

THE FOOL

Written by

Andrew Irvine

FADE IN:

EXT. CHAPEL IN FOREST - DAY

The old country church with gabled roof and a bell tower is situated in a glade of colorful sugar maple trees. A half dozen steps lead up to a set double wooden doors.

An old guy, HUDSON, sweep the steps. He has a scraggly gray beard and wild hair, wears overalls with cavernous pockets and has thick prescription glasses perched on his nose.

He stops sweeping as an SUV drives up from behind the chapel and stops. Hudson looks at PASTOR ADAMS (40s), who leans out the driver's window.

PASTOR ADAMS

Hey, Eddie, thanks for cleaning up after the wedding. You can take off as soon as you're done there.

HUDSON

Yessir, Pastor Adams. Thank you.

He watches the vehicle drive off, then straightens up and knuckles the small of his back. He slowly climbs the steps.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

There are ten rows of wooden pews on either side of the center aisle that leads to the pulpit at the front of the room. The arched stained windows on the side walls brightly illuminate the rustic room.

Hudson pushes the broom down the aisle. He freezes when he HEARS FOOTSTEPS entering the chapel. The steps get closer, stop behind him.

BOYD (O.S.)

Mr Steven Gregory?

HUDSON

(voice wavering)
Who wants to know?

BOYD (O.S.)

Just a poker player.

Hudson frowns, slowly turns around and takes in the tall man wearing khaki cargo pants and a black polo. BOYD (30s) attempts a smile, but it comes off as a sneer.

He hands a poker card to the old man.

INSERT: 9 OF HEARTS

On it is a picture of Hudson, slightly grainy, taken with a surveillance camera. At bottom of the card: "\$2,000,000.00."

HUDSON (O.S.)
I don't understand.

BOYD (O.S.)
It's simple. I get two million
dollars for killing you.

BACK TO SCENE

Hudson lets the card drop and clutches the broom tighter, owlsh eyes blinking behind the thick lenses.

HUDSON
Why? What did I do?

BOYD
You're in witness protection. Why
don't you tell me?

Boyd pulls out a GLOCK G19 from under his shirt. Before he can aim, Hudson whips up the broom and knocks it away.

Boyd's puzzled eyes follow the gun as it arcs to the far aisle -- and doesn't see the RIGHT CROSS that sends him flopping to the floor.

Hudson moves in quickly but Boyd's left arm swings back and stabs a KNIFE into Hudson's thigh.

Hudson jerks backward, grunting, and rips the knife out of his leg, trailing blood that spatters on Boyd as he scrambles over the pews.

Hudson regrips the knife and throws it at Boyd, who flings up an arm to block it -- and the knife impales his upper arm. He yelps and drops out of sight.

Hudson runs with a limp to the front of the room.

Boyd leaps up from behind the pews and start SHOOTING. The pain from the knife wound impacts his accuracy, and he only manages to shatter every window on the other side.

BEHIND THE PULPIT

Hudson scrunches up tight against the pulpit.

BOYD (O.S.)
I got a lot of bullets left, Mr
Gregory.

Hudson removes the wig, beard and glasses, revealing a much younger man, with a buzz cut and predatory eyes.

HUDSON
You've made a mistake in
identification, Boyd. Again.

He throws the disguise over the pulpit.

BOYD (O.S.)
Hudson? You mother fucker!

HUDSON
Tut, tut, Boyd. You know the Dealer
disapproves of foul language.

A BURST OF BULLETS impacts the other side of the lectern, raising a cloud of wood chips, but none penetrate, thanks to the steel plate backing up the front panel.

Hudson reaches into a pocket and pulls out a Kimber Tactical II .45 automatic.

He leaps up and BLASTS away at Boyd, who plunges behind the pews, but not before a bullet sizzles his ass.

BOYD
Shit!

BOYD

Slithers away from the bullets wrecking the pews beside him, leaving a slimy trail of blood.

BOYD
What the fuck, Hudson?

He grabs a fresh magazine and loads it with trembling fingers.

HUDSON (O.S.)
The last hand you played? You
killed an innocent!

BOYD

Collateral damage, man! The kid got
in the fucking way!

He looks over the pews, SEES Hudson reloading, and opens
FIRE, hitting him in the shoulder.

HUDSON

Grimaces as he crawls behind the safety of the pulpit, gun
hand wet with the blood leaking from his shoulder.

He pulls a battle bandage from a pocket, rips it open,
removes the liner and applies the self-adhesive gauze pad to
the wound.

HUDSON

The Card Company hates collateral
damage! And clients hate it worse.

BOYD (O.S.)

So they sent you to kill me?

HUDSON

Hell, I traded a Jack of Spades to
get your card, asshole.

Pause.

BOYD

So how much am I worth to you?

Hudson slowly looks up -

- at Boyd, who's standing only six feet away, pistol aimed at
him. Boyd gestures at Hudson to toss the gun away. He does.

HUDSON

The Card Company's set your value
at a hundred thousand dollars.

BOYD

That's insulting.

HUDSON

Yeah, well, it's coming out of the
company's own piggy bank.

Boyd looks around the debris- and blood-spattered room.

BOYD

There's so much DNA in here, I'm
going to have to burn it down.

HUDSON
Did you bring a fire starter?

BOYD
I'll improvise.

HUDSON
That's your problem, Boyd. You
improvise instead of plan.

Boyd steps closer and kicks Hudson in the side, sending him rolling away.

Hudson stops rolling, sits up -- a ballistic knife in his hand. Boyd steps away.

BOYD
Think I'm going to let you get
close enough to use that?

HUDSON
Took it off a Spetsnaz commando I
killed in Ukraine.

BOYD
So what?

HUDSON
So you lose.

He thumbs down a lever on the handle and the BLADE SHOOTS OUT in a blur and impales itself in Boyd's left eye.

Boyd staggers back a few feet, collapses to the floor, a surprised look frozen on his face.

Hudson struggles to his feet and lurches over to the body. He removes the gory blade, then drops a playing card on the body.

INSERT: THE JOKER

Blood starts covering the clown card.

CHAPEL - BACK DOOR

Hudson limps out the door and tosses an INCENDIARY GRENADE over his shoulder.

A BLINDING FLASH OF FIRE engulfs the room.

FADE OUT.