

To Be Remembered

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FADE IN:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

A group of a dozen PEOPLE gather at the corner of two narrow streets. They hold candles, most of them cry, others silent.

The somber tone pierced by dog barks and police sirens.

Propped up against a fire hydrant is a poster-board with numerous pictures of a MAN(20s).

Flowers and candles sit on the sidewalk.

DETECTIVE SETH AYERS(40s) moves through the crowd and stands in front of them. He's sad, carries a candle and is dressed neatly in a sport-coat and tie.

AYERS

Yesterday these streets claimed another victim. Was he lost? Yes. Was he in search of acceptance by the wrong people? Yes. Did he deserve to die? No.

The crowd nods and hums in agreement.

AYERS

Let us not be fooled, we knew of his actions. But those actions did not warrant an untimely death. Frank Williams Junior leaves behind his mother and a young son. We must work together to put an end to the savagery that engulfs our community.

Frank's MOTHER(40s) and SON(4) stand close by.

AYERS

Let us remember Frank Williams Junior, shall he never be forgotten.

Ayers places his candle down near the poster-board, moves aside as the others repeat the gesture.

Frank's son runs to Ayers and hugs his leg, he pats him on the head.

AYERS

I'm so sorry for your loss, missus Franklin.

With swelled eyes--

MRS. WILLIAMS

Thank you so much for your kind words. I hope Frank was able to hear them.

Ayers reaches in his pocket, pulls out a business card, puts it in her hand.

AYERS

If you ever need anything, just call.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

In the driver seat is DETECTIVE ERIC SMITH(40s), dressed as neat as Ayers. He looks on at the candlelight vigil which is only a few car-lengths in front of him.

Ayers, with his head hung, walks to the car and gets in the passenger side.

SMITH

Here I am starved while you eat up the gratitude of strangers.

He fires up the car, pulls away.

INT. DINER - LATER

There's a handful of CUSTOMERS at the front counter chatting to each other.

The WAITRESS tending the counter wears a dirty apron and looks miserable.

Smith and Ayers sit across each other at a booth. A late night breakfast for Smith, black coffee for Ayers.

SMITH

How many more times?

AYERS

How many more times what?

With a mouthful--

SMITH

How many more times are you gonna say those pretty words for a gang-banger or drug addict that got themselves killed?

AYERS

Do you know what it's like to be forgotten? They deserve to be remembered--

He chokes it down--

SMITH

--No one's gonna forget them. Tomorrow that whole family will have tee shirts with his face from a happier time printed on them. Then we'll be reminded of him in the morning brief.

AYERS

Don't mock the family, what else do you expect them to do?

SMITH

What I expect is beside the point. They'll pump out kids who in thirteen to eighteen years end up in our case-load and some statistical chart.

AYERS

You have a mighty-fine outlook on things.

SMITH

Just stating the obvious. You know this shit just the same as I do. It's a cycle.

AYERS

You never answered my question.

SMITH

What was that?

AYERS

If you know what it's like to be forgotten?

SMITH

I can't say that I do, but I have a feeling you're gonna tell me you know all about it.

Ayers polishes off his coffee.

AYERS

I haven't the time or patience to make you understand. But I'll tell you it's a feeling I wish upon no man.

SMITH

You know what, seems to me like you care more about those grieving families remembering you rather than the victims being remembered.

Ayers stands up.

AYERS

I'll be in the car. Thanks for the coffee.

Smith digs back into his plate.

SMITH

Good riddance.

INT. AYERS' APARTMENT - VARIOUS - NIGHT

The front door opens, light floods in.

Only the bare essentials sprawl the living room, not even a TV.

Ayers walks in, tosses his coat and tie on the back of a chair.

BEDROOM

He enters the room and flicks the light on.

Tacked to all four walls are numerous newspaper clippings, evidence photos and mugshots. Hardly any wall-space is visible.

Against one of the walls is a desk with paperwork scattered.

Ayers finds a small space, removes a folded up newspaper clipping from his pocket and tacks it up with the others.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

Smith stand in a gruesome scene - a homeless MAN and WOMAN, both in their 20s, sit on an old couch. Bullet holes in both of their foreheads, blood splattered against the wall behind them.

Down by their feet is a partially filled syringe and a few dollar bills.

All windows are boarded up, trash and mattresses line the area.

Ayers enters through the front door, stands next to Smith.

SMITH

You just missed the crime scene boys.

AYERS

Any more bodies?

SMITH

No, patrol cleared the place a little while ago. Just these two love-birds.

Ayers notices something about the female victim.

AYERS

She looks pregnant, maybe four or five months.

SMITH

The medics couldn't get a beat from her belly. Baby might've been dead before she was. Shame.

AYERS

It is, but at least she didn't bring that child into an environment like this.

SMITH

Agreed.

AYERS

Could it be anything else but a drug deal gone wrong?

SMITH

That, or a third junkie got greedy and eliminated the other two and took off with the rest of whatever they were shootin'.

A couple of loud thuds are heard from the rear of the house.

Ayers and Smith hear them.

More thuds.

They draw their pistols and carefully move toward the source of the noise.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Another homeless MAN(30s) throws trash out of an overturned trashcan on the other side of the yard. He rifles through the mess as if looking for something.

Ayers is first out of the house, Smith stands in the doorway with his gun trained on the man.

AYERS
Police department! Let me
see your hands!

SMITH
Get outta there now!

The man stops as Ayers approaches.

AYERS
Get down on the ground, hands behind
your head!

SMITH
We won't say it again.

He steps away from the trashcan with a hand in his pocket.

AYERS
I will shoot you! Slowly take your
hand out of your pocket.

HOMELESS MAN
I didn't do nothin!

SMITH
Final warning!

The man quickly takes his hand out of his pocket to reveal a small revolver. He points in the direction of Ayers and blindly fires.

Ayers and Smith fire back.

The homeless man crumples on the grass, Ayers is nearby writhing in pain but on his feet.

Smith rushes over, screaming into his walkie-talkie.

SMITH
Shots fired, shots fired! Officer
down at 458 G street! I repeat
officer down 458 G street!

Ayers drops to his backside, clutching his gut. Blood pours from between his fingers.

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

Ayers lies in the bed, hooked up to various machines. There are no balloons, no get well soon cards, nothing.

There is a NURSE(30s) monitoring the equipment.

Smith enters, the Nurse stops what she's doing and turns to him.

NURSE
Friend or family?

Unsure how to answer--

SMITH
...Partner.

He moves his sport-coat aside to reveal his badge.

SMITH
Any progress?

NURSE
Not as much as we'd hope. He suffered
massive internal bleeding and still
hasn't regained conciseness.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

The homicide unit is bustling - detectives walk back and forth through cubicles. The phones ring, muffled yells from behind interview room doors.

Ayers' desk sits empty. It's clean and tidy. There are no sympathetic messages or cards here either.

EXT. CEMETERY - OPEN GRAVE - DAY

A cream-colored coffin is suspended over an open grave. A PRIEST(60s) stands nearby with a bible in his hand.

Smith is the only other person at the funeral. He looks around for anyone else during the ceremony.

PRIEST
In the name of God, the merciful
Father, we commit the body of Seth
Ayers to the peace of the grave.

The coffin lowers.

The Priest tosses three handfuls of dirt onto it.

PRIEST
You gave him life. Receive him in
your peace and give him, through
Jesus Christ, a joyful resurrection.

Smith makes the sign of the cross on himself.

PRIEST
May he rest in peace.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

PEOPLE walk down the sidewalk.

Dogs bark from behind chain-linked fences, sirens blare, gunshots in the distance.

The poster-board of Frank Williams Jr. now toppled over, candles all extinguished.

FADE OUT