phone back on the table.

MESSAGE SENT. On the display.

He sits as he observes Hector fall into a stupor.

TIME CUT:

Tom stares at Hector's unconscious body.

He looks back at his watch.

He gets up to feel for a pulse.

Hector is dead.

He cuts the tape open. He wipes away some vomit on his mouth. He then carries him to the living room.

INT. HECTOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He sets him up in the posture he was in before only this time, dead.

He places the bottle in his right hand and phone in the left.

He takes a step back, looks around the room making sure everything is in order.

He reaches for his phone and orders an uber.

He places the pieces of tape, the funnel and knife in a plastic bag.

PHONE ALERT.

He pulls his phone out.

NOTIFICATION;

YOUR UBER IS HERE.

He turns the display off, looks around one more time then leaves through the kitchen.

THE END

FADE TO BLACK