

Getting Home

By

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Blackness. The sound of a car idling.

Fade in on the color blue, then to red, and then finally onto the opening shot: an unmoving, bloodshot eye staring ahead. There's lights reflected on the glassy surface.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Cut to a shot of a hand gripping the steering wheel; there's a wedding ring on the fingers that are tapping away on the leather.

We punch out wider and see that these are the features of our protagonist MICHAEL, sitting in the driver's seat. He looks over to his right; there sits his wife ANGELA.

MICHAEL

I can't believe this. I know
these woods like the back of
my hand.

EXT. THE WOODS

The car is sitting in the darkness on a beaten dirt road that forks to the left and right; it's illuminated by the head and tail lights. The car idles absently.

INT. CAR

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. I could have
sworn....

He looks back into the rear. A bundle of blankets is nestled firmly into the seat; the head of Michael's child DAMIEN pokes out from the warmth. We see only from the tip of his nose to the top of his scalp. He's asleep.

ANGELA

He's not awake, don't worry.

(pause)

Do you have any idea where we are?

MICHAEL

I don't know if I'm driving out of the woods or farther into it. And the road forks here....

Michael rubs at his eyes. Exhausted, he looks at the car's clock: one in the morning.

MICHAEL

If I don't take the right road then we could be out here all night.

ANGELA

Well, we can just sit here awhile and think about it. I'm sure we'll figure out which one it is.

(glancing back at Damien)

We need to get him home, though.

MICHAEL

I swear, this is the last time I take these woods.

ANGELA

You'll be back.

(she laughs)

You always take these woods.

MICHAEL

And how do you know that,
Angela?

ANGELA

Michael, I know everything
about you. You feel guilty
about this now but next time
everything will be different.

MICHAEL

I usually never have second
thoughts. I don't get lost.

ANGELA

Maybe. Maybe.

MICHAEL

Don't pretend that you aren't
upset. I'm always screwing
this up.

ANGELA

(with a sigh)

All I'm saying is that we
need to get home, one way or
another.

MICHAEL

That's what I'm trying to do.

ANGELA

Not if you're busy
complaining.

Michael leans back in his seat with a long sigh.

As he closes his eyes, we once again cut to a dark hue of blue.

We hear the car continue to idle for a long while... until it finally dies.

A quick cut of red before we're back into the action.

Michael jerks awake. The car is dead.

MICHAEL

(lethargic, yet
worriedly)

What? What happened?

Angela rouses. She rubs her eyes and looks sleepily at him.

ANGELA

Is something wrong? It's hot.

MICHAEL

How long did I sleep?

He looks down at the clock once again. It's dead.

He checks his watch, it's four in the morning.

MICHAEL

Good God, the battery died,
too. That's perfect.

Angela is getting her bearings as he sighs in frustration and buries his forehead in his hands. He rests his head on the wheel.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. If I had any
idea--

ANGELA

Listen, it's fine--

MICHAEL

Fine? We're stuck in the woods! At four in the morning!

(mirthless laugh)

I can't believe I did this.

ANGELA

(placing her hand on his shoulder)

Well, I don't know what we can do. But throwing a fit isn't going to help anything.

MICHAEL

I know, I know. I'm just supposed to get you home, not strand us. That's not what I'm supposed to do.

He looks up towards the road. His face freezes.

ANGELA

Supposed to do? I know you think once you're a father you're supposed to be a superhero, but--

MICHAEL

The headlights are still on.

There is a silence.

ANGELA

...what? You're... you're
right.

We cut behind them, looking out the windshield.

The dirt road before the car is illuminated quite a distance by the fully functional headlights.

We hear a slight laugh escape from Michael.

We look back at them: Michael stares, Angela has a bewildered smile and is shaking her head.

MICHAEL

How is that possible?

ANGELA

...Maybe the battery and the
engine aren't quite dead...?

We see Michael look down and remove the keys from the ignition. He places them on the dash, but the headlights stay on.

He flips the switch off, but the expression on his face tells us that they are still on.

MICHAEL

What's going on here?

We cut again behind them. They turn, and their heads obscure the view of the road.

MICHAEL

This doesn't make any sense.

ANGELA

(laughing nervously)

Well, don't try to make sense
of it. See if the car starts
so we can get out of here.

They turn back to their original positions, restoring our
view of the road.

There is a dark figure standing in the far reach of the
headlights.

We cannot make out any definition, only the silhouette.

It is a man.

There is a long silence.

ANGELA

Oh my God.

EXT. WOODS

A side shot of the distance between the figure and the car;
it's healthy.

INT. CAR

ANGELA

Michael.

MICHAEL

I see him.

Hurriedly, Michael reaches for the keys, but comes back
empty.

The keys are gone.

He looks around quickly, scrambling blindly in the darkness.

MICHAEL

Where are the keys?!

ANGELA

I don't know, I don't know!

They both feel for the keys, but cannot find them. They panic. Michael looks up.

MICHAEL

He's walking towards us.

With a moment of reflection, Michael reaches into his back pocket and grasps his KNIFE. He places it upon his lap and takes a breath while Angela continues to panic.

MICHAEL

(shakily)

It's okay. This is what I'm here for.

He holds the knife before him and flips the blade open.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

To protect you and Damien.

ANGELA

What if he has a gun or something?

MICHAEL

No, if he's out here in the woods, he's homeless. He doesn't have anything.

ANGELA

How do you know? What if he

tries to kill you?

MICHAEL

I'll show him the knife.
That'll scare him away. Now,
while I get rid of him, I
want you to find the keys.
When I come back we'll drive
off.

ANGELA

If the car works.

MICHAEL

It'll work.

ANGELA

Michael, be careful. You're
all I have.

MICHAEL

Don't worry. In a minute
you, me, and Damien will all
be home together.

WOODS

Michael slowly steps out of the car and holds the knife
before him like a brandishing stick. He steps into the
glow of the moon beams, which glint off the knife.

We see Michael's profile and the shape stand opposite each
other with an eternity between them.

MICHAEL

What's going on here, man?

There is no response. Both figures stand still.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I figured. Move along
now, pal.

(he raises the
knife and steps
forward a bit)

As he steps closer, he gains some clarity. The figure is
holding something in its arms.

MICHAEL

What do you have there?
Trash or something?

Again, no answer. Michael points the knife and approaches
again.

We enter slow motion as he steps closer; the form in the
shadow's arms grows more distinct: it is the shape of a
SMALL CHILD.

Michael's mouth falls open and he lowers the knife a bit
absentmindedly.

Then, the car's headlights shut off in an instant, and all
goes black.

The figure is off, veering into the woods. Michael gives
chase, running blindly into the foliage.

DEEPER WOODS

It is very dark; we hear the crunch of leaves and heavy
breathing as Michael runs.

Eventually he chases the figure into a clearing where there
is a very bright white light that seems to emanate from the
moon itself into a sharp circle on the ground.

The figure is crouched there, still bathed in shadow.
Michael stops a distance from the figure, awed.

He stands far from the ring of light, near the treeline,
the knife tight in his hand.

The figure looks back and then leaps up and vanishes back into the nebulous woods.

Step by step, Michael approaches the ring of supernatural light. Every moment is odd, juxtaposed, uncomfortable, and extremely cautious.

Leaves crunch underfoot as he draws near.

Silence. The small child is bundled in the center of the light.

Michael carefully engulfs himself in the luminance.

Kneels.

The small child is in fact a BABY DOLL, which is somewhat buried under the soil.

Carefully, Michael digs it up and turns it over. There is a HOLE in the neck of the doll, and DUCT TAPE on its mouth.

Michael upturns his palms; they're covered in black dirt.

He stands with an audible hush of breath. He takes a step back.

He turns and looks behind him.

The figure is distant behind him, this time holding a FLASHLIGHT. It shines into our eyes momentarily, and the color red is seen.

Michael steps towards the undefined figure cautiously.

MICHAEL

(hushed)

What are you doing?

The figure runs off again... this time towards the car, where Damien and Angela are.

Michael, terrified, chases again.

Once out of the treeline, he stops short.

The vehicle is open. All the doors, including the trunk, are ajar. The headlights are on again.

MICHAEL

(out of breath)

Oh my God, oh my God....

He rushes to the back seat and sees that Damien is gone. With a quick glance, he notices that Angela, too, is missing.

Michael lets out a yelp of fear and looks down the road. On the left fork stands the figure with the flashlight. Michael rushes after him.

The shadow makes no attempt to move.

They collide.

The force of the impact launches the figure to the ground.

The flashlight twirls through the air. It clatters across the pavement and rolls into our sight; the light is blinding (and red) until it rolls away again.

As it rolls away, it reveals an out-of-focus Michael pinning the figure to the ground and repeatedly stabbing it.

The blade is raised and lowered several times. It slows; stops.

Michael tosses it beside the corpse.

He breathlessly leans back on his haunches and looks up towards the sky. The moon is lightly tinted blue.

In an over the shoulder shot, Michael looks down and sees the face of the man he has just killed.

It is his face.

The dead Michael's eyes are bloodshot as they stare listlessly above, just as the living Michael had.

Rather than being awed, Michael has a strange sort of understanding. He gazes down at his own dead body for a moment, observing silently.

He stands, exhausted, and walks back towards the car, but not before retrieving the knife.

Upon arriving, he sees that all the doors are closed again, except for the TRUNK.

He peers into the trunk and sees that there is ROPE, a SYRINGE, and DUCT TAPE all laid neatly across the leather.

Michael raises the knife; it's covered in blood.

He turns it over and over until finally, slowly placing it into its place in the trunk.

He opens the back door of the car.

Damien lies in his pile of blankets, his nose poking out.

Stoically, Michael peels back the blankets and gently turns Damien's head to the side.

There is a SYRINGE PUNCTURE in Damien's neck and DUCT TAPE on his mouth.

Michael has stained Damien's cheek.

He upturns his palms; they're covered in black blood.

Michael has an incredulous look on his face. He is almost crying. He pulls the blankets up over Damien's face and returns to his driver's seat. There is a long silence.

ANGELA (V.O)

(blithely)

We need to get him home,
though. He needs to get his
sleep.

Michael doesn't look at her. He stares out the windshield.

MICHAEL

I don't even know where home
is anymore.

We follow Michael as he glances to his right.

Angela is absent, in her seat lie the keys.

Michael reaches over and grabs them. He methodically places them in the ignition and waits before turning the key. Behind him, there is a minute movement from beneath the blankets.

His fingers grip the steering wheel. The wedding ring is gone.

We're in close again on his eye.

It's no longer bloodshot.

We hear the sound of the car starting and we fade to the color blue, then to red, and then black as the car drives off.

The End