

Intruders

by

Jeff Huttinger

Jeffhutt@hotmail.com

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY MANOR - EVENING - ESTABLISHING SHOT

Moving cautiously down a narrow gravel road, surrounded on both sides by seemingly endless acres of wooded terrain.

Up ahead, the path links to a paved driveway, leading to our destination...

A swanky chateau in the middle of nowhere.

Definitely high-priced. Unique architectures suggests custom made.

But most important --

Secluded. Not another residence in sight.

The peaceful sounds of mother nature are quickly interrupted by the clamor of glass shattering from within the home.

INT. KITCHEN - COUNTRY MANOR

Inside --

Two BURGLARS frantically tear apart an aristocratic yet tasteful kitchen in this charming rural estate.

Ripping designer cabinets off their hinges before sweeping their contents crashing down onto a posh tile floor, it is obvious they are looking for something particular.

Across the room --

Bound to a chair and looking on with sobering concern, a comely and petite HOUSEWIFE shifts awkwardly in her seat.

Stoic, her angelic features cautious not to give anything away.

With a balled-up rag in her mouth, her eyes follow the two thieves as they traipse the kitchen, criss-crossing past each other, desperately searching.

Growing angrier and more impatient, the portlier of the two burglars, CHUBBS, grabs the back of the refrigerator --

Slamming it down on its side.

CHUBBS
GODDAMMIT!

His accomplice, SLINKY, tall, haggard with an animated bounce in his step, practically jumps out of his skin.

Turning to his partner --

SLINKY
What?! What is it?

CHUBBS
Nothing. That's the fucking problem.

SLINKY
Well, warn a guy before you're gonna do that, huh? Jesus Christ. You nearly gave me a heart attack.

With the gag in her mouth, the housewife's lips take on a familiar shape. Is she smiling?

Regaining focus, Chubbs turns to his hostage. Noticing her amusement --

CHUBBS
Something funny to you?

Pulling a .9MM PISTOL from the waistband of his jeans --

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
How about your better half? Think ol' Danny boy shares your sense of humor? My watch says he's due any minute now. And I got one of my boys waiting in the woods ready to ambush his ass 'fore he even makes it halfway up the path.

Pressing the barrel firmly to the young lady's cheek, he leans in even closer, only inches from her face.

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
(whispering)
So, go on. Laugh it up.

Again, stone-faced. She is composure incarnate.

Chubbs snatches the rag from the housewife's mouth --

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
Now, unless you really want us to still be here when he gets home, you best start squealing. We've torn this fucking house apart.
(MORE)

CHUBBS (CONT'D)

This is it. The final room. So where the fuck is it?!

HOUSEWIFE

Where's what?

CHUBBS

The safe. All the money. The valuables. Where do you keep it?

HOUSEWIFE

I don't know what you're talk --

CHUBBS

Oh, don't give me that shit! Your husband teaches English over at Jefferson High. Part-time. You. You're a regular Donna Reed. What do you call 'em - domestic goddess? Hey, don't get me wrong. I'm old fashioned. I believe a woman's place is in the home. But that don't exactly pay the goddamn bills.

Gesturing towards the rest of the house --

CHUBBS (CONT'D)

Yet you two live it up out here in the lap of luxury. So what is paying the bills, huh? I got a cousin works at the Wells Fargo. Says you ain't got shit in savings. That tells me you got another source of revenue. Drugs, I figure. And where there's drugs, there's cash. Lots of it. I mean, look at all this shit. What are you sitting on back there? About 20 acres? Hell, I bet that toaster cost more than my last truck.

HOUSEWIFE

Take it. My treat.

Slinky tries stifling a giggle. He fails miserably. Chubbs shoots him a look.

Standing upright, Chubbs paces anxiously, his gun pointed loosely at the unshaken homemaker.

CHUBBS

You're something else, Mrs. Whitman. You know that?

(MORE)

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
 What am I saying? "Mrs. Whitman."
 We're all friends here. May I call
 you Jane?

Chubbs raises the weapon. He aims it right between JANE's
 eyes --

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
 For the first time in my life, I'm
 gonna know what's going through a
 woman's mind in exactly three
 seconds unless you start talking,
 Jane.
 (beat)
 3...

Starting to shake, Slinky steels himself, clutching the
 island for reinforcement.

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
 ...2...

It's not enough. Slinky turns, averting his gaze.

Unlike Jane, who matches her potential murderer glare-to-
 glare. Fearlessly. Not a hint of intimidation.

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
 ...1.

Suddenly --

Jane's reserved demeanor finally cracks, betraying her true
 feelings about the situation.

She yawns.

Chubbs lowers his gun, frustrated. He takes only a moment to
 reflect on a new strategy before simply raising it back up --

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
 Sonuvabitch! Now, I'm gonna count
 to 5 --

SLINKY
 Stop.

Slinky grabs his cohort, pulling him to the side. Chubbs
 reluctantly follows.

SLINKY (CONT'D)
 Excuse us. We need to talk.

JANE

Take your time.

Chubbs eyes Slinky's grip on his shoulder, pushes his hand off.

SLINKY

Now, something ain't right here. You done had your piece up in that woman's face least three times now. She ain't flinched once. That make sense to you? Shit, I myself almost puked out an entire plate of Waffle House hash browns just considering her brains splattering 'gainst that back wall.

CHUBBS

(softly)

Would you keep it down, goddammit? Now, this here is just a minor setback.

SLINKY

Hey, God knows I seen what fear looks like in a woman's eyes, and that ain't it. Either that bitch in there is actually Batgirl herself or she done experienced horrors already we ain't even imagined. I'm talking like met the devil and walked away to tell the tale.

Both men look over at Jane. She remains sitting, casually rubbing an itchy chin against her shoulder.

SLINKY (CONT'D)

Now, I say we cut our losses, admit to ourselves we done underestimated this particular female, take what we can and get the hell outta here.

CHUBBS

Bullshit! The day I get steamrolled by some 110 pound bag of slutmeat is the day they retire my wifebeater and hang it from the goddamn rafters in the shitkicker hall of fame. She's hiding something. Something big. I can smell it. Now, we're doing this. You got it?

Slinky shrugs, unsure how far he's willing to go.

Pouncing on his hesitation like a feral cat, Chubbs slams Slinky against the kitchen counter.

CHUBBS (CONT'D)
YOU GOT IT?!

Slinky nods.

JANE
If you boys are busy arguing over what comes after 3... it's 4. And I'm only 105 pounds of slutmeat.

And with that little comment, Chubbs is right back in it. Full steam ahead.

CHUBBS
Pretty *and* clever. You outta be on TV.

JANE
Know anyone at *The Tonight Show*?

CHUBBS
No, but I can get you on *48 Hours Mysteries* real quick you keep playing your cards wrong.

JANE
Nah. I'm more of a --

WHACK! Slinky backhands her mid-sentence.

Caught off-guard, Jane is slow to recover her senses. As she turns back to face her assailant, a tiny stream of blood trickles out her nose.

She licks it off her lips.

SLINKY
I'm getting real tired of your smart mouth!

Surprised, in a good way, by Slinky's unexpected aggression -
-

CHUBBS
Woo-hoo! Now that's what I'm talking about. My boy is back!

Chubbs throws his hand in the air for a high-five.

Smiling sheepishly, Slinky consents, slapping his buddy some skin.

CHUBBS (CONT'D)

That's just the beginning, little girl. It's about to get a whole lot worse from here. Now, how long you think you can put on a brave face as we're beating it off ya -- ?

JANE

Two days.

CHUBBS

Huh?

JANE

Two days. That's how long I held out the last time I was in this situation.

Slinky throws his arms in the air, brazenly revelling in the fact that he was right about something. Finally.

SLINKY

I knew it. I fucking knew it. You never listen to me --

CHUBBS

Would you shut the fuck up! It's a trick. She's bluffing. Trying to psych us out or something.

SLINKY

Bluffing, my ass. This chick's got ice in her veins. I know grown men, veterans even, who would be weeping like a willow at a gun half that size getting shoved in their face. Not her, though.

Slinky grabs a nearby chair, slides it over. He sits across from Jane.

SLINKY (CONT'D)

I knew there was something off about you. You got yourself a past, dontcha?

(beat)

Tell us.

JANE

Well, about five years ago now, I
awoke to the *click* of the last
handcuff locking around my right
wrist.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - FLASHBACK

Dazed and a bit weak, Jane groggily comes to. Her eyes fix on the hazy image of a DARK FIGURE just above tugging on a metal brace, testing its durability.

It is firmly connected to an iron headboard.

As the figure moves swiftly in and out of view, Jane's gaze drifts unsteadily as she takes in her blurred surroundings.

Her body is splayed out on a filthy mattress.

JANE (V.O.)

My kidnapper had stripped me naked
and shackled my hands and legs to
the corners of the bed.

Reeling with confusion, her mind slowly comes to grips with her current predicament.

Her view moves to a dimly lit doorway where the figure stands engulfed in shadow.

Taking a moment to size up his prey, he approaches confidently.

Jane's expression switches instantly from befuddlement to a look of sheer panic.

JANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And lying there in that dank
basement, I was systematically
tortured. My body burned, beaten
and shocked.

Her face twists in agony. Eyes clenching as her mouth bursts open. A muted scream.

JANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Whenever it couldn't take anymore
and began to shut down, a syringe
was jammed into my arm --

CLOSE on a needle, as a thumb presses down on the plunger.

JANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Injected with a drug so that I
 would not lose consciousness.

Resisting as long as she can, the pain taking its toll on her
 body and spirit --

JANE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I kept pleading with myself to
 "wake up, wake up." That this was
 all just a bad dream. But then
 another jolt of excruciating pain
 would remind me that it wasn't.

Jane just stares lifelessly up at the ceiling. Her expression
 blank and drained of all hope as a single tear rolls slowly
 down her cheek.

END FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - COUNTRY MANOR

JANE
 And it went on like that. Hour
 after agonizing hour. For two days.

An uncomfortable hush falls over the room, as both men let
 the gravity of Jane's account wash over them.

Breaking the silence --

BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP

Both men practically hit the ceiling, their hearts racing at
 the shrill cry of the OVEN TIMER.

Chubbs shakes it off, yanks the door open. Inside --

A CASSEROLE. Cooked to perfection.

Slamming the oven closed, he spins the knob to OFF.

Still catching his breath, Slinky cuts to the chase --

SLINKY
 That story true?

Jane doesn't say a word. She doesn't have to. The answer is
 written all over her face.

SLINKY (CONT'D)
 (softly)
 Jesus Christ --

JANE

Lightweight. Less than a day before
he gave in.

SLINKY

Who in their right mind would do
that to you?

JANE

A man. A very violent man. One who
wouldn't stop no matter how loudly
you cried or how sincerely you
begged.

SLINKY

What the hell was he after?

No less enthralled, Chubbs finally speaks up --

CHUBBS

Yeah. What was it - some kind of
interrogation? Was he asking you
stuff the entire time?

JANE

Just one question. Repeatedly. Over
and over again. Until he got the
answer he wanted.

CHUBBS

What was the question?

A beat --

Jane's gaze suddenly drifts off, lost in thought. Reminiscing

JANE

"Will you marry me?"

Stunned, Chubbs can only muster a reply so faint it isn't
audible.

His mind wrestles with Jane's response.

Leaning in even further, literally on the edge of his seat,
Slinky can barely contain his suspense --

SLINKY

So how did you get away?

Turning to confront her intruder with laser-like focus, Jane
looks him dead in the eyes.

JANE
Who says I got away?

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - COUNTRY MANOR

The FRONT DOOR slowly swings open.

INT. KITCHEN - COUNTRY MANOR

The thieves turn to the low screech of the door's creaky hinges...

INT. FOYER - COUNTRY MANOR

From outside --

A LONE FIGURE casts an ample shadow across the small room.

INT. KITCHEN - COUNTRY MANOR

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
(calling out)
Honey... I'm home.

Jane watches as the robbers' faces fill with fear.

Without a shred of reluctance --

She gently tilts her head back, calls to her husband.

JANE
In the kitchen, dear.

A moment. Maybe two.

Before a MALE FIGURE appears in the entryway --

DANIEL WHITMAN.

Hardly a frightening presence at first glance. 5'10. Wiry build. Good looking. Sharp haircut.

But in his eyes... nothing. Hollow, disconnected. Soulless.

Lowering his briefcase, Daniel elicits a flash of reserved glee --

DANIEL
Oh, look. Company.

JANE
Perfect timing, babe. I was just
regaling our new friends with the
story of how you proposed.

A neighborly smile plastered on his face, Daniel studies the
men intently.

DANIEL
Well, how could I resist really? I
mean, just look at her. Have you
ever seen anyone more...

For the first time since entering the room, Daniel shifts his
attention to --

His wife. Restrained. Clearly helpless. As one side of her
face begins to swell.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Captivating.

CHUBBS
How did you get past our lookout?

DANIEL
How did I get past your lookout?
That's a good question. Not the
actual way I got past, but the *how*,
I mean. See, I'm an English
teacher. It's just in my nature to
always be looking for exactly the
right adverb to convey *how* I
performed a certain task. So, to
answer your original question...
(thinking it over)
Well, I guess the best word to
describe how I got past your
lookout is...

Daniel unbuttons the sport coat he wears fastened over a V-
neck sweater, opening the jacket wide.

Underneath --

His torso is drenched in fresh blood.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Methodically.

Repulsed by the carnage, Slinky covers his mouth to contain the vomit rising in his throat.

Chubbs raises the gun in a flash, pointing it at Daniel. Slinky dives behind his partner's ample frame.

SLINKY

Shoot 'em. Shoot 'em, goddamn it.

Sweating profusely, Chubbs' hand begins to quiver. It quickly mounts to a visible tremor.

SLINKY (CONT'D)

The fuck are you waiting for? Do it already!

Trembling now, Chubbs pulls feebly back on the hammer. Hesitating still --

SLINKY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?!

Daniel reaches out, welcoming death with open arms.

Slinky has seen enough. Disgusted with his accomplice's weakness, he rips the pistol from Chubbs' grasp.

CHUBBS

Don't!

Taking aim, Slinky yanks back on the trigger --

CLICK.

SLINKY

(softly)

No.

Again. CLICK.

SLINKY (CONT'D)

No.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

SLINKY

NO!

Confused, Slinky turns to his companion, his terrified expression hysterically searching for answers.

DANIEL

Despite what you hear in the news,
gentlemen, you just know the
economy is still limping along when
a man can't even afford bullets for
his own gun.

Chubbs bows his head in humiliation, nodding ashamedly.

Slinky loosens his grip on the gun as it falls to the floor.
Dropping to his knees, he weeps like a child.

CHUBBS

How the hell did the both of you
know?

DANIEL

Well, I wish I could tell you boys
that I'm just that good, but you
can blame your friend outside for
ruining the big surprise. He
spilled his guts... *before* spilling
his guts.

Slinky's blubbing intensifies, growing even louder and more
exaggerated.

JANE

Me, on the other hand, I just know
men without the balls to do
whatever it takes to get the job
done when I see them.

Slinky picks himself up off the floor. Finally mustering the
nerve to speak --

SLINKY

What... what the hell are you?

DANIEL

Let's start with what were we?
Agents. Assassins. Monsters.
Depends on who you ask. Retired
now, but as you can see from the
surroundings, Uncle Sam is
incredibly grateful for our
service.

JANE

I told them you tortured me.

DANIEL

Ugh. A necessity in our field, I'm
afraid. Finding that threshold.

JANE

I was good. He made me better. They say it isn't unusual for a female operative to fall for her trainer. What can I say? I'm such a cliché.

DANIEL

But that was all in the past. What are we *now*?

Daniel and Jane lock eyes. Smiling --

JANE

Nostalgic.

DANIEL

The way I see it, you boys can run. Or you can fight. Hell, you can even try to scream for help. I'd like to go on record as saying I encourage all three.

Completely numb, the thieves find themselves engulfed in a paralyzing fog. Unable to move or speak.

Their bodies have already surrendered.

Bits of half-remembered prayers rattle around their brains in short bursts. Hastily pieced together from books and movies...

And perhaps even from memories of brighter days, when innocence was still an option.

JANE

You wanna know the secret to a successful marriage, gentlemen? Adaptation. Finding pleasure in your partner's interests. Now, I watch *Top Gear*, and he enjoys *Grey's Anatomy*. He gained an appreciation for authentic Greek cuisine, and I developed an insatiable appetite for violence.

Sniffing the air --

DANIEL

Something smells delicious.

JANE

Dinner's ready, sweetheart.

Jane stands up, the ropes used to tie her down fall loosely to her feet.

JANE (CONT'D)

Let's eat.

EXT. COUNTRY MANOR - EVENING

Drifting back down the gravel road just as day slowly loses its battle to night --

A radiant sunset bursts through the tiny cracks in the forest, bathing the chateau in an eerie red glow.

A scream rings out, piercing the silence. Followed quickly by a second.

A duet of pure terror that never relents, only grows fainter and less audible the further along we go...

FADE OUT.