

TRUST ME

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DAY

JOE (30), scrawny, rough looking, dirty torn clothes, walks down the street in a bad part of town. He holds hands with EMMA (5), also scrawny, rough looking in dirty torn clothes.

Passersby eye them with suspicion.

Emma struggles to keep up with Joe.

EMMA

I'm hungry.

JOE

We'll get something soon.

INT. DODGE - DAY

WARREN (50), clean shaven, button shirt and jacket, middle age spread, drives the car down the street.

He sees Joe and Emma up ahead. His eyes zeroes in on the unlikely couple.

EXT. STREET - DAY

On the opposite side of the street from Joe and Emma, a white Dodge Charger slows down. The driver, Warren, watches them.

The Dodge makes a U-turn further down the street. Now it's on the same side of the street as Joe and Emma.

The Dodge stays back, creeps covertly behind them.

Joe and Emma walk up to a mom and pop burger joint.

The Dodge stops by the curb a short distance behind.

EMMA

Are we gonna eat here?

JOE

Yeah, but don't talk to anyone. We keep to ourselves, okay.

INT. DODGE - DAY

Warren watches with a sharp eye as Joe and Emma walk inside.

He pulls a small pair of binoculars out from the glove compartment, uses them to better see.

INT. BURGER JOINT - DAY

A small place with only a handful of patrons.

Joe walks up to the counter. An OLDER WOMAN, short and rotund with a stained apron, stands behind it. An old cash register in front of her. She looks at Emma with pity. Joe notices.

JOE
(to Emma)
Go sit at a table. I'll be right there.

Emma chooses a table by the window. She sits patiently while Joe gets the food.

He brings a tray back with a couple burgers and drinks. He sits down, hands Emma a burger and one of the drinks.

Hungrily, she takes a giant bite out of the sandwich.

INT. DODGE - DAY

With a phone to his ear, Warren watches Joe and Emma inside the restaurant through the binoculars.

WARREN
Yep. Looks like it, to me.

He listens to the other person.

WARREN
There's no doubt in my mind.

INT. BURGER JOINT - DAY

Emma finishes her burger, drinks some soda.

EMMA
Am I gonna go home soon?

Nervous, Joe glances over his shoulders. No one pays any attention to them.

JOE
Not yet. Soon.

EMMA
I have to pee.

Joe gestures to the back of the room.

JOE
It's back there, but don't talk to
anyone, okay.

Emma gets up. Joe grabs her sleeve.

EMMA
I won't.

INT. DODGE - DAY

Warren, watches Emma get up from the table.

WARREN
(into phone)
She just got up. Time to make a
move.

He pockets the phone, grabs a police badge from the glove compartment, attaches it to his belt, then gets out.

INT. BURGER JOINT - RESTROOM - DAY

Emma, washes her hands in the sink, dries them off, grabs the door handle then opens the door.

Startled, she almost runs straight into Warren. He bends down to her level, offers up a smile.

WARREN
Hi there.

Emma tries to pass him, but he blocks her way.

WARREN
Are you okay?... Is that your
father you're with out there?

EMMA
I'm not supposed to talk to
strangers.

WARREN
That's great. You're a smart girl.

He shows her his badge.

WARREN

I'm not a stranger though. I'm a police officer.

Emma relaxes a little.

WARREN

I'm here to take you home. Would you like me to take you home?

Emma nods. Warren takes her hand.

WARREN

Come with me. Other police officers will be here soon to arrest that man you're with.

He ushers Emma out into the --

KITCHEN

The older woman and TWO EMPLOYEES stare wide eyed at Warren and Emma as they make their way through the kitchen.

Warren holds his badge in front of him.

WARREN

The back door. Where's the back door?

Frightened, the older woman points to a door in the back.

Warren and Emma hurry through the kitchen, exit out the back door. The woman and the two employees share nervous looks.

EXT. BURGER JOINT - DAY

Warren opens the passenger side door to his car, helps Emma inside, then shuts the door. He takes a quick glance around.

INT. BURGER JOINT - DAY

Anxious, Joe peers over at the restroom area. He notices the older woman staring at him oddly.

Joe gets up, heads over to the restrooms. He knocks on the door. Listens.

JOE

Emma, are you in there?

He knocks again, opens it a crack. The restroom is empty. Joe spins around, searches the restaurant with frantic eyes.

JOE

Emma!

Joe hurries over to the older woman.

JOE

The girl I was with, have you seen her? She's gone.

The older woman's confused, scared.

OLDER WOMAN

The police came. They took her.

Joe stares at her in disbelief.

JOE

The police?!!

LATER

Depressed, Joe sits at one of the tables. OFFICER SNYDER (40), stands next to him with a pen and notepad in hand.

OFFICER SNYDER

So, she's not any relation to you?

JOE

No. I'm a friend of her mom's. She was arrested last night for possession with intent. She asked me to look after Emma until she gets out.

OFFICER SNYDER

Why didn't you take her home then? These streets are no place for a little kid.

Joe peers up at the cop.

JOE

I live in one of the houses down on canal street. Would you take a kid there?

Officer Snyder writes something down.

JOE

What's going to happen now?

OFFICER SNYDER

We'll have to figure out which officer picked her up. See what the situation is with her mom and get child protective services involved.

JOE

She'll be fine though, right?

OFFICER SNYDER

Yes. As soon as we figure out who picked her up.

JOE

What about me?

OFFICER SNYDER

You're free to go, but keep your phone handy in case we need any more information.

INT. DODGE - DAY

Warren has a content smile on his face as he drives. Emma sits quiet in the passenger seat.

Warren glances over at Emma. A different look in his eyes. Slight predatorial...

WARREN

You have very pretty eyes.

EMMA

Are you taking me home now?

WARREN

Not yet. We're going to visit a friend of mine first. He likes little girls like you.

Warren cracks a grin.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The white Dodge heads out of town on an empty two lane road.

FADE OUT: