

JUSTICE

By

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FADE IN:

INT COURTROOM - DAY

Standing at the defendant's table are PERP, longish hair styled to make him look benign, dressed in suit and tie, as mainstream as he can be. Next to him, his ATTORNEY, as smarmy as expected.

They face a JUDGE who looks toward the jury where the FOREMAN reads the verdict.

BARRY (V.O.)

When a man's wife is killed, he's supposed to make sure justice prevails. If he doesn't, it's bad for all wives, everywhere...husbands too.

The Foreman finishes, and Perp CELEBRATES. Pounds Attorney's back as Judge reins in the exuberance.

BARRY (V.O.)

When the courts fail to mete out justice, what recourse does a man have but his own hands?

EXT STREET - DAY

Perp, hair loose, scruffy, struts down the sidewalk, high-fiving his friends and living large.

BARRY (V.O.)

The problem is that if the perp gets justice, the husband is the best suspect the cops have.

Perp ducks into an apartment building.

BARRY (V.O.)

Justice should never earn a prison sentence. That's the problem. How to deliver justice and avoid prison.

INT BARRY'S KITCHEN - DAY

An upscale kitchen in an upscale house. On the granite topped island in the middle are a combat knife and a silenced automatic pistol.

BARRY (V.O.)
When is a revenge killing not a revenge
killing?

Barry, face unseen, adds the Ace of Spades to the knife and
pistol.

BARRY (V.O.)
When it's hidden inside an enigma.

EXT COURTHOUSE - DAY

A THUG exits the building and walks along the street. Longish
hair, scruffy, he looks remarkably like Perp.

BARRY (V.O.)
The demands of justice sometimes
require the willingness to harm. Not
the innocent. No, never the
innocent.

EXT BAR - NIGHT

The Thug, half-drunk, slides out of the bar and weaves down the
street, trying hard to light a cigarette.

BARRY (V.O.)
Every journey reaches a point of no
return, that spot where going forward
costs less than going back.

As the Thug passes a dark doorway, a hand reaches out and flicks
on a lighter. The Thug gratefully accepts a light.

EXT ALLEY - NIGHT

The Thug lies on the cold pavement. A neat bullet hole in his
forehead, his shirt ripped open to expose a bloody 'J' carved
in his chest. A single playing card, the Ace of Spades is placed
between the Thug's lips.

BARRY (V.O.)
Every journey worth taking involves
risk. And risk generates its own
special heartbeat.

INT BARRY'S KITCHEN - DAY

The pistol lies broken down on the island next to a gun cleaning kit.

Barry, face hidden, towels off the combat knife and lays it next to the pistol.

BARRY (V.O.)

The problems with most plans lie in the preparation. A good lumberjack sharpens his axe often.

EXT POLICE STATION - DAY

Several POLICEMEN walk into the station. Out comes a NER-DO-WELL, longish hair, scruffy, much like Perp and Thug.

BARRY (V.O.)

One event can be anything. Two events make a series.

EXT STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Ner-do-well makes a quick buy with a PUSHER in the half light on the corner. With a nod, he hustles away.

BARRY (V.O.)

The cemeteries are full of the forgotten who faced opportunity and turned away.

INT NER-DO-WELL APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ner-do-well sits in a marijuana haze, lost to the drug, lethargic and staring at a TV showing an old movie.

As the door opens, he turns, blissfully lost. A neat hole appears in his forehead and leaks blood.

BARRY (V.O.)

Every criminal claims he got caught the first time he broke the law. Every criminal lies.

INT BARRY'S KITCHEN - DAY

On the island, the disassembled pistol, the clean knife, and a new pack of playing cards still in cellophane.

Hands break open the cards and add the Ace of Spades and the Ace of Hearts.

BARRY (V.O.)
Occam's razor stipulates that the simplest explanation is generally the preferred explanation.

The hands take back the Ace of Hearts, leaving the Ace of Spades.

BARRY (V.O.)
Unnecessary complexity is the bane of conspiracy theories.

EXT APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Perp exits the building and starts along the sidewalk.

BARRY (V.O.)
Those who find no solace in vengeance never wept in grief.

EXT PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

On one elbow, Perp lies under the swing, his face bloody, his eyes fearful.

The bullet hole appears on his forehead, blood, he collapses.

BARRY (V.O.)
Justice often tastes sweet and washes away the bitterness of failure.

INT BARRY'S SHOWER - DAY

Barry, in a cloud of steam, head bowed to the stream of water.

BARRY (V.O.)
People remember the last in a series. Tinker to Evers to Chance. Everyone remembers Chance.

INT BARRY'S KITCHEN - DAY

On the island, pistol, knife, Ace of Spades, and a newspaper. Headline reads --

POLICE SEEK 'J' SLASHER

Gloved hands pick up the pistol, knife, and card.

BARRY (V.O.)
Every artist wants his genius
recognized. Attribution,
attribution is quite another thing.
Ask any forger.

EXT STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Three men smoke and sip whiskey under a street light. One, longish hair, scruffy, a HOMEBOY, bumps fists with the others and walks away.

BARRY (V.O.)
Justice is rarely perfect. Who was it
that said you have to break some eggs
to make an omelet?

EXT ALLEY - NIGHT

Homeboy lies next to a dumpster. Hole in forehead, 'J' on chest, ace of spades in lips.

A door opens, and light spills over Homeboy as a DISHWASHER steps out to smoke. One look and the Dishwasher quickly slips back inside.

BARRY (V.O.)
People who cheat on their spouses
often leave evidence in plain sight.
Perhaps that's part of the thrill.

EXT BRIDGE - NIGHT

Foggy, late, a narrow bridge over a wide river. In the middle, Barry lifts a backpack. He looks left and right before he drops it into the water where it sinks immediately.

BARRY (V.O.)
When does a cheetah know it's a
cheetah? When it has spots? Or when
it chases down the slowest Impala on
the savanna?

INT BARRY'S KITCHEN - DAY

The island is bare.

A different pistol and silencer are laid on the island.

BARRY (V.O.)
Did you ever wonder why Batman and
Superman didn't retire?

A different hunting knife is laid next to the pistol.

BARRY (V.O.)
Could it be that meting out justice
is just too damn addicting?

Two copper pennies are laid beside the knife.

BARRY (V.O.)
I wonder what the papers will call me
this time.

FADE OUT.