

THE RIGHT CHOICE

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OVER BLACK

SUPER: "It's not good to dig in the past, raise the ghost up from the grave, and have it walk with the flesh"

Tires SCREECH, the CRASH of cars followed by the SPLASH of something large hitting water.

FADE IN:

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

On the grassy bank, in a single wooden chair, sits HERB (65) in prison garb. Behind him, a PRISON GUARD stands tall, arms behind his back.

Opposite Herb, behind a mahogany desk, sits HEARING EXAMINER (40) in a \$10 suit. Behind him stands PEREGRINE (25, 3-piece suit), holding a metallic orb.

HEARING EXAMINER
What led you to this crime?

HERB
Loss.

The Hearing Examiner stares at him, waiting for more. Herb clears this throat.

HERB
I lost something, then I lost my temper.

Peregrine surveys her surroundings. In the river, the roof of a submerged car peaks from the water.

HEARING EXAMINER
What guarantee's do we get that you will not re-offend?

HERB
I don't have anything left to lose.

HEARING EXAMINER
How do you think your victim feels about your offense?

HERB
My victim is dead.

Peregrine looks to a road running adjacent to the river. Another car, smashed and smoking.

None of the others seem to care about their surroundings.

HEARING EXAMINER

The Victims young child witnessed your crime. Have you thought about the impact your crime has had on their life?

HERB

I don't think of anything else.

HEARING EXAMINER

If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?

Herb wipes away a tear.

HERB

I would make the right choice.

Examiner turns and stares at Peregrine.

INT. HEARING ROOM - DAY

All remain in their positions, but they now occupy a poxy room with bare and paint-faded walls.

PEREGRINE

Do you really mean that?

Peregrine walks around the room to Herb. The Examiner continues to stare at where Peregrine once stood, frozen in time.

Herb eyes him, confused.

HERB

Yes, of course.

Peregrine holds out the orb in front of Herb.

PEREGRINE

Take it, please.

HERB

What is it?

Peregrine stares at him, unblinking.

Herb reluctantly reaches his hand out, his fingers touch it--

FLASH CUT

INT. CAR - RIVER - DAY

Buckled in the driver's seat, HERB (30) opens his eyes, gasps for breath but inhales water.

He flaps his arms trying to swim upward, the seatbelt holds him back, he reaches round, unbuckles.

Herb bursts through the open sun-roof, splutters water, gasps desperately for air.

Eventually, he steadies his breathing. His eyes widen as realization hits him. He dives back into the car.

On the back seat, strapped to a child seat, rests NATHAN (5) arms floating peacefully in the water.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Herb drags Nathan from the river, lays him on the grass.

HERB

No, please, not again, not again.

Herb places both hands on his chest, rhythmically presses.

HERB

Please, come on.

Nathan doesn't respond, his partially open eyes stare back at Herb. Cold.

Herb continues CPR, no response. Herb breaks down, collapses on his chest, his tears fall onto Nathans soaked clothes.

A car door opens (O.S)

Herb looks up, sees the smoking and damaged car on the road.

FRANK (35) topples out along with several beer bottles. He scrambles to his feet and stumbles towards Herb.

FRANK

Wow, man! I'm sorry, you hurt?

Herb stares at Frank.

HERB

Not again, please.

FRANK

Is the erm... Kid, OK?

Herbs sorrow quickly fades into anger as he pulls a handgun from his coat pocket, points it straight at Frank.

FRANK

Woah, man!

Frank raises his hands, stumbles backwards onto his ass.

FRANK

I said I'm sorry!

Herb looks to Franks car, sees GIRL (9) in the backseat, she stares at Herb, frozen in fear.

Herb stares back, regret in his eye. He flicks his eyes between the Girl and Frank.

Herb YELLS, it echoes, birds fly from nearby trees.

He cocks the handgun, steps forward and aims for Frank's face. Consumed with hate.

INT. HEARING ROOM - DAY

As they were before.

HEARING EXAMINER

If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?

Herb wipes away a tear.

HERB

I would make the right choice.

Examiner turns and stares at Peregrine. waits for the answer.

Peregrine pockets the orb, shakes her head.

Examiner turns back to Herb.

HEARING EXAMINER

That is all.

The Officer leads Herb out of the room.

Hearing Examiner slams a stamp onto Herbs file.
"Parole Denied"

FADE OUT.