

.38 SPECIAL

Written by

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1 INT. LUXURY CONDOMINIUM - LATE AFTERNOON 1

A luxurious condo with a beautiful view of Downtown Chicago. RYAN, 26, sits in the tall window sill overlooking the city, smokes a cigarette, sports a three-piece suit, he's sharp.

He puts out his cigarette and sips his drink, gets off of the window sill and refills his drink. The phone rings annoyingly... Ryan stares curiously at the phone, walks back over to the window and gazes down at the streets below.

Three men at different intersections wearing suits. Ryan catches one of them looking up at the building, notices a gun/holster, nearly spills his drink. Ryan places his drink down, throws his jacket on and heads for the door.

2 INT. LUXURY CONDOMINIUM - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON 2

Ryan exits the condo, head down, and strolls down the hallway. Ryan hears the elevator ring and ducks into an open door, looks to the frightened resident. He raises his index finger over his mouth. She's frozen.

He peeks down the hallway to find two ARMED MEN in suits, guns drawn, on their way to his condo. Ryan watches them pass, guns first, we don't see their faces. Ryan quietly walks down the hallway towards the elevators.

Ryan turns back to the two men about to knock on his door ready to raise hell. The elevator rings and the two men turn to Ryan who jumps for cover in the next hallway.

He runs towards the staircase and sees two more men who lift their guns at him but he ducks into the stairway door before they get a shot off. They run towards Ryan.

3 INT. LUXURY CONDOMINIUM - STAIRWAY - LATE AFTERNOON 3

Ryan races through the door and down the stairs. A man pops out of the fifth floor exit, gun drawn. Ryan lunges at the man, knocking the gun to the ground. Ryan grabs a hold of him and pummels his face in.

He rises and kicks the gun out of the man's reach, his hand covered in blood now. He continues down the stairs, looks up, two more men with guns, he exits on the second floor.

4 INT. LUXURY CONDOMINIUM - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON 4

Ryan strolls cautiously down the hallway, headed for the elevator.

He finds two men looking for him, going the wrong way, guns drawn. The elevator rings and Ryan jumps on board just in time as the two men whip their heads around.

5 INT. LUXURY CONDOMINIUM - ELEVATOR - LATE AFTERNOON 5

Ryan hits the "Close Door" button repeatedly, two ELDERLY SOCIALITES panicked to his right and left. The elevator door closes just in time. He tips his hat, smiles at the two ladies.

6 INT. LOBBY - LATE AFTERNOON 6

Ryan exits the crowded lobby. As he exits the main entrance the two men from before get off the elevator, scanning the crowd.

7 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - LATE AFTERNOON 7

Ryan leaves the building, walking towards MAIN STREET, he quickly turns his head back towards the lobby, notices the men looking for him, turns his head back and whistles for a cab. A cab pulls over for him and he quickly gets in.

8 INT. CAB - LATE AFTERNOON 8

Ryan in the back of the cab.

RYAN
Seventh Street Station, please.

CAB DRIVER
Yes sir.

9 INT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT 9

Ryan waits in line. It's his turn at the kiosk. Ryan looks perturbed, hesitant even as he looks up at the train schedule. The Attendant notices.

ATTENDANT
Good evening, sir. Destination?

Ryan looks up at the train schedule again, then checks his surroundings, clear, back to the train schedule where he sees Pasadena.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Sir?

RYAN
Pasadena.

ATTENDANT
Pasadena...
(scanning his computer)
Got a train leaving in an hour.

RYAN
Thanks.

Ryan gives the man cash, gets his ticket, we stay on the Attendant as Ryan walks away. The Attendant seems suspicious, holds a wad of cash in his grip...

10 INT. TRAIN CABIN - NIGHT 10

Ryan in a private train cabin. He dials a phone number. It rings.

RYAN
(softly)
Hello.

11 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 11

LAURA, 55, reads a book by the night light when the phone rings. She places her book down and answers.

LAURA
Thompson Residence. Hello?

RYAN (O.C.)
Hey Laura...

LAURA
Ryan? Is that you?

12 INT. TRAIN CABIN - NIGHT 12

Ryan undoes his tie, resting in a private cabin on the train, a cocktail in front of him.

RYAN
Yeah. It's me.

13 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 13

Laura's in shock, a cold silence.

RYAN (O.C.)
I'm headed to California. I wanted
to drop by... maybe I could see you
and Natalie.

LAURA
Is everything alright? You don't
sound well.

14 INT. TRAIN CABIN - NIGHT

14

Ryan on the phone.

RYAN
Yeah everything's fine... I just
wanted to come by if that's
alright... I'll be at the train
station at four o'clock tomorrow...
Laura?

15 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

15

Laura on the phone. She wipes her tears away.

LAURA
Yes, of course. That's fine.

RYAN (O.C.)
Is Natalie there?

LAURA
No, she's at work... I can have her
call you when --

RYAN (O.C.)
No it's alright.

LAURA
Are you sure you're okay?

RYAN (O.C.)
Yeah, just tired.

LAURA
It was nice hearing your voice
again.

16 INT. TRAIN CABIN - NIGHT

16

Ryan on the phone.

RYAN

Yours too.

LAURA (O.C.)

Good night.

RYAN

Good night, Laura.

Ryan hangs up, takes a sip from his drink, a deep breath, looks out the window as the night flies by.

17

INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

17

Laura composes herself. She tears up a bit, wipes them away. NATALIE, 25, walks downstairs, finds her mother, Laura, in the kitchen, in a deep trance.

NATALIE

What is it?

LAURA

It was Ryan... He'll be here tomorrow.

They share a look of cold surprise.

NATALIE

What did he say?

LAURA

That he wanted to see us.

NATALIE

(in disbelief)

He wants to see us? Why?

LAURA

I don't know any more than you do, dear, but he's family.

NATALIE

Define family.

LAURA

Natalie, don't start. It's been a long time, I'm sure you can make amends. The book says...

NATALIE

Save it, please.

Natalie looks in the mirror, she's doing her hair for work, dressed like a waitress.

LAURA
You missed him didn't you?

NATALIE
Good night, mom.

18 EXT. TRAIN STATION - PARKING LOT - DAY 18

A car pulls up into the parking lot. Laura gets out of the car and approaches the train platform.

19 EXT. TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - DAY 19

A train approaches and slows to a stop, casting a large dark shadow over the platform. Laura slowly walks down the platform: emotional, reserved.

Ryan appears among the crowd and catches eyes with Laura. She feigns a smile under teary eyes. Ryan notices. They come within a foot of each other. There's an awkward silence.

LAURA
Look at you.

She hugs him.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Where have you been?

Ryan kisses her on the cheek.

RYAN
Chicago, mostly.

LAURA
I never could get a straight answer from you... Look at you, the proper gentlemen.

RYAN
She didn't want to come?

LAURA
It's hard for her, Ryan. She just needs some time.

RYAN
I understand.

LAURA

Come on, let's get you home I'm
sure you're starving.

20

INT. CAR - DAY

20

Laura drives, Ryan in the passenger seat. An awkward silence
as Ryan looks out the window at the vast countryside.

LAURA

She's not well, you know.

RYAN

What do you mean?

LAURA

It's a long story. I'd prefer if
she told you when she felt ready.

RYAN

Laura.

LAURA

The worst thing that could happen
to a woman happened to Natalie a
year ago while she was away at
college. Afterwards, she came home.
There's nothing you or anyone else
can do about it. Now, Ryan, promise
you won't say anything to Natalie
or do anything to bring that mess
back into her head. She hasn't been
the same since.

RYAN

I can't believe this. Did they get
the guy?

LAURA

They did but he was let go for some
technical reason. Don't you go
getting into any trouble. You're a
guest, you're on vacation.

RYAN

I'm not seventeen years old anymore
I'm not going to go beat him up.

LAURA

Promise me.

RYAN

I promise. Is she working?

LAURA

She went back to school at the local community college.

RYAN

Is she seeing someone professionally?

LAURA

Once a week. But I didn't say a word. I think you being back might just be what she needs.

21 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - LATE AFTERNOON

21

Laura leads Ryan into the home. Ryan takes in the sights, a newfound familiarity as he looks around his childhood home.

RYAN

You didn't change a thing.

LAURA

I never felt the need. It reminds me of... a better time I guess.

RYAN

No... it's perfect.

Natalie appears at the top of the staircase, looks to Ryan from the second floor. Ryan smiles, she doesn't.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Hi.

NATALIE

Hi.

22 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON 22

Natalie leads Ryan into his old bedroom. Ryan looks around at pictures of when he was in his late teens: playing baseball, football, him with Natalie. Posters cover the walls. The Rolling Stones. Jim Morrison. The Clash. 49ers.

NATALIE

No one's slept in here since you left... Laura wouldn't let anyone. I guess she knew you'd come back eventually.

RYAN

And you?

NATALIE
You left, Ryan... You left us... I
don't know what you're doing back
but Laura's happy now, I'm happy
now...
(she gets up)
Don't fuck it up.

RYAN
Natalie.

NATALIE
Don't.

Natalie walks to the door, Ryan turns to the window.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
You know what I'm sorry I just have
to ask you this. Why now? Why are
you here? Really?

RYAN
I wanted to see you.

NATALIE
After six years you just woke up
one day and thought of that?

Ryan nods in the affirmative, he's convincingly genuine.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Dinner's at seven there's clean
towels in the bathroom.

Natalie slams the door. Ryan walks over to the window and
peeks through the blinds, sees an elderly couple walking down
the street. He closes the curtains, turns around, lights a
cigarette, takes a deep drag.

23 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

23

Laura and Natalie prepare dinner in the kitchen. Natalie
peels potatoes.

LAURA
You look upset.

NATALIE
I'm fine.

LAURA
Did you talk?

NATALIE
What is there to talk about?

LAURA
I'm sorry. Forget I said anything.

Joe, 30s, appears at the front door, lets himself in, bag of groceries in hand. Natalie and Laura smile.

JOE
Hey everyone.

Joe places the bag of groceries down in the kitchen, kisses Laura on the cheek.

LAURA
(off Joe)
Thank you, dear.

NATALIE
Hey Joe.

24 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - RYAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 24

Ryan hears a male voice, gets out of bed, grabs his jacket, leaves the room.

25 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - DINNER TABLE - NIGHT 25

Ryan walks down just as Joe kisses Natalie on the cheek in the living room. Joe turns and makes eye contact with Ryan. Joe walks over, they shake hands, make eye contact.

LAURA
Ryan this is Joe he lives across the street.

JOE
Nice to meet you. I've heard a lot about you.

RYAN
Pleasure.

Ryan shakes his hand, nods, sits down across from Joe. Laura and Natalie bring dinner to the table, rotisserie chicken, potatoes and asparagus.

LAURA
I just want to make a quick toast.
(a bit emotional)
(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for this day for a long time and... I'm just so happy to have you back. Oh look at me...

JOE

It's alright Laura, come on.

NATALIE

To family and friends!

EVERYONE

Cheers!

They touch wine glasses, Joe visibly disturbed by Ryan's presence.

JOE

So Ryan... Laura tells me you've been living in Chicago. What do you do for a living?

RYAN

I worked in finance. Securities, mostly.

JOE

(with a smirk)

Finance. Must have been a whole lot more exciting than anything in this little town.

RYAN

Depends on what you find exciting, doesn't it?

JOE

Wall Street, Finance... It's all just gambling, really, isn't it?

RYAN

I guess so... Unless you're the house, that is.

LAURA

(interrupting their stand off)

I just can't believe all this you couldn't have made me happier. You know, Joe was just promoted to detective.

Ryan eyes Joe with even more suspicion, Natalie notices.

RYAN
Detective? Now that must be
exciting work.

JOE
It is.

RYAN
Do they keep you busy here? I mean,
is there a large criminal element
in Pasadena?

JOE
(talks and eats at the
same time)
There's a criminal element
everywhere you just have to know
where to look. We nabbed a guy the
other day, serial killer, raided
his house, found six corpses with
the heads cut clear off. Guy used a
chain saw.

LAURA
Joe!

NATALIE
So disgusting.

Joe chuckles, amused by it. Ryan: disgusted by this man.

JOE
You're right I'm sorry.

Laura gets up and walks to the kitchen. Joe flips the
newspaper open. Ryan looks at the newspaper, notices
something shocking. Natalie recognizes the look in Ryan's
eyes, fixated on the newspaper.

RYAN
Joe do you think I could take a
look at that?

JOE
Sure, here.

Joe passes Ryan the paper.

RYAN
Thanks.

Ryan takes the paper and folds it in a way as to hide
something, he pretends to read the paper as he rips out a
page behind his back, everyone continues to eat.

CLOSE UP - Natalie, confused, stops eating for a moment, continues to eat, looks up at Ryan.

26

INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - RYAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

26

Ryan smokes a cigarette as he lays on the bed, looks up at the ceiling fan. A knock at the door interrupts.

RYAN

Come in.

Natalie enters, sits down on the bed as Ryan undoes his tie.

NATALIE

I'm sorry about earlier, I was being a bitch.

RYAN

It's fine I deserved it.

NATALIE

Must be weird for you... all this.

RYAN

A little bit.

A pause.

NATALIE

I noticed the newspaper at the dinner table tonight.

RYAN

This one?

Ryan takes a torn newspaper page from a chair, it's the closing stock prices.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I have to stay in the loop.

NATALIE

Wow I'm embarrassed.

RYAN

Don't be, you're observant that's good.

NATALIE

Thanks, I guess.

RYAN

So who's the neighbor? I don't remember a Joe.

NATALIE

His father and James used to be friends. Joe lost his father too. That's when he started coming over more. He's really been there for Laura when I'm not around.

RYAN

That's nice.

An awkward stare.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I'm pretty tired.

NATALIE

I bet.

(walks to the door)

Good night.

RYAN

Good night.

Natalie closes the door. Ryan turns back up to the ceiling fan as it continues to spin. In his suitcase on the other side of the bed, the real torn newspaper article.

27

EXT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

27

Two young men in suits and overcoats, MICHAEL, 30s, and GEORGIE, 30s, stand at the front porch as it pours rain and thunders. Michael knocks on the door incessantly.

MICHAEL

U.S. Census Bureau! If we could only have a moment of your time, please!

Georgie and Michael exchange looks, Georgie, a look of impatience. Michael knocks harder, louder.

GEORGIE

I don't think anyone's home.

MICHAEL

Just wait.

Michael knocks again. Laura appears through the door window.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

See.

Laura opens the door, surprised by the two men at her doorstep.

LAURA

What on earth are you two doing out in this weather?

MICHAEL

(overwhelming smile)

Sorry to intrude, ma'am. My name is Michael Stark this is my colleague George Remus we're from the U.S. Census Bureau.

GEORGIE

(politely)

What can I do for you?

MICHAEL

We just have a few questions if we could have a moment of your time.

She scans both young men up and down.

LAURA

Oh come in you're getting soaked out there.

Both men smile innocently at Laura, follow her in.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

28

INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

28

Laura leads Georgie and Michael into to the living room, points to a couch, she takes their coats, hangs them. Michael has a slight limp in his right leg. They both sit down, Georgie takes out a note pad and pen.

LAURA

I'll take your coats.

MICHAEL

Thank you... We might have drowned if you hadn't let us in.

They all laugh.

LAURA

Can I get you something to drink?

MICHAEL

We're fine. Thank you.

LAURA

So... How does this work? It's been a while.

MICHAEL

We're just going to ask you a few questions, pretty basic stuff, nothing crazy. It shouldn't take long.

Laura sits in front of them.

LAURA

Okay, I'm ready.

MICHAEL

Again thank you so much for letting us in, that rain's really killing us today.

LAURA

Not a problem.

MICHAEL

(playfully)

Alright... So... You are Laura Thompson is that right?

LAURA

Yes, how did you know that?

MICHAEL

From the last census.

LAURA

You must have been a boy.

MICHAEL

We keep records.

LAURA

You don't have them in front of you.

MICHAEL

(pointing to his head)

It's all up here.

LAURA
You must have quite the memory.

MICHAEL
(playfully)
It's my job! Well, part of it
anyway. How many members are there
in this household?

LAURA
Two.

MICHAEL
From the last census there was a
Ryan, James and Natalie Thompson
also living here.

LAURA
James was my husband. He passed.

MICHAEL
When?

LAURA
Six years this September.

MICHAEL
Sorry to hear it. I know what it's
like to lose a loved one. I lost my
parents at a very young age.

LAURA
Must have been tough.

MICHAEL
Well, I survived... I'm sorry that
was inappropriate.

LAURA
No it wasn't. Really.

MICHAEL
So? Does he still live here? Ryan,
I mean.

LAURA
We were his foster family. He
joined the Marines.

MICHAEL
And when was that?

Laura pauses.

LAURA
About six years ago.

MICHAEL
So around the time your husband
died?

LAURA
Is that relevant?

MICHAEL
Just getting the facts straight.
It's part of my job.

LAURA
Is it? Digging into people's
personal affairs?

MICHAEL
You're completely right. I
apologize. I was just trying to be
nice. I know what it's like. I
served, too. See.

Michael hints at his leg.

LAURA
I'm sorry.

MICHAEL
It's okay. I get it all the time, I
guess I'm just too curious. So back
to the Census, your foster son,
Ryan, what does he do for a living?

LAURA
Now he works in finance in Chicago.

MICHAEL
(laughing almost)
Finance? Well isn't that something!
Right Georgie?

Laura eyes Georgie with confusion.

GEORGIE
Right.

MICHAEL
Georgie doesn't like bankers much.
They took his house. He's got a
wife. Sorry... had a wife.
(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Two kids in school, good job, wakes up one day. Bam! The bank throws them out. Good bye.

GEORGIE

That's not how it happened.

MICHAEL

He's embarrassed. So how old was Ryan when you took him in?

Laura a bit taken aback by all this.

LAURA

Sixteen.

MICHAEL

That's very kind of you. Raising a kid that's not your own.

LAURA

I think so... Do you have kids? A family?

MICHAEL

No, just me. Sorry I keep getting off the subject. After all, I have a job to do... Do you work, Mrs. Thompson?

LAURA

I did for many years. I was let go.

MICHAEL

From where?

LAURA

The factory.

MICHAEL

The factory?

LAURA

Yes, the old Ford factory.

MICHAEL

Ah, yes. That's right.

(taps his head)

So much for having a good memory.

LAURA

What part of town are you from?

MICHAEL

All over.

Natalie appears on the top of the steps, wary of the two strangers as they speak to her mother.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(like a guessing game)

And your daughter, Natalie, right?

LAURA

Yes. What about her?

MICHAEL

Is she home?

NATALIE (O.C.)

Yes.

Natalie walks down the staircase.

LAURA

Good morning, dear. These men are from the Census Bureau.

NATALIE

So I heard.

MICHAEL

Michael Stark, pleasure to meet you.

Michael reaches out his hand, she shakes it reluctantly.

GEORGIE

Name's Georgie.

NATALIE

Hi.

MICHAEL

(suspicious yet playful
aggression)

And how about you, Natalie, you've been listening, right? How old are you, where do you work?

NATALIE

(patronizing him)

This isn't mandatory, *right*? Or am I just getting my facts crossed?

MICHAEL

No it's not but it lets you serve
your country. I mean, you do want
to serve your country, right?

GEORGIE

Not a lot of work for just
answering a few questions.

NATALIE

How many more?

MICHAEL

Just a few.

NATALIE

I'll save you some time I'm a
student, I've never been married
and I don't have any kids.

Georgie writes it all down, Michael smiles to Natalie.

MICHAEL

How old are you?

NATALIE

26.

MICHAEL

(off Georgie, then smiling
to Natalie)

Me too... how about that?

(off Laura)

And Ryan, Mrs. Thompson? Where is
he now?

LAURA

He's asleep.

MICHAEL

I thought you said he moved to
Chicago.

LAURA

He did. He's in town visiting.

MICHAEL

For how long?

LAURA

I'm not sure.

MICHAEL

May I speak with him, please?

LAURA
I don't see why not.

Natalie watches suspiciously as Laura leads Michael up the stairs, Georgie gives her a creepy look. Laura leads Michael to Ryan's bedroom door and knocks.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Ryan. Some men from the census bureau are here they'd just like to ask you a few questions... Ryan?

MICHAEL
Are you sure he's home?

LAURA
Yes.

Laura knocks again.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Ryan? He had a long trip, took the night train, probably just sleeping it off.

MICHAEL
You mind?

LAURA
Sure.

Michael knocks.

MICHAEL
Hey, Ryan my name's Michael I'm from the U.S. Census Bureau we're just trying to do a census it won't take long.

GEORGIE
Must have been a late night.

Michael looks to Georgie, upset. Then to Laura.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
(off Laura)
Mrs. Thompson we can't conduct the census without interviewing all members of the household.

When Laura isn't looking, Michael tries the door knob. It's locked.

LAURA

He's not a member of the household
and please stop calling me Mrs.
Thompson or ma'am. Laura will do
just fine.

They all walk back down the stairs to the front door.

MICHAEL

(being the good cop now)
I apologize. I really do. Laura...
When would be a good time for you
so we can stop by and finish the
census?

LAURA

I guess this weekend would be fine.

MICHAEL

How about Saturday morning?

LAURA

Sure.

MICHAEL

Thank you very much Mrs. Thompson,
Natalie, the U.S. Government truly
appreciates your support.

LAURA

Thank you, Michael.

MICHAEL

You have a good day.

LAURA

And you as well.

Michael nods at her, then Natalie, smiles. Georgie follows
suit, they leave the house. Laura goes to the kitchen as
Natalie watches the two men walk to their car, she notices
them looking at the second floor of the house.

NATALIE

Didn't they seem odd to you?

LAURA

The tall one was cute. A bit odd
but who isn't these days. Maybe you
can get his number when he comes
back on Saturday.

NATALIE

I'll pass.

LAURA
You can't stay single forever,
honey.

29 INT. GYM - DAY

29

Natalie in a rigorous training routine. Lots of cardio.
Weight lifting. Rock climbing. Stadiums. She's focused,
listens to music. Drinks a lot of water.

30 INT. PARKING LOT - DAY

30

Natalie walk towards her car, duffel bag over her shoulder.
Ryan walks through the lot, sees Natalie.

RYAN
Hey.

NATALIE
Hey.

RYAN
Still training?

NATALIE
Every day... What are you doing
here?

RYAN
Same as you. Releasing some stress.

NATALIE
Who said I was stressed?

RYAN
No one. I'm sorry.

A silent stare.

NATALIE
I have to be at class.

RYAN
Alright.

NATALIE
I'll see you.

Natalie keeps walking and gets into her car. Ryan watches for
a moment, turns, walks towards the entrance to the gym.

31 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

31

Natalie exits a college campus building and walks to the parking lot. Michael appears behind her, Georgie tails closely behind.

MICHAEL

Natalie!

NATALIE

(shocked)

What are you doing here?

MICHAEL

Relax. Just wanted to grab a cup of coffee.

NATALIE

What's stopping you?

MICHAEL

I prefer company.

NATALIE

How about your lap dog over there?

MICHAEL

What, Georgie? He's not too much on conversation.

NATALIE

I noticed... Seriously, what are you doing here?

MICHAEL

Alright, no coffee.

NATALIE

I have to be home for dinner.
Excuse me.

Natalie turns, walks away.

MICHAEL

You know Ryan never worked in Finance, Natalie. He's a gangster.

Natalie freezes, turns around.

NATALIE

Who are you?

MICHAEL
(flashes badge)
Special Agent Michael Tafferty.
FBI.

NATALIE
Is that supposed to impress me?

MICHAEL
I don't know. Does it?

NATALIE
Stop wasting my time and tell me
what you want.

MICHAEL
Oh come on... You already know the
answer to that. Ryan just appears
out of nowhere after six years that
doesn't seem a bit strange to you?
You're smarter than that.

Natalie realizes this isn't a joke.

NATALIE
What does the FBI want with Ryan?

MICHAEL
He's about to be indicted for
murder and multiple RICO violations
back in Chicago. There's a Federal
grand jury in session as we speak.

NATALIE
Bullshit.

MICHAEL
Here. Take a look.

Michael shows her pictures from crime scenes, men in suits
shot to death all over Chicago.

NATALIE
And you're saying Ryan did this? He
would never --

MICHAEL
I'm not saying it, the FBI is.

NATALIE
I don't believe you.

MICHAEL
I figured you wouldn't.

He takes a document out of his jacket, hands it to Natalie, mug shot of Ryan, list of various charges. She skips a few breaths. Charges: hijacking, extortion, racketeering, gambling, murder.

NATALIE

You shouldn't even be talking to me
if you don't have a warrant.

OVER MICHAEL'S MONOLOGUE - CLOSE IN ON NATALIE IN DISBELIEF

MICHAEL

We're just keeping an eye out until
the grand jury indicts... He should
be carrying a revolver on him, it's
called a .38 Special it looks like
this...

(lifts jacket to show
revolver)

We believe it's the murder weapon.
If you get it for us, you two go
out one night, we arrest him far
away from the house. This all goes
away, everyone's life goes back to
normal, Laura's none the wiser...
You got to do the right thing here,
Natalie.

NATALIE

I can't... I can't.

MICHAEL

I know it's terrible what you're
going through, I really do, an ex
especially... I'm sorry you had to
go through this I really am.

NATALIE

How did you know he was my ex?

MICHAEL

Natalie. Information is ninety
percent of my job. Without it, I'd
get nothing done. I know that you
see a shrink, Dr. Patel, once a
week. Your father James passed six
years ago, he was an artist from
Brooklyn, pretty good work actually
but great art never really gets
appreciated until you're dead.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You were also, surprise surprise,
arrested in college for underage
drinking when you were eighteen
after your foster brother left you
and joined the Marines. And... I
know what it feels like to be
abandoned.

NATALIE

You've been spying on me.

MICHAEL

No. We keep files. We're very good
at it. There's a difference.

Michael hands her a card, FBI credentials.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Give me a call... The sooner the
better. I'm counting on you.

Michael walks away with Georgie, they get into a car.

CLOSE UP - NATALIE, shocked and confused.

32 INT. CAR - NIGHT

32

Natalie drives. She suddenly bursts into tears, wipes them
away, turns up the music. She pulls into the driveway, cleans
herself up. Joe is in the driveway smiling. She feigns a
smile back.

33 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

33

Ryan, Joe, Laura and Natalie eat in silence. Joe puts his
knife and fork down, sips his wine.

JOE

So, Ryan. What do you think of
Pasadena since you left?

RYAN

You know, I noticed there's no kids
on the street anymore playing ball.

LAURA

They're all playing video games in
the basement.

JOE

I guess a lot has changed, hasn't
it?

LAURA
(changing the subject)
So... two men from the Census
Bureau came by this afternoon.

Ryan listens intently to Laura. Natalie notices.

JOE
Those guys are a real pain in the
ass. I did mine last month. It took
them something like six times to
finally get me to do it.

LAURA
I agreed to do it but they needed
Ryan here so they'll be back
Saturday morning.

JOE
Why would you agree you know you
don't have to do those things? Tell
them you're terminally ill.

RYAN
(smiling)
Me too.

Everyone laughs except Natalie.

LAURA
It's just a few questions to help
out the country. I don't see what
the big deal is.

JOE
You're not exactly storming the
beaches of Normandy...

Laura gives him the stare.

LAURA
You did it last month.

JOE
They blind sided me I had no choice
I was boxed in. It was when I got
the TV. They helped me move it in.

LAURA
Ryan? Are you okay with Census?

Ryan wasn't paying attention to their side conversation.

RYAN
I'd rather not. I like to keep my
personal life, well, personal...

Natalie watches Ryan, he's convincingly genuine.

NATALIE
Excuse me.

Natalie gets up, heads up the stairs as Ryan watches.

LAURA
Ryan don't worry I'll give their
office a call and cancel their
visit.

RYAN
Thank you. I appreciate it.

LAURA
You are here on vacation, after
all.

34 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - RYAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 34

Natalie enters the room, hits the light switch. It's very neat. She turns to make sure no one followed her, goes through Ryan's dresser. She carefully digs through a drawer full of clothes. Nothing...

She turns to his jacket hanging on a rack and finds a .38 special in a holster. Natalie, frozen, covers her mouth in shock. She puts everything back in order. Natalie rushes out of the room, turns off the light.

35 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - DINNER TABLE - NIGHT 35

Natalie walks down the stairs. Ryan turns his head around, smiles. She smiles back, sits down at the table.

LAURA
We were about to make a toast.

NATALIE
I'm sorry. What are we toasting to?

JOE
Life!

Natalie and Ryan look at each other from opposite sides of the dinner table. Laura fetches another bottle of wine.

RYAN
Everything alright?

NATALIE
Yeah. I'm fine.

36 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - NATALIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 36

Natalie sits at her computer, looks at the door, back to the screen. She types into Google "Pasadena Herald June 6th". She pulls up an online version of the newspaper.

She scans the PDF pages, looks at each article, speed reads the BYLINES to no avail. Still nothing until she sees the word CHICAGO... "CHICAGO GANGLAND MURDERS UNSOLVED" strikes her attention.

RYAN (O.C.)
Hey.

Frightened, Natalie quickly exits out of the article and turns around to Ryan as he leans against the doorway. Natalie attempts a smile, terrified.

NATALIE
Hey.

RYAN
You want to go grab a drink?

NATALIE
I don't know. It's late.

RYAN
Come on. One drink. For old times.

NATALIE
(reluctantly)
Alright, give me a second I'll change into something.

RYAN
Okay. I'll be downstairs.

Ryan leaves. Natalie looks nervously, opens a desk drawer with a switch blade in it. She eyes it with curiosity and fear.

37 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - DOORWAY - NIGHT 37

Ryan waits at the bottom of the steps as Natalie exits her room, walks downstairs.

38

INT. PUB - NIGHT

38

Ryan and Natalie sit across from each other at the bar, their beers in front of them as they wait in silence.

RYAN

Any boyfriends, anything serious?

NATALIE

Not that it's any of your business but no, actually. Not in a long time.

RYAN

When was the last time? I see the way that guy Joe looks at you.

NATALIE

He's just a friend. A serious relationship? Nothing since you left. How about you?

RYAN

Would you believe me if I told you the same?

NATALIE

I don't know, Ryan.

RYAN

I had a girlfriend here and there but I could never get back that feeling, you know?

NATALIE

I don't.

RYAN

How I felt when I was with you, how I feel with you now... Safe.

NATALIE

Safe?

RYAN

Yeah.

NATALIE

You were a Marine and I make you feel safe? What are you afraid of?

RYAN

I don't know. The whole world I guess...

Their drinks arrive.

RYAN (CONT'D)
(off waiter)
Thank you.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Cheers.

NATALIE
Cheers.

RYAN
Listen, Natalie. I know you're still mad at me and nothing I say or do is going to change that. But I'm not going anywhere and I want to be a part of your life.

NATALIE
Do you, really? How? My big brother? Boyfriend? Or maybe my father?

RYAN
I was a kid when I left I was stupid and impulsive but it doesn't mean I don't have feelings for you.

NATALIE
Then why'd you leave and don't just cop out and tell me it's because you were young and stupid or because of what happened. I didn't run away and I was the youngest.

RYAN
I don't know... I really don't have an honest answer to that question.

NATALIE
Well thank you for being honest with me.

A long silence.

RYAN
(out of nowhere)
I couldn't bare the pain. I felt like I had to get as far away as I possibly could.

Natalie turns to Ryan.

NATALIE

You couldn't bare the pain? He was my father and you just left when we needed you the most. Did you ever think about how Laura would feel, how I would feel? You abandoned us, Ryan and it's not something I'm going to forget.

RYAN

I know. Natalie --

NATALIE

And now you just come back, for what? Forgiveness? So you can sleep better at night? So you can feel safe?

RYAN

Natalie, please just listen to me.

NATALIE

I've been done listening to you for a long time, Ryan. I'm leaving.

Natalie gets up and leaves, Ryan follows.

39

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

39

Ryan catches up to Natalie.

RYAN

Natalie!

Natalie takes the switch blade from her purse and hides it in her hand.

NATALIE

What?

Ryan at a loss for words.

RYAN

I didn't mean to hurt you.

NATALIE

I don't care what you meant to do. Good night, Ryan.

Natalie hails a cab, Ryan left on the sidewalk.

40 INT. CAB - NIGHT

40

Natalie in the back of the cab, she looks in the rear view mirror to make sure the cab driver isn't looking and cries softly. She looks at the switch blade in the grip of her hand, puts it back in her purse.

41 INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - NATALIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

41

Natalie, in bed, turned away from the door, her eyes wide open, thoughts racing through her mind. She looks at her cell phone, finds MICHAEL as a contact. She's about to dial. The door slowly creaks opens. Ryan stands at the doorway.

NATALIE

What do you want?

Natalie doesn't move, Ryan stands in the doorway.

RYAN

I don't know why I ever left here, left you, what I was thinking. When I first got to Afghanistan I knew, I mean, really knew, that I'd die there... and, it was the weirdest thing, I didn't mind it. One day I was on recon in this village and I saw this woman who looked like you, I don't know maybe it was a mirage. I remembered I had someone, something to live for. So I stopped being so reckless, started being more careful, took my time. I didn't want to die. I wanted to come back.

NATALIE

Then why didn't you?

RYAN

I don't know... When I got back, I felt nothing, empty, I guess. Like I couldn't feel. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't smile. I couldn't stop thinking about the horror. I didn't want to bring that back here....

(regretful)

I found a job in Chicago that I was good at and I tried to forget. But I never could...

Natalie's cell phone buzzes. She turns to the night stand, it's Michael. The message reads: "tick tock". She freezes, puts the phone down, turns back to Ryan.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Everything okay?

NATALIE
Yeah, fine.

RYAN
Remember grad night when we got back from Chandler's party? We were in my room it was like four in the morning. You remember what you said to me?

NATALIE
I said a lot of things.

RYAN
Natalie.

She takes a deep breath, looks into his eyes.

NATALIE
I said, "No one will ever kiss me like you do..."

Ryan waits hopefully.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
... and no one ever did.

Ryan goes in for the kiss. It gets fast quickly, passionate, within a few seconds they're both naked in bed. It's romantic, passionate sex.

42 EXT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - NIGHT

42

Georgie and Michael stand at the door. Michael rings the door bell and knocks a couple times. Laura comes to the door in her night gown, beyond surprised.

MICHAEL
Good evening, Mrs. Thompson, sorry to disturb you.

LAURA
How can I help you?

MICHAEL

I'm really sorry for barging in like this we have a lot of ground to cover and I wanted to see if it was possible to finish the census tonight.

LAURA

It's nine o'clock we made an appointment for Saturday morning.

GEORGIE

It'll only be a couple of minutes.

LAURA

This is highly unusual.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, I really am. You're really nice I hate to do this.

LAURA

Come in. Please, make it quick.

MICHAEL

Absolutely, Mrs. Thompson. Thanks a lot, really. Thank you.

They enter the home.

43

INT. THOMPSON RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

43

Laura stands at the bottom of the staircase as Michael and Georgie get comfortable in the dining room.

LAURA

(off upstairs)

Ryan?!

(off Michael)

He's upstairs he should be down in a moment, you can take a seat.

Michael and Georgie sit down as Laura cleans in the kitchen.

MICHAEL

That painting on the wall, is that... is that a Warhol?

LAURA

It is.

MICHAEL

Wow. A real Warhol. I've never actually seen one in person before. It's beautiful.

LAURA

Thank you.

MICHAEL

It really is something.

LAURA

Would you like something to eat there's plenty of left overs.

GEORGIE

Sure.

MICHAEL

Georgie, where are your manners? No thank you, Laura. Like I said we have a lot of ground to cover.

LAURA

At this hour?

MICHAEL

We always have to map out the next day in advance but I guess if Georgie's hungry, a man's gotta eat.

LAURA

It's fine, I'll make you both a plate.

GEORGIE

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson.

MICHAEL

You're too kind.

Laura sets the table for them. Ryan and Natalie walk down the staircase and see Michael and Georgie seated at the dining room table.

LAURA

Have a seat. Ryan, this is Michael and Georgie from the Census Bureau.

Michael smiles at them.

MICHAEL

Hey look, we got the whole family
now! Come have a seat.

Michael extends his hand as Ryan and Natalie sit down. They
watch as Michael and George eats their dinner and drink wine.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Laura I gotta say you make one hell
of a brisket. I mean, I think this
is the best brisket I've ever had
in my entire life. What about you,
Ryan?

RYAN

I agree.

MICHAEL

He agrees! Look at that! Words!
We're making progress!

LAURA

Is something wrong?

MICHAEL

I don't know Laura? Is something
wrong?

Natalie looks at Ryan, then Michael, she sits down. Michael
eats, stares at Natalie, it disturbs Ryan who moves his hand
closer and closer to his .38 Special. Michael eats quickly,
like a monster.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

That... was... amazing. Thank you
so much I am absolutely stuffed,
how about you Georgie?

GEORGIE

Delicious.

LAURA

You two are so polite I'm sure your
mothers are very proud.

MICHAEL

(changing tones)
My mother's dead.

LAURA

Oh, I'm so sorry.

Michael takes out his pistol, elbow on the table, calmly points it at Ryan. Georgie stands, reveals a pistol, he's on crowd control. Natalie and Laura: utter shock.

MICHAEL

Oh don't be. My dad used to beat the shit out of her until she had enough, offed herself with a bottle of pills... When I was twelve I took my father's shotgun from the garage and put a shell right...

(tapping his stomach)
...in his gut, watched him bleed out for hours. It was... exhilarating.

LAURA

Who are you?

MICHAEL

The grim reaper. Here to collect a soul isn't that right, Georgie?

GEORGIE

Sure is.

Georgie nods. Ryan tries to reach for his gun. Michael lifts his elbow, the nose of his pistol right in Ryan's face. Ryan places his hands on the table.

MICHAEL

Not fast enough.

LAURA

What is going on, Ryan?

MICHAEL

Yeah, Ryan. What is going on? Why don't you tell this lovely woman who you really are? I think she deserves to know. After all, she did take care of you, real mother or not.

(inching in)
Come on, let's play a game, truth or truth...

NATALIE

Please stop.

MICHAEL

Stop what? I just want your
boyfriend here to be honest, for
once in his miserable life. Is that
really too much to ask?

No response. Michael cocks his pistol, points it at Laura's
head.

RYAN

Stop! Here. Point it at me.

MICHAEL

Look at that. I'm impressed Ryan.
That's very noble of you. Georgie,
tie em' up.

Laura and Natalie exchange looks, frightened. Georgie zip
ties Ryan to the chair and takes the .38 Revolver from his
holster, tucks it in his pants. Natalie watches Ryan in
horror.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Look at all this pain you caused,
Ryan. Two innocent people are going
to die because of you. Don't you
think they should at least know why
before I pull the trigger?

RYAN

Because you're a psychopath.

MICHAEL

Maybe. But tell them something they
don't know.

(off Laura)

You know back in Chicago me and
Ryan here used to be partners.

Georgie hands Michael the .38, he flashes it in front of
Laura before handing it back to Georgie who tucks it in his
pants.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

See this, Laura. Your beloved Ryan
carries a hand cannon around with
him. Why do you suppose he does
that? Because he's a killer that's
why Laura. He kills people for
money. At least he used to. Pretty
good at it too til he gave it all
up for... this, I guess. We were a
pretty good team.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Then one day, pow, he vanished into thin air. Didn't you, Ryan?

RYAN

They have nothing to do with this.

MICHAEL

Wrong. They had nothing to do with this until you walked through that door.

RYAN

Mike. You take me and you do what you gotta do, just leave them alone.

MICHAEL

No that's too boring. I'm here on vacation. I'm here to have fun. I mean where's the fun without a little entertainment, right Georgie?

GEORGIE

Right.

RYAN

Mike. I give up.

MICHAEL

You give up? Georgie did you hear that he gives up? You don't get to give up. You were beat. Soon, you'll know the difference.

Michael walks over to Natalie, gun drawn, then Laura.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

So, I have one point and you have zero. Now we're going to play a game called... Who do you love more?

(off Laura and Natalie)

Unfortunately ladies you don't get to play this game but one of you will get in on the fun soon but which one is really up to Ryan here. So... Ryan. Who do you love more?

RYAN

Don't do this, Mike.

MICHAEL

This is happening Ryan. Right now. Nothing you say or do is going to change that. So stop begging and start playing the game or it's going to get very messy. You know that.

RYAN

Go fuck yourself.

MICHAEL

Oh. Language, please. Laura you let him talk like that?

(off Georgie)

Georgie which one should we kill first? The girlfriend or the mom? Well, foster mom.

(off Laura)

Sorry.

Georgie looks them both over, smiling.

GEORGIE

The girl.

MICHAEL

Well of course but how? Gun? Blade?

Georgie stares down a frightened Natalie.

GEORGIE

Blade.

MICHAEL

Excellent choice, Georgie! You hear that Natalie? I guess Georgie doesn't think too much of you. Blade's the worst way to go. Me, I'd prefer a couple to the back of the head when I least expect it.

NATALIE

Hopefully I can make that happen for you some day.

MICHAEL

(smiling)

Wow, she bites! Did you hear that, Georgie? You know what Natalie... I like you, I really do. I wish we had met under other circumstances, really.

Michael takes out a knife, holds it to Natalie's throat, looks at Ryan who turns away.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Georgie, please make sure Ryan is paying attention.

RYAN
Don't do this.

Georgie holds Ryan's head, forced to watch Natalie as Michael glides the knife towards her throat.

MICHAEL
You know what Georgie I'm going to have to disagree with you. I want to save the best for last. Laura, looks like you're not going to get to play any games.

Michael removes the blade from Natalie's neck, approaches Laura, looks at Georgie.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Same?

GEORGIE
No. Use the gun. His gun.

Georgie hands Michael the gun, Ryan's .38 Special. Michael sits across from Laura, smiles. Laura and Natalie crying now. Ryan gets more red, every muscle in his body in full flex.

MICHAEL
Laura are you a betting woman? I guess that's kind of a stupid question, we're going to make a bet. An interesting one to say the least. I bet, or really, we bet, that you and your entire family will be dead by eleven o'clock at night so that's a decent amount of time. In return, we walk out of here with the Warhol painting. Think of it as a reward. For us, though...

Laura is terrified.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
What about you? You have to bet on something. What if you live and we die, you guys win. What's your prize?

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(no response)

Well I'll give you some pointers I have two guns on me worth about a thousand dollars you could take care of that at a pawn shop and I have a few grand in my wallet so what do you say? Do we have a bet?

LAURA

No.

MICHAEL

No? Is that because you're smart and you know that I've killed several people with these guns or is it because you're so frightened you can't even make a decision?

LAURA

It's because I hate you, and all you represent. You are the devil.

MICHAEL

That's great. I have a question. Did you have fun? I mean, you had a good run, fifty five years if my memory serves me right and now it's coming to a close. My mother died at 26. Your daughter's age. I'd say 55 is a good run. Did you at least enjoy yourself?

LAURA

Burn in hell.

MICHAEL

I get that a lot. I'm not much of a believer though. You sure you want those to be your last words?

Laura nods. Joe enters the front door, Michael instantly whips around and shoots Joe in the chest three times. Joe's dead in the doorway. Michael turns back to Ryan.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Where were we?

GEORGIE

You were going to shoot Laura in the head.

MICHAEL

That's right, I was. But first I want to play another game. How about you, Laura?

No response.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Wow you guys really are no fun. Laura do you think you could make a pot of coffee? I don't know about Georgie but I'm exhausted. Hello? Laura!

LAURA

Make your own coffee.

MICHAEL

It's your house. What kind of host would you be? Georgie you can untie her just make sure she doesn't try anything. Keep that steel to the back of her head.

GEORGIE

Coffee might not be as good.

MICHAEL

It'll be fine just do it.

Georgie unties Laura and forces her to the kitchen. Michael sits at the head of the table in front of Natalie and Ryan.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You know, Ryan, your girlfriend was gonna sell you out. I told her I was an FBI agent, how about that? I almost had her. Would've made this a whole lot easier. You know I prefer to keep things civilized.

Georgie laughs at Michael's last comment, looks to Michael for a second. Laura grabs a butcher knife and stabs Georgie in the shoulder blade, he struggles to get his gun as he slumps to the floor.

Michael walks into the kitchen and pistol whips her, rendering her unconscious. Michael kneels down, looks Georgie in the eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

What did I say, Georgie? Don't let her try anything.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You were lazy and now you're going
to die because of it.

GEORGIE
(gargling blood)
I'm sorry.

MICHAEL
It's alright, Georgie. Tell you the
truth I've been getting sick of all
this... emptiness we call
existence. Now you get to hit the
stop button. I'll see you soon,
Georgie.

Georgie bleeds out, Laura's unconscious next to him. Michael
turns back around, walks back to the table.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Looks like I'm going to be on my
own on this one.
(breaking third wall,
turning to camera)
I've always been more of a solo
act.

Michael sits back down at the table.

NATALIE
Your friend is dying and that's all
you had to say to him?

MICHAEL
Did you have something better in
mind? He might still be alive.
(louder)
Georgie you still there?
(silence)
I guess not.

NATALIE
You're a monster.

MICHAEL
Thank you that's very kind. Georgie
said blade but he's gone now so
I'll go with my weapon of choice.

Michael points the .38 at Natalie's head.

RYAN
No!

MICHAEL

Calm down, Ryan. Remember, entertainment? Now for one final game. Laura doesn't get one cause she fell asleep on us but you, Natalie, are lucky. Now you get to decide how Ryan dies. Long and drawn out, painful, torture most likely, or, you can take one for the team and I can make his death nice and painless. But for me to do that, I gotta use the knife on you. It's part of the game.

Natalie looks to Ryan, a mess of guilt. Psychological torture to the extreme.

NATALIE

Fine. I'll play your sick game. The knife.

MICHAEL

Really?

NATALIE

Yeah, really. You think I'm afraid of you? Of death?

MICHAEL

Yes I do.

NATALIE

So what are you waiting for?

MICHAEL

You don't make the rules, Natalie, that's my job.

Laura moans in the B.G., Michael looks at the kitchen. Laura gets on all fours, struggles, Michael walks over and puts a bullet in the back of her head.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Maybe I didn't make myself clear. Don't worry it's a nice quick way to die.

NATALIE

(screaming)
No!!!

Ryan's teary eyed, Natalie tries to keep it together. Michael sits back at the table.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I feel bad she didn't get to play
but she did break the cardinal
rule. So... Natalie, you sure
you're not afraid of death?

Michael points his gun at her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Bang.

Michael starts laughing, he gets up, brings out the blade, to
her throat, very close. Ryan closes his eyes for a second,
all is lost.

RYAN
Please, Mike. Don't. Please don't
do it.

MICHAEL
It'll be your turn in a second just
be patient.

Natalie breaks free, having cut the ziptie with the
switchblade, she stabs Michael twice in the neck, kicks the
knife from his reach as he falls to the floor. She cuts Ryan
free. Ryan grabs the .38 from Michael who is bleeding
profusely, coughing, laughing, gargling blood.

RYAN
Michael. Come on stay with me,
we're gonna play a game.

Ryan kneels down, gun in hand as Natalie watches, horrified.

RYAN (CONT'D)
This game is called life and you've
reached the final level.
(off Natalie)
Turn around.

NATALIE
No... I want to see.

Ryan looks at her. Michael is laughing but gargling blood in
the process.

MICHAEL
Come on! Come on! Do it already you
--!

FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! The bullets tear through Michael's flesh, the first bullet hits him square between the eyes, dead instantly. Ryan empties the clip on him out of pure anger.

CLOSE UP - Michael's dead body. Suddenly, his eyes open and everything we just saw happens in reverse motion, including the dialogue which becomes inaudible. REWIND all the way to:

DINNER TABLE -- MOMENTS BEFORE

Georgie hands Michael the gun, Ryan's .38 Special. He sits across from Laura, smiles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Did you have fun? I mean, you had a good run, fifty five years if my memory serves me right and now it's coming to a close. My mother died at 26. Your daughter's age. I'd say 55 is a good run. Did you at least enjoy yourself?

LAURA

Burn in hell.

MICHAEL

I get that a lot. I'm not much of a believer though. You sure you want those to be your last words?

Laura nods. Joe enters the front door, Michael instantly whips around and shoots Joe in the chest three times. Joe's dead in the doorway. Michael turns back to Ryan.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Where were we?

GEORGIE

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MICHAEL

That's right, I was. But first I want to play another game. How about you, Laura?

No response.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Wow you guys really are no fun. Laura do you think you could make a pot of coffee?

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I don't know about Georgie but I'm
exhausted. Hello? Laura!

LAURA
Make your own coffee.

GEORGIE
It probably wouldn't be too good.

MICHAEL
You're right we'll pick up
Starbucks.

Georgie laughs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(off Laura)
He's laughing cause he knows I hate
Starbucks. You could buy yourself
some time by making coffee? You
know that, right? Last chance.

LAURA
No.

MICHAEL
Suit yourself.

Michael shoots her in the head in front of Natalie and Ryan,
the blood splatters on them, as well as Michael. Natalie
breaks into tears. Ryan's having a hard time keeping it
together, he shakes his head in guilt and shame.

RYAN
Natalie I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

NATALIE
I know. I love --

BANG! A bullet rips through Natalie's head, her body falls to
the floor, lifeless. Ryan looks to see Michael as he grins,
chuckles, Georgie stands behind him.

MICHAEL
Georgie can you make us some coffee
to go, please?

GEORGIE
Coming right up.

Ryan has lost all hope. He's crying now. Georgie goes into
the kitchen, steps over the dead bodies, he makes a pot of
coffee as Michael stares at an extremely shocked and angry
Ryan.

MICHAEL

Looks like it's just you and me
now, buddy.

RYAN

What are you waiting for?

MICHAEL

My coffee, of course.

Georgie returns to the room.

GEORGIE

It's brewing.

MICHAEL

It smells fantastic.

They stare each other down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

When you make a promise in life you
have to keep it. It really is that
simple, Ryan. If you kept yours,
none of this would've happened. You
think I enjoy killing innocent
people, civilians? I probably won't
be able to sleep for months.

(laughing)

No but seriously. With all you
know, you think they were just
gonna let you walk away? Did you
really think this was gonna end
with you and Natalie riding off
into the sunset together? You did
didn't you? God you're more
romantic than I thought. It's
touching, really. I wonder if
Natalie was as naive.

The coffee maker rings. Ryan turns to it, then back to
Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Coffee's ready. Good bye, buddy.

Michael shoots Ryan in the head, he falls back flat on his
back, next to Natalie's dead body. Michael gets up, looks him
over for a second. He kneels down, rubs Ryan's hair with his
fingers, closes his eyes.

GEORGIE

How do you want the coffee?

MICHAEL
Lots of cream, lots of sugar.

Georgie goes into the kitchen and makes a cup.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
And get a cup to go before some
neighbor calls the police.

GEORGIE
I thought we were the police.

MICHAEL
That's right we are, aren't we?

They laugh together. Georgie brings him a cup of coffee.
Michael sips it over Ryan's dead body.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Delicious... Come on. Don't forget
the Warhol.

Michael leads Georgie out of the house, he grabs the Warhol
painting off the wall, walks over Ryan and Natalie's dead
bodies, then Joe's at the door step. It's a bloody mess.

FADE TO:

44 EXT. SUNNY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 44

A beautiful house on a quiet street, kids bike past.

45 INT. HOUSE - DAY 45

A WOMAN, 40s, types away on her laptop in her living room. A
knock at the door interrupts, she gets up from the computer.
It's persistent. She sighs on her way to the door --

MICHAEL (O.C.)
M'am! Hello?

46 INT. HOUSE - DOORSTEP - DAY 46

The WOMAN looks out the door and sees Michael and Georgie
standing there smiling.

MICHAEL
(knocking)
U.S. Census Bureau we just need a
moment of your time.

She opens the door cautiously.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(overwhelming smile)
Sorry to intrude, ma'am. My name is
Michael Stark this is my colleague
Georgie Remus we're from the U.S.
Census Bureau.

WOMAN
(politely)
What can I do for you?

MICHAEL
Are you Mrs. Reville?

WOMAN
Yes I am.

MICHAEL
We just have a few questions if we
could have a moment of your time.

She scans both young men up and down.

WOMAN
Sure... come in.

Michael smiles deviously at the camera. **FREEZE FRAME.** Punk
rock blares.

TITLE: .38 SPECIAL

CREDITS ROLL...

