

GOTCH'EM

Screenplay by  
Chad C. Layven

Based on the book  
"GOTCH'EM JOHNNY TAGGETT"

by  
William D. Hoy

June 2, 2020

FADE IN:

INT. NYPD SQUAD ROOM/JOHNNY'S DESK - DAY

October 23, 1939. JOHNNY TAGGETT, 30s, stares around the forty-eighth precinct station. It's his last day as a sergeant. He's got his meaty hands buried in a stack of old papers and photos, cigarette ash drifting down from his 6'2" height as he sorts what he wants to keep from what he can't care about anymore:

Old forms and memos, trophies he won playing football with the squad, framed snapshots from Christmas blasts and New Year get-togethers, one or two pictures of sexy dames.

The powdery ash falls over all this stuff as he rummages through it.

Somewhere under that pile is his beat-up wooden desk with its two long-necked telephones rising from the mess the way skyscrapers tower over slums. He stands there, tie loose around his thick neck, sleeves rolled up, and keeps digging through all the various crap he's built up over his years in the department. His whole official life in the form of junk he's better off leaving behind.

JOHNNY  
(to himself)  
Too much. I could never keep up  
with all this secretary work.

Almost in a daze, he goes on shuffling through the remnants of the mess on his desk.

A SCREAM from out by the front processing area and a smashing of glass blast his eyes all the way open and his instinct has him jumping over a couple of chairs before he even knows he's moving.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
Holy shit! What the hell is going  
on?

INT. FRONT ROOM

Johnny's big muscular body joins a crowd of other cops from all over the tough precinct house with their guns drawn as they hustle toward the writhing, grunting clot of guys in suits and uniforms in the center of the station's big front room.

Johnny recognizes a bunch of detectives in the crowd; they're wrestling down some creep who must have thrown a metal chair through one of the glass doors. Johnny looks around at the chair lying on the floor, the smashed palm that used to decorate the lobby, the doorframe all wrenched out of shape and figures that this creep must be all coked up. All these flatfoots with their nightsticks swinging free, smashing into the creep's skull, must have put that together too; they're not stopping till they can hustle his limp form down the hall to holding. It leaves a trail of blood as they drag it.

Someone standing next to Johnny hollers. Captain Patrick Murphy, 60s.

CAPTAIN MURPHY

Make sure he's still breathing.  
It'd look like shit if we killed  
this lowlife.

JOHNNY

Hey, Captain Murphy. I guess  
this'll be as good a time as any to  
say goodbye.

There's a little catch in his growling voice, as if something in his throat was trying to get out. He stands there staring at the tough, old precinct captain for a moment. A flood of memories has got Johnny nailed to the spot and speechless.

QUICK FLASHES - JOHNNY'S MEMORIES

- Vegetable wagon slips on the cobblestones.
- Johnny's father dying.
- A young Johnny stands in front of two graves.
- A young Johnny Taggett fresh out of the peacetime army.
- A young Johnny Taggett getting hauled in to the forty-eighth precinct house more than too many times for fighting.
- A younger Captain Patrick Murphy brings Johnny into the police family.
- Captain Murphy gives Johnny odd jobs for a couple of bucks here and there, inspires him into the force, and becomes a second father.

BACK TO SCENE

Captain Murphy's gazing right back into Johnny's narrow grey eyes, watching him remember.