

"A NURSERY RHYME"

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Thriller / Suspense / Short

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INT / EXT. SUTTON RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

It's 1am in a nice suburban home. The kind of home neatly tucked into neighborhoods with white picket fences and two car garages. Hours from now this neighborhood will be bustling with soccer moms and professor dads, kids, dogs -- families.

We flicker through a series of these late night establishing shots. The kitchen. The living room. Who's home? Is everyone sleeping?

We push down a long hallway leading to a bedroom -- the bedroom door ajar at the far end of the frame. A soft light on.

OPENING CREDITS roll over this series of images.

Also over this --

WOMAN'S VOICE SINGING (VO)
(Softly, slowly, beautifully)
Three blind mice...Three blind mice...

And then, walking into frame far down the lens we see: MELISSA SUTTON, 33, pregnant. Brown hair, brown eyes. Pretty but not too pretty. Wearing no makeup. Dead serious.

See how they run...See how they run...

MELISSA paces back-and-forth nervously around the bedroom. There is tension here but we're not quite sure why.

...They all ran out to the farmer's wife, she cut off their tails with a carving knife...

She's anxious. Something important is happening but we don't know what. Her mind racing. Lost in thought. Holding her pregnant belly over her maternity pajamas. ECU on her face.

Have you ever seen such a sight in your life?...

Three...

...

blind...

...

mice.

And with that, like a crack of thunder shattering this soft moment: DANIEL SUTTON, 38 (tall, smart and handsome) **burst into the front door.**

Hearing this, MELISSA turns and beelines it to him as he slams the door shut behind him.

INT. FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

As MELISSA approaches -- she slows. Her eye line drifting from DANIEL'S face down to his clothes.

HE'S COVERED IN BLOOD.

MELISSA let's out a whimpered gasp. Covers her mouth to keep from screaming. Frozen in shock. They stare at each other. And then -

DANIEL

She's dead.

And with that - DANIEL moves quickly towards the kitchen - Melissa following briskly behind him.

MELISSA

(Following from behind)

She's DEAD? Daniel? Daniel! Daniel talk to me. What happened?!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

DANIEL reaches the kitchen sink. He drops a bloody pocket knife into the stainless steel sink and begins to wash his bloody hands.

DANIEL

We need to leave.

MELISSA

What do you mean she's dead?

DANIEL

We need to leave now.

MELISSA

How is she dead? What happened?!

DANIEL

We need to get out of town. Go pack.

MELISSA

Daniel - you're scaring me -

DANIEL

Go pack your things.

MELISSA

Daniel, talk to me! What do me --

DANIEL

(and finally - he explodes)
 She's **dead**, Melissa! DEAD! I killed her. She attacked me and I killed her. Sh -- she -- she said she was going to kill me, kill you, the baby... she attacked me when I told her it was over. I used the knife, and...we -- we struggled and she...

(Frustrated, losing it now)
 fell forward and...

(raising his voice loudly)
 the knife just went in! Goddammit it was self-defense, I swear to God it was self-defense!

MELISSA is stunned.

MELISSA

(to herself)

Oh my God. Oh my God...We need to call the police. We need to tell them the truth... tell them it was an accident.

DANIEL

Tell them what!? That I was having an affair with one of my students? That my pregnant wife told me to go "end" the relationship - and that she gave me a pocket knife to **protect** myself. Something tells me that might not end well for either of us.

MELISSA

(Her mind racing)

...What are you saying?

DANIEL

I'm saying we need to leave. Go to a motel tonight. Get off the grid for a while. Establish an alibi that we're on vacation. I don't know - we just

can't be here.

DANIEL rushes towards the bedroom to pack.

MELISSA watches this, as --

HARD CUT TO --

INT. SHOWER - DAY

The surge of shower water pours from the shower head onto DANIEL'S tired face. His eyes closed, he's exacerbated. Living in hell. From behind the bathroom shower door, we can hear --

MELISSA

(Behind the door -- irate;
shouting relentlessly)

THIS IS OVER. AND YOU NEED TO END IT.
I DON'T GIVE A FUCK IF SHE'S YOUR
STUDENT. SHE'S A WHORE, DANIEL! AND IF
YOU DON'T END THINGS WITH HER TONIGHT,
I'M DIVORCING YOU. I'M DIVORCING YOU
AND I'M GOING TO THE DEAN. YOU'LL
NEVER SEE YOUR CHILD. YOU NEED TO
THINK ABOUT THAT. YOU NEED TO THINK
ABOUT THAT LONG AND HARD. EVERYTHING
YOU'VE EVER WORKED FOR, DANIEL. YOUR
FAMILY, YOUR CAREER...YOU NEED TO
START FIGHTING FOR US!

INT. SUTTON RESIDENCE - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

DANIEL makes his way towards the front door. MELISSA hands him his JACKET, and then --

MELISSA

(Handing him a small pocket knife,
too)

Here, take this.

DANIEL

Oh, c'mon, no...

MELISSA

--For protection. You never know --
These young girls, they get attached,
they get psycho. I'd feel more
comfortable knowing you had something
to protect yourself just in case
she...I don't know -- just take it.

DANIEL reaches for the pocket knife reluctantly and grabs it.

DANIEL
(Turning to exit)
I'll be back.

MELISSA
What are you going to tell her?

DANIEL
I'm going to say what we talked
about...

MELISSA isn't satisfied. She waits for the full rundown...

DANIEL (CONTINUED)
...That this can't go on anymore. That
I love my wife and I'm about to have a
baby so I need to make things right.

MELISSA loves hearing this. She gives him a soft smile and
leans in. He kisses her forehead. Here, a nice moment of
love.

And with that, he turns and exits the door with the slam. On
the slam, we --

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Intense music begins to build.

DANIEL parks his car outside of the COLLEGE DORM APARTMENT
complex and walks up to the main gate. He takes out the
pocket knife from his jacket and examines it. Flips open the
blade, and then back down. Looks up to the apartments.

Just then, TWO COLLEGE KIDS come flying out of the gate
entrance. DANIEL ducks his head and turns away to stay
unrecognized.

Music builds.

Just before the gate closes again, he GRABS IT, and **enters
the complex.**

INT. COLLEGE DORM APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Intense music surging now.

We push in past a wad of bloody paper towels & newspaper
scattered across the cheap dorm room linoleum kitchen floor.

Something messy has happened here. Something bad.

Kneeling with his back to us is DANIEL, he's stabbing something over and over that we cannot see.

DEEP INTENSE MUSIC AT FULL DRAMA. A pool of blood under his shoes. His breathing heavy, his body putting everything in to the stabs.

And then -- a deep breath. He's finished. Music stops, too.

DANIEL
(loudly)
That should do it.

UP CUT TO: A bloody piece of raw meat. Not a body. A sponge, and bowl of red food dye.

From behind him (and us) walks the feet of a young college girl. This is AMANDA.

AMANDA
(off screen)
Let's see it.

DANIEL stands, turns towards AMANDA, revealing a blood soaked shirt and smeared mess of fake-blood splattered skin.

Finally we see: AMANDA, 20 -- blonde hair, blue eyes -- gorgeous college student. The kind of student that every professor takes an extra look at when she walks in every day. The *dangerous* kind of student.

AMANDA
(Smiling)
You look like you just **killed me**.
(turned on)
You're bad.

DANIEL
(In full Professor mode)
Okay so now we need to get our story straight here.

AMANDA walks to DANIEL and admires his bloody regalia.

AMANDA
So. Bad.

She begins to kiss his neck.

DANIEL

(Not paying attention to the kissing)

I tell you that this was over. You freaked out, began screaming. Saying you're going to kill me. Kill my wife. Yada, yada...

AMANDA'S not listening. She rolls her hands over his bloody body. They drift down -- off camera -- low -- towards his crotch.

AMANDA

Shut up, Professor. You don't even love her.

DANIEL

(Procedural; matter of fact)

I took out my pocket knife to defend myself - You attacked me - My hands go up to protect myself and the knife accidentally slits your throat - there's blood everywhere.

AMANDA is unbuckling DANIEL'S PANTS NOW.

DANIEL

(Still focusing on his story)

-- I'll tell her we need to get out of town for the night. We'll go to a motel. There, I'll...

AMANDA disappears out of frame -- onto her knees.

DANIEL

(Still trying to focus...but barely able to speak)

...I'll...**take care of her**. I'll take care of her like I should have years ago...I'll bury her in the mountains... And then we'll finally **be together**.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A cheap motel off the freeway. The sound of cars passing by in the distance. DANIEL and his wife MELISSA enter their room. No frills. Bed -- TV -- window.

DANIEL'S changed his clothes - now wearing sweat pants and a hoodie (almost ridiculously inconspicuous). MELISSA is still

in her maternity pajamas.

The door shuts behind them.

MELISSA

Now what?

DANIEL

Let's get some sleep. We need to be back on the road first thing in the morning.

MELISSA

I need to pee.

MELISSA escapes to the bathroom. DANIEL flops a suitcase onto the bed. He opens it...unpacking his toiletries.

DANIEL

(loudly to Melissa in the bathroom)
We could go to Mexico.

MELISSA

(from behind the bathroom door, a moment of levity)
You know my stomach can't handle Mexican food.

From under his toiletries bag DANIEL reaches for and reveals:
A LARGE KITCHEN KNIFE.

DANIEL

How about Canada? Montreal is nice.

He feels the sharp end of the blade.

MELISSA

(from behind the bathroom door)
What, then I have to learn how to speak French? No thanks.

DANIEL positions himself just outside the bathroom door, **KITCHEN KNIFE in hand**. He grips it good. Tests of few air stabs. Ready to plunge it deep into Melissa's skin.

DANIEL

(Playing it cool)
They speak English in Canada too, babe.

The toilet flushes. The sink runs.

The squeaky bathroom door begins to open.

Before it does, we --

INT. BATHROOM - SHOWER - DAY

We're back at the shower scene again. The rush of shower water pours from the shower head onto DANIEL'S tired face. His eyes closed, he's exacerbated. Living in hell. From behind the bathroom shower door, we can hear --

MELISSA
(shouting relentlessly)
THIS IS OVER. AND YOU NEED TO END IT.
I DON'T GIVE A FUCK IF SHE'S YOUR
STUDENT. SHE'S A WHORE, DANIEL.

And then --

INT. BEDROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Just outside the bathroom MELISSA stands next to the bed shouting at DANIEL behind the bathroom door showering. Her POV now. Only, she's not just shouting. While shouting, she's hard at work stitching a bug microphone into his jacket.

MELISSA
(Relentlessly stitching a wire
microphone into seam of jacket)
...AND IF YOU DON'T END THINGS WITH
HER TONIGHT, I'M DIVORCING YOU.

She cuts the thread and needles another loop through his jacket. Her finger is pricked - she winces and sucks the blood.

I'M DIVORCING YOU AND I'M GOING TO THE
DEAN. YOU'LL NEVER SEE YOUR CHILD. YOU
NEED TO THINK ABOUT THAT.

Haphazardly stitching away. Trying to follow directions / read the instructions and scream at her husband at the same time.

YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT THAT LONG AND
HARD. EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WORKED
FOR, DANIEL. YOUR FAMILY, YOUR
CAREER...YOU NEED TO START FIGHTING
FOR US!

She's done. The microphone is in. The wire is in place. She

blows into it to test that it works.

The shower turns off.

INT. FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

DANIEL makes his way to the front door. MELISSA hands him his **JACKET (bugged with microphone)**, and then --

INT. COLLEGE DORM APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

DANIEL and AMANDA stand in her dorm room kitchen, same as before. AMANDA kissing his neck...

DANIEL

(Not paying attention to the kissing)

...I tell you that this was over. You freaked out, began screaming. Saying you're going to kill me. Kill my wife.

AMANDA'S not listening. She rolls her hands over his bloody body. They drift down -- off camera -- low -- to his crotch.

We PUSH IN on DANIEL'S jacket.

AMANDA

(Off screen)

Shut up, Professor. You don't even love her.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

MELISSA is parked outside under a street light. She listens in on their conversation with headphones. Every word coming through crystal clear via the hidden microphone bug stitched into DANIEL'S jacket.

DANIEL (VO)

(through the headphones)

I took out my pocket knife to defend myself - You attacked me - My hands go up to protect myself and the knife accidentally slits your throat - there's blood everywhere.

The sounds of kissing.

DANIEL (VO)

*I'll...**take care of her**...I'll bury her in the mountains. And then we'll*

finally *be together...*

MELISSA'S eyes welt with tears.

INT. SUTTON RESIDENCE - HOME - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

MELISSA enters her home briskly and quickly makes her way to the bedroom. Her make-up a mess from crying.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

MELISSA is racing now. Against the clock. Her pregnant belly aching from the stress.

She drops down and reaches UNDER THE BED -- Pulls out a shoe box -- opens it. There: A .22 caliber handgun. She grabs it, and begins to load it with bullets. Her hands shaking.

She stuffs the loaded gun under her maternity pajamas, into her underwear lining.

She wipes the smeared make-up from her face.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

MELISSA paces around the room...waiting anxiously. This is where we started. **Back where it all began.**

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

DANIEL and his wife MELISSA enter a motel. Same shot as before.

MELISSA

Now what?

DANIEL

Let's get some sleep. We need to be back on the road first thing in the morning.

MELISSA

I need to pee.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

MELISSA enters the bathroom and sits down on the toilet. Same scene as before, but her POV now.

AS SHE PEES -- she retrieves the loaded .22 caliber gun from under her maternity pajamas.

DANIEL
(from the other side of the
bathroom door)
We could go to Mexico.

MELISSA cocks the gun.

MELISSA
You know my stomach can't handle
Mexican food.

DANIEL
(from the other side of the
bathroom door)
How about Canada? Montreal is nice.

MELISSA stands and flushes the toilet. She turns on the sink and stares at herself in the mirror.

MELISSA
What, then I have to learn how to
speak French? No, thanks.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

DANIEL stands on the other side of the bathroom door with a kitchen knife ready to go to work on MELISSA.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

MELISSA stands on the other side of the bathroom door with a loaded gun ready to go to work on DANIEL.

She swallows extra saliva that's built up in her mouth. A long deep heavy breath.

THIS IS IT.

She looks down at the gun. Anticipation is at a boiling point. And if there is music, it's reached it's crescendo here, too. All roads have led to this stand off.

Then -- she reaches for the door handle, and pulls.

HARD CUT TO BLACK.

Music cuts out. Only, we hear the squeak of the bathroom door open.

CREDITS ROLL over the soft, beautiful sound of a nursery rhyme: MELISSA'S VOICE, singing *Three Blind Mice*.

The end.