

The Paperboy

By

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TITLE OVER: **WEDNESDAY**

FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

A perfectly paved street, flanked by two rows of identical looking houses. We're passing through them -- seemingly drifting without a specific destination or target.

Then, a newspaper is chucked from somewhere, and it lands, SPLAT, on the porch of one of the houses. Then, another follows. And another.

The source of the papers is 13 year old DANNY - The paperboy - riding down the street on a bike, tossing one on each porch.

EXT. FURTHER UP THE STREET - DAY

Danny approaches one house in particular. According to the mailbox at the end of the driveway, it belongs to the WALSH'S.

Danny takes a paper out of his bag, slides it in the mailbox, when --

JERRY WALSH (O.S)
Hey, Danny Boy!

Danny looks up -- The Walsh's are exiting a vehicle, dressed in fishing gear, unpacking items from the car. They include LISA and JERRY WALSH, currently waving Danny over.

Danny grabs a paper, makes his way over to Jerry. He blushes upon making eye contact with Lisa, and offers her an awkward smile.

JERRY WALSH
Back just in time, huh?
(RE: Newspaper)
You got some good news for me, pal?

Danny turns back to Jerry, neutral faced.

JERRY WALSH
Just went out to Lake Winnouka for the weekend.
(beat)
Should have seen the Salmon I caught. A real beaut'. Must have been at least five pounds. I swear.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Salmon generally get their pink color from their diet.

JERRY WALSH

No kidding. What's that? Flamingos?

Jerry gives Danny a chumming pat on the shoulder, chuckling. Danny doesn't get it.

An awkward silence. It's perhaps around this point in the conversation that we notice a certain aloofness and awkwardness in Danny's delivery and mannerisms.

DANNY

I should inform you that the newspaper will be fazed out, on July 25th.

JERRY WALSH

No kidding?
(beat)
No more paper, huh?

DANNY

In favor of digital print.

LISA WALSH (O.S)

Jerry, can you help me with the cooler, please?

JERRY WALSH

That's my cue.

Jerry turns back to family. As he's walking back --

DANNY (O.S)

A woman came by for you, while you were gone, Mr. Walsh.

Jerry's buoyant mood deflates at once. He turns back to Danny, suppressing an anxious look.

JERRY WALSH

A woman?
(beat)
Well, she didn't have money for me, did she?

Jerry chuckles nervously. He can sense Danny's apprehension.

(CONTINUED)

JERRY WALSH
(RE: newspaper)
Well, thanks again, Danny boy.

TITLE OVER: **THURSDAY**

FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Danny, on his bike, going through the motions - tossing papers to each of the houses on his route.

LATER

He approaches the Walsh driveway, digs into his bag, and withdraws a paper.

He climbs off his bike, prepares to place the paper in the mailbox, When...

...Danny looks up, spots something that makes him abruptly freeze in place -- Jerry, emerging from his house with a young woman...

Danny, in a panic, makes a hasty retreat behind a bush, out of their field of view. He begins voyeuristically watching the scene with a mixture of curiosity and anger.

Now Danny notices where they're headed - to the woman's car, parked across the street. They share a kiss -- looking around, conspiratorially.

Danny makes a break for it down the street, rustling the bushes in the process, and drawing Jerry's attention, who gets *just* enough of a glimpse of the fleeing boy to arouse his suspicion.

TITLE OVER: **FRIDAY**

FADE IN:

EXT. WALSH RESIDENCE - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Walsh, returning from work.

A sound draws their attention - it's Danny, coming to a rolling stop in front of their mailbox. Danny looks noticeably apprehensive and uncomfortable.

(CONTINUED)

JERRY WALSH
(waving)
Hey! Danny Boy!

Jerry loosens his tie, rushes towards Danny.

JERRY WALSH
Missed you yesterday, Buddy.

DANNY
I was ill.

JERRY WALSH
Ah! Bummer!
(beat)
Didn't I tell you to get your
cooties shot?

Jerry gives Danny another friendly punch on the arm. Jerry notices the intensity with which Danny is gazing at his wife. His suspicions are clearly mounting. *Does he know?*

JERRY WALSH
Hey, Danny Boy - I know you're just
a kid, but you look at a man's wife
like that, and he's liable to call
you out for it.

Danny's face -- expressionless and troubled. Jerry can sense the hostility. As Danny leaves --

JERRY WALSH (O.S)
Oh, Danny Boy...
(beat)
Just, uh, a quick question...

Danny turns back around.

JERRY WALSH
Mrs. Tiller got her paper
yesterday. So did the Zewski's -
the whole neighborhood did,
actually...

Jerry, expecting Danny to elaborate, is instead met with silence.

JERRY WALSH
...Don't suppose you
accidentally...skipped us, did you?

Danny goes stone Grey.

JERRY WALSH
 (suddenly serious)
 Or were you lying about being sick?

Danny hands over the paper. Jerry grabs his arm - a little too roughly - looks him straight in the eyes --

JERRY WALSH
 There's nothing wrong with a
 little...lie every now and then...
 (suddenly serious)
 ...Right, Danny Boy?

Jerry senses the pressure he's just inflicted on the young boy, and decides to ease off - his eyes suddenly bulging with comic relief.

JERRY WALSH
 I'm just kidding with you, buddy.

INT. WALSH HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

It's late. Jerry paces back and fourth - a cell phone pressed to his ear.

JERRY WALSH
 (into phone)
 ...Listen, I think - I think we
 need to take a break for a while.
 (beat)
 Because...Because I think someone
 might...know.
 (beat)
 Who? THE DAMN PAPERBOY! That's who!
 (beat)
 Yes. I said "Paperboy".
 (beat)
 I don't know. He's been acting
 funny lately. I think he's been
 spying on us.
 (beat)
 Don't tell me I'm paranoid, Susan!
 Don't do that!

Lisa suddenly emerges from the bedroom.

LISA WALSH
 (yawns)
 Jerry, who are you talking to?

JERRY WALSH
(quickly hanging up)
Oh. Nobody. Just a, uh...a prank
call.

TITLE OVER: **SATURDAY**

FADE IN:

EXT. WALSH HOUSE - DAY

Jerry pulls into the driveway, cautiously wiping lipstick off his mouth, in the rear view mirror.

LISA (O.S.)
(accusatory)
I know what you're doing, Jerry!

Jerry freezes - his eyes bulging open with terror.

He frantically scans around him - *Who said that?* He is instead greeted by Lisa, hanging just outside the door - grinning from ear to ear.

LISA WALSH
I know what you're doing.
(suddenly --)
You're using compost as lawn
fertilizer.

Off Jerry's slightly puzzled, but relieved look --

JERRY WALSH
(rolling with it)
Oh. Ha. Yeah. That's the best
method, isn't it?

LISA WALSH
Did Danny suggest that? He's such a
bright kid.

JERRY WALSH
Danny...?

Jerry looks across the lawn - his grin suddenly morphing into a scowl when he picks out Danny on his bike, staring at him with a look of suspicion and mistrust.

EXT. WALSH HOUSE - BEDROOM - DREAM SEQUENCE - DAY

Lisa Walsh washes the car in the driveway.

Danny approaches her with the quick, vigorous pace of someone on a mission. When he reaches her, he holds out the paper.

DANNY
Good Morning, Miss Walsh.

LISA WALSH
Oh, Thanks, Danny.
(beat)
Any job prospects after the paper
is done?

Suddenly, emerging from out back with an anxious beat in his step --

JERRY WALSH (O.S)
Oh. Danny Boy! I'll grab that from
you.

Jerry quickly tries to intercept the paper, moments from changing into his wife's hands.

Danny resists - tugging the paper back towards him.

JERRY WALSH
What's the matter, Danny Boy?
(beat)
It's almost like you don't want me
to have...the...paper...

Danny tries again to pull the paper back. Jerry resists harder. Lisa raises an eyebrow - *what the hell is going on?*

DANNY
Mr. Walsh! You're hurting me!

LISA WALSH
Jerry! What are you doing?!

JERRY WALSH
(into Danny's ear)
Let go of it, Danny!

DANNY
Mr. Walsh, please! Let go of me!

The struggle migrates to the sidewalk, then finally, a violent spill on the road.

(CONTINUED)

Now the whole neighborhood has gathered to watch Jerry's pathetic struggle with the little paperboy.

Neighbors stare at neighbors - *What the hell is going on?*

JERRY WALSH
(yanking paper away)
Give. It. To. Me. You. Little--

NEIGHBOR #1
Jerry, what the hell are you doing
to that paperboy?

NEIGHBOR #2
Are you crazy, Jerry?!

Jerry pries himself away from the scene - suddenly realizing what he's created.

Then --

HONK!

A speeding car - passing through the neighborhood - comes whizzing by...

NEIGHBOR #1
Watch out!

It's too late, though...

BAM!

...But before we see it make it's violent collision with Danny, we --

JERRY WALSH (O.S)
Gah!

INT. WALSH HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

...Awake from the dream.

Jerry springs up from bed - sweating, panting.

He looks over -- Lisa is sleeping soundly next to him. After a long silence, Jerry collapses back on his bed, trying to catch his breath, but he can't go back to sleep.

His eyes remain open - troubled, guilt-ridden.

TITLE OVER: **MONDAY**

FADE IN:

INT. WALSH HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Jerry sits at the dinner table, dressed for work, an untouched breakfast plate in front of him.

He has dark rings under his eyes, and looks gloomy and depressed.

INT. WALSH HOUSE - LATER

LISA --

Crying, distraught. Clearly she's just received some bad news from Jerry, who stands nearby - head hung in shame.

JERRY WALSH

...I'm so sorry - I don't. I don't know what I was thinking, Lisa. I just - I can't keep this from you any more.

A shameful silence. Lisa takes a moment to process.

JERRY WALSH

I'm so sorry.

EXT. WALSH HOUSE - DAY

Jerry emerges from the house, and heads for his car. Lisa stares daggers at him from the living room window.

Then - the sound of Danny's bicycle tires churning up pavement becomes audible from the street behind him.

Jerry stops, prepares himself to face Danny, but when he turns...

It's not him. It's just a random kid, going for a bike ride.

NEIGHBOR (O.S)

No more paper.

Jerry turns to his neighbor, watering his lawn, beside him.

NEIGHBOR

Can you believe that, Jerry? It's all this digital crap, now.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEIGHBOR (cont'd)

What is this world comin' to? No
more paper. Unbelievable.

Jerry nods, turns back to watch the kid on the bike, getting
further and further down the street, until we...

FADE OUT.