

ASHES BETWEEN US

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - BACKDOOR - NIGHT

A gloved hand slides a lock pick into the knob. A click, then the knob turns.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - MUD ROOM - NIGHT

The door eases open.

ROMAN, 20s, dressed all in black, hoodie shadowing his face, slips inside. He closes the door behind him, then slides a backpack off his shoulder. He continues into the --

KITCHEN

Street lights spill faint light into the messy kitchen. Dirty dishes on the table and countertop.

Roman moves silently through while he looks for valuables.

He grabs a few dollars in a tray. Checks drawers. Cupboards. Finds a few prescription bottles. Reads the labels. Puts one bottle back, the others in his pack.

HALLWAY

Roman walks down the narrow hallway towards a --

BOY'S BEDROOM

A teenage mess. An unmade bed. Clothes on the floor. Music posters. A desktop computer with a big monitor. Game console. Headset.

Roman enters, casually sifts through the clutter. Snatches the electronics, stuffs them into the backpack.

HALLWAY

Back in the hallway, Roman edges toward the --

MASTER BEDROOM

Heavy drapes suffocate the room in darkness. Roman turns on his phone's light. The beam lands on the bed. He freezes.

On the bed lies LINDA, (40s), on her side. Eyes wide open. She stares straight through Roman.

Roman flinches back into the hallway.

Linda doesn't move.

After a beat, Roman peeks inside again.

Still no movement from Linda.

Roman shines his light into the room. On the woman. He stares at her for a moment, hesitates, then sweeps the light across the room. Empty.

A purse on the floor catches his eye.

Roman flashes the light at Linda again, moves his hand in front of her. She doesn't move.

He snatches the purse and bolts.

HALLWAY

He runs through into the --

KITCHEN

Speeds across into the --

MUD ROOM

Roman yanks the back door open, ready to flee, but stops in his tracks. He looks back at the kitchen. Hesitates.

Slowly, he shuts the door, turns back.

MASTER BEDROOM

Roman stands in the doorway. He shines his light on the bed. Linda hasn't moved, still stares out at nothing.

He flips on the ceiling light. No reaction.

ROMAN
Hey... you okay?

Nothing.

He steps inside. Moves his hand in front of her face.

ROMAN
Ma'am... Can you hear me?

He touches her shoulder. Gently shakes it.

ROMAN
Hey. You all right?

No reaction.

Roman hesitates, then checks for a pulse on her neck.

He shakes her harder.

ROMAN
Wake up, okay. Something ain't
right with you.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Startled, Roman freezes.

Someone bangs on the front door. A man's angry voice roars
from outside.

RAY (O.S.)
Open up, Linda Barrett!

BOOM! BOOM!

RAY (O.S.)
Open this fucking door!

Roman's eyes dart around. Nowhere to run.

BOOM! BOOM!

CRASH!

The front door is kicked in. Heavy steps thud across the
floor.

RAY (O.S.)
Where are you you fucking bitch?

The footsteps come closer.

Roman looks for somewhere to hide. He ducks into the closet.

RAY, (40s) red-eyed fury, staggers in.

RAY
Get up! I said, get up!

Ray leans in, inches from her face.

RAY
You think you can just lie there
while my daughter is in the ground?

He shakes her violently. Screams at her.

RAY
She's dead! You hear me? Dead! Your
fucking son killed her. Killed
three more!

He slaps her across the face.

MASTER BEDROOM CLOSET

Roman peers through the slats, lets out a quiet gasp.

MASTER BEDROOM

Linda doesn't flinch. Eyes wide, fixed on nothing.

Ray pulls her up by the shirt. She's limp, a ragdoll in his grip.

RAY
You're gonna suffer. Suffer like I
do.

Tears streak down his face. He shoves her back onto the bed.

His big hands clamp around her neck.

RAY
Your monster took my little girl.
I hate you.
I hate you.

He squeezes harder, trembles with rage.

MASTER BEDROOM CLOSET

Roman watches. Can't take it. He shoves the door open.

MASTER BEDROOM

Roman bursts out of the closet.

ROMAN

Hey!

He lunges, slams into Ray, knocks him off Linda.

ROMAN

Get off her!

Ray tumbles, but snaps back up, eyes ablaze.

RAY

The fuck are you?

ROMAN

Nobody, man! Just-- just stop!

Ray charges, tackles Roman. They crash into the dresser. A lamp smashes to the floor.

The two men grapple, fists fly. Not skillful, just wild, desperate swings.

Roman shoves Ray back, panting.

ROMAN

She's not fighting you! She's not even there, can't you see?!

Ray roars, swings again. Roman ducks, tackles him onto the bed beside Linda.

Linda lies unmoving as chaos erupts around her.

White foam visible between her lips.

Ray snarls, strains against Roman's grip.

RAY

She raised a monster! She has to pay!

Roman, shaking with adrenaline, pins him for a moment.

ROMAN

She's broken, man! You kill her, what's that gonna fix?

Ray bucks him off. Both men stagger to their feet, breathe hard, circle each other.

Behind them, more froth bubbles from Linda's mouth.

Ray lunges again. Roman sidesteps. They slam into the nightstand.

It topples. A half-empty pint of vodka falls off. A prescription bottle rolls across the floor.

Both men pause. Their eyes lock on the bottle and the pint. They pull away from each other.

Roman snatches the bottle. Shakes it. Empty. He checks the label.

ROMAN

Oxy...

Ray gets up, stares at Linda. Foam thick at her lips.

RAY

Shit...

He staggers back, fury draining into raw grief.

RAY

No, no, no...

Roman, still shaky from adrenaline, crouches by the bed.

ROMAN

You wanted her to suffer. She
already was. Till she couldn't face
it anymore.

Ray collapses onto his knees, trembling. His hands cover his face.

Linda lies motionless.

Roman presses fingers to her neck.

ROMAN

She's still alive.

He turns to Ray.

ROMAN

We gotta do something, man.

Ray looks up. Eyes red, wet, torn.

Roman pulls Linda onto her side, wipes the foam from her mouth with his sleeve.

ROMAN

What do I do?

Ray hesitates, hands shaking, then comes over.

RAY
Is she breathing?

Roman puts his hand in front of her nose.

ROMAN
I don't think so.

Ray pats her hard on the back. Nothing.

RAY
Linda! Missus Barrett! Can you hear me?

ROMAN
We gotta do CPR.

Roman rolls her onto her back, tilts her head back, pinches her nose, tries two rescue breaths.

ROMAN
Come on... come on...

Ray watches, tears in his eyes.

RAY
What else? What do we do?

Roman presses two fingers to her neck again.

ROMAN
I don't feel anything. Start compressions. Hard, right here.

Points to Linda's chest.

Ray hesitates for a second, then plants his hands on her.

RAY
I'll break her ribs...

ROMAN
Do it!

Ray pumps, awkward and uneven. Roman counts under his breath.

ROMAN
One... two... three... four...

Linda jerks, a wet gasp rattles out of her throat.

Ray stops, eyes wide.

RAY
I'm hurting her.

ROMAN
Keep going. Don't stop.

Ray resumes, clumsy but determined.

Roman leans in, gives another breath.

Linda sputters, weak breaths through her mouth.

ROMAN
Quick call 911.

Ray fumbles his phone, dials.

Roman sits down on the bed next to Linda, rubs her back.

ROMAN
You're gonna be okay. Help's
coming.

Ray slumps on the bed's edge, exhausted.

From outside, faint sirens. Getting closer.

Ray looks up, panic in his eyes.

RAY
Cops'll be here any second...

ROMAN
Good! She needs an ambulance.

RAY
Good? What do you think happens
when they see you?

Roman pauses, glances at his backpack stuffed with loot.

ROMAN
...Shit.

Ray wipes his face with shaky hands.

RAY
I broke her door down. You broke
in. They'll lock us both up.

ROMAN
We saved her...

They share a look. Torn, uncertain. Sirens grow louder.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

A COP, (50s), in a uniform that says PEACE OFFICER stands before Roman and Ray.

COP
So, tell me... why are you here?

Ray glances at Roman, clears his throat.

RAY
I... I was going to talk to Lin...
Missus Barrett. Been upset since
the shooting, you know, and I
thought maybe it would help if I
talked to her.

The Cop nods. Sounds plausible.

COP
And you found her on the bed?

RAY
Yes, that's right.

The cop turns to Roman.

COP
And, how do you fit in?

Roman's nervous.

ROMAN
I was just --

RAY
He's my buddy Roman. He came along
to make sure I wouldn't say or do
something I'd regret.

The Cop looks from Ray to Roman, not quite convinced... but not pushing.

COP
Well, I'm going to leave it at
that. You two did save her life.

Roman and Ray share a look of relief mixed with unease.

The ambulance lights flash across their faces.

FADE OUT: