

**OPERATION: TRICK 'R TREAT**

Written by

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Second Draft

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT**

KIDS IN COSTUMES swarm the street in pursuit of candy. Some PARENTS lag behind, ready for the night to be over.

A group of boys, all around 12, loiter on a side street, gathered around a trash can.

They are:

JIMMY, dressed as FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER.

DUSTIN, dressed as a MUMMY.

WILLIAM, dressed as THE WOLF MAN.

CALEB, dressed as DRACULA.

Jimmy pulls a town map from his pocket. Lays it on top of the trash can. A red line draws a path to the best houses. All of which have been circled.

JIMMY

I made a change since last year. I think we can hit twice the houses if we follow this path.

The other boys huddle together, scanning the map.

DUSTIN

So we're just sticking with the back side of town?

Jimmy traces the red line with his finger.

JIMMY

If we stay on the north side, we can loop around and hit the gated communities. They always give out the best stuff.

William SNATCHES the map, bringing it close to his face. His eyes bugging out with terror.

WILLIAM

Shit, dude!

Everyone stares at him.

CALEB

What?

William shows them the map.

WILLIAM

This route takes us past Old Man Hader's house.

The boys share an uneasy look.

Dustin tries to act brave --

DUSTIN

So?

WILLIAM

So? He's crazy! Didn't you hear about Stacy Wilson? She went missing after trick or treating at Old Man Hader's house.

JIMMY

I thought Stacy Wilson went to live with her dad in Michigan?

WILLIAM

Shut up, Jimmy! Old Man Hader's crazy. He looks like a psycho. And what's with that smell? I bet he runs a meth lab in his basement.

CALEB

We have to take a different route. I'm not going past Old Man Hader's place.

Caleb points to a road running down the center of town.

CALEB

What if we take Witcham street? We can still hit up the rich houses, but we don't have to go near Hader's place?

Jimmy takes the map, folds it up. Stows it back in his pocket.

JIMMY

Fine. If you guys are too pussy to go with the best route, fine. Your loss.

Jimmy grabs his candy bag off the ground. Storms off down the sidewalk.

The other boys collect their bags and follow him.

**EXT. WITCHAM STREET - NIGHT**

It's later now, very few kids out.

The boys make their way down the sidewalk, their bags bulging with candy.

Jimmy holds his bag open, rifling through the contents. Very pleased with his acquisitions.

JIMMY

Think I'll die if I try to eat all  
this in one night?

WILLIAM

Die? I don't know, maybe. A  
diabetic coma is more likely.

CALEB

Or just puke your guts out.

Jimmy closes his bag... AND WALKS RIGHT INTO Dustin, who's standing completely still, staring at something down the road from them.

DUSTIN

You've got to be kidding me.

The boys follow his gaze to a 15-year-old boy standing at the end of the street. No costume, just jeans and a Metallica shirt. A face only a mother could love. This is ETHAN.

JIMMY

(low)

Maybe if we move slowly, he won't  
notice us.

The boys slowly start to back up.

TOO LATE.

Ethan spots them. A grin spreads across his face. He starts towards them.

ETHAN

Well look who it is. We got all  
the losers together.

The boys turn around to face Ethan, tightening their grip on the candy bags.

JIMMY

We just want to get through,  
Ethan.

DUSTIN  
Yeah. Can you try not being a dick  
for one night?

Ethan puts on a faux sad face, puckering his lips.

ETHAN  
That hurts. You guys wanna get  
through, go right ahead. I won't  
stop you.

The boys exchange skeptical looks.

CALEB  
This some kind of trick?

ETHAN  
No trick at all.

Ethan sidesteps. Gestures for them to pass.

Cautiously, the boys take a step forward --

Ethan steps in front of them again, blocking their path.

The boys stop, rolling their eyes.

ETHAN  
Now that I think about it, there  
is a payment arrangement we have  
to consider.

The boys GROAN.

JIMMY  
Seriously?

WILLIAM  
We don't have any money us.

ETHAN  
Not money. Candy.

DUSTIN  
You want our candy?

ETHAN  
Not all of it. Just a little bit.

JIMMY  
How much is a little bit?

Ethan eyes their bags. Counting on his fingers.

ETHAN

Well, seeing as I'm much older  
than you are -- and need more food  
to survive on -- how does two bags  
sound?

JIMMY

Two bags?

CALEB

That's crazy. We're not giving you  
half our candy, douchebag.

ETHAN

Then you can't pass. Sorry, kids.  
That's the way it is. You gotta  
pay your taxes.

Jimmy smiles. A light bulb goes off in his head.

JIMMY

Deal.

The other boys stare at him. Even Ethan looks surprised.

ETHAN

Really?

DUSTIN

Dude, are you nuts? Don't give  
this idiot anything.

Jimmy grabs Dustin's bag. Gives him a quick wink.

JIMMY

It's our only option, guys.

Dustin hands over his bag to Jimmy, a look of understanding on  
his face.

DUSTIN

Fine...

Jimmy extends the bags.

JIMMY

Here.

ETHAN

See, we can get along.

Ethan reaches out for the bags --

Jimmy SMACKS ETHAN ACROSS THE FACE with the bags, KNOCKING HIM  
TO THE GROUND.

JIMMY

RUN!

The boys SCATTER, taking off into the tree line.

As they disappear from sight, Ethan gets to his feet.

ETHAN

Get back here, losers!

He CHARGES after them.

**EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT**

The boys HAUL ASS towards the end of the alley. They glance over their shoulders -- no sign of Ethan.

They slow to a jog, catching their breath.

DUSTIN

Think we lost him?

JIMMY

I don't know.

Just then, Ethan ROUNDS THE CORNER. SPRINTING towards them.

CALEB

That's a no.

The boys dart to the right, cutting into a yard with tall grass. They drop to their stomachs, watching as Ethan runs past them, scanning the area.

Ethan stops briefly, looking around. Heads around the corner of the lot.

The boys take a collective sigh of relief.

Their joy is short-lived, however, as Jimmy notices what house they're at.

JIMMY

Shit...

(beat)

You guys, look where we are.

The boys look at the house... and their faces DROP in terror.

Shutters missing, paint peeling, roof tiles ready to blow away.

THIS IS OLD MAN HADER'S HOUSE.

DUSTIN  
We've got to get out of here.

**EXT. OLD MAN HADER'S HOUSE, BACK YARD - NIGHT**

Dustin starts to get up. William YANKS him back down, pointing ahead of them:

Ethan turns the corner, now coming directly at them.

ETHAN  
I know you're here somewhere,  
losers!

OLD MAN HADER (O.S.)  
Did you need something, young man?

Ethan and the boys turn to see OLD MAN HADER, 60s, with gray hair and overalls, standing on his porch.

Ethan approaches the porch. Putting on his best BS act.

ETHAN  
Sorry to bother you, sir. I was  
just looking for some of my  
friends. Thought they came this  
way.

OLD MAN HADER  
I haven't seen anyone. You're more  
than welcome to stay and wait for  
them if you want.

ETHAN  
I would... but I really need to  
get going.

OLD MAN HADER  
I understand.

Ethan starts to leave.

Old Man Hader calls after him --

OLD MAN HADER  
I don't suppose there's any way I  
can get your help before you leave  
is there?

Ethan stops, turns.

ETHAN  
I really need to head home. It's  
starting to get late.

OLD MAN HADER  
 It won't take more than a minute.  
 I dropped my groceries on the  
 kitchen floor and can't bend down  
 to pick them up. If you could  
 help, I'd appreciate it.

A beat.

Old Man Hader can sense Ethan's hesitation. Decides to change his approach.

OLD MAN HADER  
 I'd be happy to pay you for your  
 help.

Ethan raises his eyebrows. His interest peaked.

ETHAN  
 Pay?

OLD MAN HADER  
 I've got a crisp twenty dollar  
 pill with your name on it.

ETHAN  
 How can I resist?

Ethan heads up the porch.

Old Man Hader holds the door open for him, a smile on his face that makes him look like he just won the lottery.

Old Man Hader follows Ethan, closing the door behind them.

IN THE GRASS:

The boys just stare, jaws dropped, at the house.

WILLIAM  
 Did he just go in there?

DUSTIN  
 I think he did.

CALEB  
 Why the hell would he do that?

JIMMY  
 He's crazy.

WILLIAM  
 What do you think is going on in  
 there?

DUSTIN  
Only one way to find out.

**EXT. OLD MAN HADER'S HOUSE, BACK YARD - NIGHT**

The boys climb over the fence into the junk and crab grass filled yard.

They scramble forward, keeping low.

Moving in a single file line, they tiptoe up the steps and peer into the dark interior of the house.

JIMMY  
You guys see anything?

CALEB  
Nope.

WILLIAM  
Nothing.

DUSTIN  
It's too dark in there. But I think I see something -- can't tell what it is. It looks like a huge pile of something...

Dustin's voice CRACKS.

DUSTIN  
Or like a body...

JIMMY  
No way?!

CALEB  
Oh my god. Oh my god.

WILLIAM  
We're dead. We're all gonna die.  
We're gonna be on the news. Dude,  
my mom is gonna be so mad if I die.

SUDDENLY --

A LOUD CRASH from inside. Accompanied by several LOW THUMPS. Then, what sounds like SOMETHING SCOOTING ACROSS THE FLOOR.

Then SILENCE.

JIMMY  
Holy shit!

DUSTIN  
What was that?!

CALEB  
Whatever it is, it's not good.

WILLIAM  
We have to get out of here.

JIMMY  
We can't just leave Ethan in there?

DUSTIN  
Why not? He's an ass.

JIMMY  
I know he's an ass. But we've got to do something.

CALEB  
We've got to call the police!

WILLIAM  
He's probably been murdered.

The other boys round on William, shooting him a dirty look.

WILLIAM  
What? He probably did!

JIMMY  
We have to decide something. We can't just --

THE SOUND OF THE DOOR OPENING BEHIND THEM!

The boys FREEZE, mortified. Their eyes turn in unison to see:  
Old Man Hader, peering at them through the screen door.

The boys stare at each other, trying to come up with something to say.

Caleb loses his cool. Stands.

CALEB  
Stay back! We know what you did!

The other boys slowly get stand.

Dustin shoots daggers at Caleb.

DUSTIN  
Smooth move, idiot.

Old Man Hader stares at them. Confused.

OLD MAN HADER  
I can assure you boys that I don't  
know what you're talking about.

CALEB  
You took Ethan in there and killed  
him!

Old Man Hader starts LAUGHING. Gut-busting, doubled-over,  
amusement. After a moment, he's almost crying.

OLD MAN HADER  
You boys think I killed that young  
man?

DUSTIN  
Well... yeah.

OLD MAN HADER  
Why would I do that?

DUSTIN  
Because you're crazy!

Jimmy elbows Dustin the ribs. Shakes his head.

JIMMY  
We heard noises inside.

OLD MAN HADER  
I knocked over some boxes and had  
to pick them up.

DUSTIN  
And we saw a body!

OLD MAN HADER  
A body?! Where?

Dustin points through the window.

DUSTIN  
Right there! On the floor!

Still chuckling, Old Man Hader reaches inside the utility room  
and FLIPS THE LIGHT ON, revealing what appears to be a LARGE  
HALLOWEEN PROP:

A HUMAN SIZED FIGURE WEARING DARK BLACK ROBES. A SKULL MASK  
over its face.

OLD MAN HADER

It's a prop for Halloween. I was going to put it on the porch with some candy, but wasn't able to get around to it in time.

The looks of fear start to fade from the boy's faces, replaced instead by looks of embarrassment.

CALEB

Oh yeah? Then what about Ethan? We saw him go inside. You said you wanted his help, but he never came out.

OLD MAN HADER

That's because he left through the front door.

(beat)

You boys have let your imaginations run wild tonight.

The boys look back inside at the halloween prop. Beside it, two small buckets about half full of BLOOD. BLOOD STAINS on the floor beside it.

DUSTIN

Then explain the blood!

Old Man Hader sighs. Goes inside, grabs one of the buckets. Returns to the porch.

OLD MAN HADER

It's fake. It was going to cover the mannequin with it.

Old Man Hader sticks his finger in the bucket. Pulls it out. Licks it without a moment's hesitation.

OLD MAN HADER

See? It's just corn syrup.

Old Man Hader extends the bucket in front of the boys.

They stare at it. Nervous.

Finally, Jimmy sticks his finger in it and pulls it out, staring at the blood.

CALEB

What are you doing?

JIMMY

Relax.

Jimmy LICKS HIS FINGER.

The boys watch him. The tension thick and palpable.

Jimmy swallows. Licks his lips.

WILLIAM

Well?

JIMMY

It's kinda sweet. Way to sweet.

(to Old Man Hader)

Why didn't you just buy fake  
blood?

OLD MAN HADER

This is cheaper.

The boys look down at their feet, feeling about an inch tall.

JIMMY

We should probably get going now.  
It's getting late. Our moms are  
probably freaking out right now.

(beat)

We're sorry we bothered you...  
sir.

OLD MAN HADER

It's fine, boys. Next time, try  
finding out the facts before you  
go jumping to conclusions.

DUSTIN

We will.

OLD MAN HADER

And make sure you don't trespass  
on private property. You never  
know what kind of crazy people are  
out there.

Old Man Hader heads back inside, closing the door behind him.

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT**

The boys hurry home, not looking behind them.

CALEB

You guys think he was telling the  
truth?

JIMMY  
We thought we saw something we  
didn't see and that's it.

DUSTIN  
Are you gonna tell your mom what  
happened?

JIMMY  
Hell no. We have to keep this a  
secret. Agreed?

The boys nod in silent agreement.

They continue down the street in silence. Not even looking at  
each other.

**INT. OLD MAN HADER'S HOUSE, UTILITY ROOM - NIGHT**

Old Man Hader closes the door. Locks it. Lets out a sigh. A  
huge weight off his shoulders.

OLD MAN HADER  
That was close.

Old Man Hader moseys over to the halloween prop. Squats down  
beside the prop, whistling a TUNE. Removes the mask --

-- revealing ETHAN'S BLOODIED FACE. A LARGE GASH is cut deep  
into his forehead. His expression frozen in a look of TERROR.

Old Man Hader reaches up. Grabs a HACKSAW off the wall. Ready  
to get to work.

As he continues whistling, we --

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.