

THE RECKONING

Written by

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INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is modernistic, with several cubicles off a main foyer. Several OFFICE WORKERS seem to be busy at work.

BRYAN RIDDELL (45) overworked, dials at a desk telephone. Tax papers are all over his messy desk. He waits for the tone to dial out, glances at his wristwatch.

INT. RIDDELL HOME - LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

The telephone in the well-furnished room rings. The answer machine clicks.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(on answer machine)
Thanks for calling Bryan and Wendy Riddell. We're sorry we can't speak to you right now, so leave a message and we'll get back to you ...

Moments later, Bryan bursts through the front door.

INSERT CLOCK: 9.35PM

BRYAN
Wendy? Honey are you here?

INT. RIDDELL HOME - HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

Bryan moves from room to room, worried.

INT. RIDDELL HOME - LOUNGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bryan claws his hair. The flashing light on the answer machine catches his attention. He presses the button.

MAN'S VOICE
(on answer machine)
I've waited long enough for you to get me the parcel. No more. Meet me at five o'clock at the railway steps with the goods. If you don't turn up I'll make sure your husband learns about everything...

The message ends. Bryan's gaze falls on the clock.

INSERT CLOCK: 9.47pm

He sprints for the door.

INT. BRYAN'S CAR PARKED NEXT TO STATION - DAY

Bryan watches in his car.

WENDY (40s) appears near the station steps looks around.

INSERT WATCH: 9.56PM

Bryan scoots down in his seat.

PAUL YOST (60s) approaches Wendy.

BRYAN

Damn it, what the hell is going on?

Wendy and Paul have some brief words. Wendy reluctantly hands Paul a parcel and stomps away.

Bryan follows Paul's car.

EXT. GOVERNMENT HOUSE BUILDING - EVENING

Paul parks his car and heads for the government building. Bryan parks his car and follows Paul.

Three BURLY MEN in balaclava's jump out of a black van and accost Paul in a serious violent struggle.

Bryan races over to Paul to assist. He gets in a few good jabs on one of the assailants.

The parcel drops from Paul's hands and an assailant grabs for it. They jump back in the van and speed away.

Paul rolls around, clutches his ribs, blood drips down his swollen face.

PAUL

Damn them!

Bryan heaves a few breaths, looks between Paul and the van furious, he scrawls down he memorizes the number plate.

BRYAN

You better explain to me why those guys belted the shit out of you over a parcel my WIFE gave you!

Paul pauses, stares up at Bryan.

PAUL

You're Wendy's husband, Bryan, the accountant?

Bryan crouches down beside Paul.

BRYAN
Yeah, and who the hell are you?

PAUL
Paul Yost, I've been assisting your wife with her... dilemma you can say.

BRYAN
Better keep talking.

Paul winces as he stands, pats Bryan on the back.

PAUL
Let's get a coffee and work out how we can both help your wife get herself out of the trouble she's in.

Bryan's mobile phone buzzes.

INSERT MOBILE: WENDY'S NAME FLASHES

BRYAN
Honey... I've been held up at work. I tried calling earlier to let you know... Yeah sweetheart... no... no don't wait up... I'll be home soon.

INT. INNER CITY CAFE - NIGHT

Paul exits a male bathroom, his face wiped down from the blood, bruised and eye swelling.

Bryan places an order for coffee in a booth. Paul joins him.

BRYAN
Tell me everything you know.

PAUL
Well, your wife called me a week ago. She's got a serious problem--

BRYAN
Why wouldn't she talk to me?

PAUL
You going to let me speak or what?

Bryan gestures for Paul to continue.

WAITRESS brings their coffees to their booth.

PAUL
Well your wife is in some serious politically trouble Bryan.

BRYAN
Political?

PAUL
Yeah, political. She's got some politicians after her. Her words were... 'they're coming after me for these documents'.

BRYAN
Do you even know what's in these documents?

PAUL
All she would say was that the docs could ruin the career of one very high powered politician. She's either a hooker or a spy, you guess.

Bryan glares at Paul.

BRYAN
My sweet, soft spoken wife is not a hooker or a spy.

PAUL
I've got to get those documents back before they get leaked.

BRYAN
Not without me you ain't.

Paul grins, holds out his hand, Bryan shakes Paul's hand.

PAUL
Text Wendy, you'll be pulling an all-nighter.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Paul and Bryan hack through Government files online at a computer. Searching for a link between the rented van and who purchased it.

INSERT CLOCK: 3AM

PAUL
Bingo!

BRYAN
What?

PAUL

The van was paid for by... Whoa, we've got yourselves in deep with this one. The Honorable Senator Morwitz what's he been up to?

Paul chuckles.

BRYAN

Are you sure?

PAUL

His Assistant hired the van, the thugs, probably too. That rented van got a Government Card all over it.

INSERT: COMPUTER SCREEN records wiped off screen.

BRYAN

And it's gone... I'm going to ask Wendy what the hell is in those docs?

PAUL

No, no, don't get all twisted. She might not even talk. The election is in a week. We've got some time to work this out. Let's call it a night and I'll see you at ten tomorrow outside Government House.

INT. RIDDELL KITCHEN - DAY

Bryan and Wendy prepare breakfast. Tension between the two of them. Bryan watches an annoyed Wendy fuss in the kitchen.

BRYAN

I'm sorry I was late last night.

WENDY

I bet you are.

Bryan takes his cup of coffee to the dining table.

WENDY

Are you having an affair?

Bryan almost chokes on his coffee, it spills everywhere. He mops it up with a napkin.

BRYAN

What?

WENDY

Something's going on Bryan, I'm not sure what it is but you've never been that late before in the whole five years we've been married.

Bryan approaches Wendy, pulls her into his arms, she remains stiff for a moment before hugging him tight.

BRYAN

We all have secrets, don't we?

Wendy surprised, steps back.

WENDY

I don't keep anything from you. I cooked dinner, where were you?

BRYAN

Where were you doing last night?

WENDY

What are you talking about?

BRYAN

Paul Yost, ring a bell?

Wendy straightens, lifts her chin.

WENDY

If they ever hurt you, I couldn't bear it.

BRYAN

They won't... Just tell me, I need to hear it from you.

Wendy contemplates for a moment on what to say.

WENDY

About a year ago, I was found by an investigator and forced to take DNA testing to prove that I was not the real child of the Senator Morwitz.

Bryan's eyes widen.

BRYAN

Your real parents were killed in a car accident, right?

Wendy shakes her head.

WENDY

Apparently not.

BRYAN

Tell me what's going on honey, I want to help you. What was in those documents you gave to Paul?

WENDY

Proof that I am real child.

Tears shine in Wendy's eyes.

BRYAN

Who the hell is chasing you?

WENDY

The opposition want to use this to discredit the Senator Morwitz on his policies before the election on Saturday. His policies on adoption contravene his own experiences.

BRYAN

And what do you want to happen?

WENDY

I want those tests to disappear. Every record to not exist. I have my parents here in my heart, the mother and father I grew up with.

BRYAN

Consider it done.

WENDY

No, Bryan, please I can't lose you. What will I do if they hurt you?

BRYAN

What will *I* do if they *hurt* you?

INT. GOVERNMENT HOUSE BUILDING - DAY

Paul smokes a cigarette waiting outside Government Building. Bryan crosses the road to join him.

PAUL

You're late.

BRYAN

Wendy explained everything. I need to destroy every record that exists in those documents. Can you do that?

PAUL

What are we talking about here?

BRYAN
DNA tests, birth records.

Paul shrugs, finishes off his cigarette.

PAUL
So she's not a hooker or spy? Just
an illegitimate child to some high
powered politician.

Bryan shoves Paul hard, Paul chuckles.

BRYAN
Let's just get to work.

PAUL
I did some further investigating
this morning and found the address
of one of those goons. Let's go.

EXT. GOON HOUSE - DAY

Bryan and Paul are on a stakeout, outside Goons house.

Goon exits house, a scantily clad woman on his arm.

Paul and Bryan jump into action. They grab the Goon and drag
him to the car, forcing him into the backseat of the car.

The scantily clad woman screams for help.

They jump in and speed away.

INT. PAUL'S CAR - DAY

PAUL
Where are the papers?

GOON
What the fuck! Who the hell are you
guys? I don't know anything about
no papers.

BRYAN
Really, you don't remember us from
yesterday! You jumped out of a van
and took some papers for your
Government Hokeys.

The Goon rubs the back of his neck.

GOON

That was a prank... The Government never hired us to do anything. We are called 'HIRED GOONS' to prank people. And get paid to get violent!

Bryan and Paul glance at each other. Paul slows the car and pulls to the curb. He turns on the Goon.

PAUL

Who hired you to mess my face up!

GOON

Wendy Rid--

BRYAN

Riddell?

GOON

Yeah that's it. Wendy Riddell.

PAUL

Get out!

The goon gets out of the car quickly. Bryan and Paul speed away.

PAUL

Are you sure your wife isn't playing us both?

BRYAN

Not anymore I'm not.

PAUL

Those tests have to be somewhere online. I'm going to hack every server to find it.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul works fast across a computer keyboard, typing in codes to gain access to DNA databases.

PAUL

Found it!

Bryan leans over Paul's shoulder to stare at the screen.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN: TEST RESULTS APPEAR

PAUL

That's got to be the weirdest thing. It's not Wendy's DNA they've tested... it's...

BRYAN
My son's DNA...

INT. RIDDELL HOUSE - LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

BOBBIE, 5 yrs old, vibrant enthusiastic child with golden hair just like Bryan's watches television.

When Bryan enters the room - Bobbie jumps up excitedly and runs to him for a bear hug.

BOBBIE
Dad! Do you want to play some soccer? Yeah, I've been practicing. Yeah, let's go.

BRYAN
Go get the ball Bobs, we'll kick the ball around down at the park.

Wendy enters the lounge room, drying a dish. Bobbie races out of the room to search for the soccer ball.

WENDY
How did Paul go with those docs?

BRYAN
We decided to let it go. For the child's sake. The real truth don't need to come out.

Wendy's face whitens.

BRYAN
Pack your things. Bobbie will stay with me until... I'm ready to talk to you... I loved you, I still do... all those years ago... you didn't have to lie about Bobbie being mine. I would have done anything for you.

The end.