

The Butcher

By

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BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

JAMES EAGAN, 40s, lies face down on the ground, blood pooling around his head. Jame's wife SAMANTHA, 40s, lies further away, her face turned away from him.

Their son ERIC, 14, cowers in the corner of the room .

A towering FIGURE, face obscured by shadow, approaches Eric, a pistol hanging by his side. Eric lifts his tear streaked face and stares defiantly at the Figure. The Figure raises his pistol and fires.

Cut to black.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GATES - DAY

A saloon car pulls to a halt in front of two cast-iron gates. The car's window slides down, MICHAEL, 40s, dark haired, bearded, world-weary, leans out of his car.

He presses an intercom button next to the gates and waits for a few moments. There is no response. He presses the button again and it clicks into life but no one speaks. Michael leans in closer. The black lens of the camera stares lifelessly at him.

MICHAEL

Hello, my name is Michael Godwin.
I'm a journalist. Dr Pearson is
expecting me.

There's no response. Michael leans in closer.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

He--

There is a CLICK, a loud BUZZ and the gates swing open. Michael drives down the long, winding driveway.

EXT. HOME FOR THE ELDERLY - DAY

Michael parks in front of a large, gracious-looking house. The car door opens and Michael steps out, a briefcase tucked under his arm. He sighs and approaches the main entrance slowly. His left foot is bent inwards and drags behind him as he walks. He opens the door and walks inside.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Michael stands in the dimly lit hallway gazing at the cracked oil paintings adorning the walls while a heavy set NURSE sifts through his bag. The doors of the hallway swing open and DR PEARSON, 40s, balding, bespectacled, strides into the room. He walks towards Michael, his hand extended.

PEARSON

You must be Michael, I'm Dr
Pearson.

Michael takes his hand firmly and smiles.

MICHAEL

Yes. It's a pleasure to meet you.

Pearson smiles politely.

PEARSON

You're here to interview Walter
Marlowe?

MICHAEL

Yes. That's right.

Pearson nods and gestures.

PEARSON

I'll take you to his room.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Pearson leads Michael down a narrow, dimly lit corridor, wincing at the sound of Michael's foot scraping along the floor.

PEARSON

I assume you're aware of his
condition? Why the authorities
placed him under my care?

Michael nods, struggling to keep up with Pearson's brisk pace.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Yes, I was informed.

PEARSON

I should warn you that his violent outbursts have become more frequent.

The two men come to a stop in front of a large, heavy door.

PEARSON

If you are concerned at any point for his safety or yours, press the emergency button by his door.

Michael nods and stares at the door. Pearson smiles reassuringly at Michael, pushes open the door and steps aside.

PEARSON

Good luck.

Michael nods in thanks and walks into the room. The door shuts behind him.

INT. WALTER'S ROOM - DAY

Michael enters a large, cavernous room. Crowded bookshelves line the walls. In a wheelchair in the middle of the room sits WALTER, 70s, frail, forlorn.

Plates of unfinished food and an empty glass sit on a desk beside him. He looks up at Michael wearily as he enters the room. Michael steps forward, extending his hand.

MICHAEL

Walter, I'm Michael, we spoke on the 'phone.

Walter takes his hand weakly and stares at him, thoughtfully.

MICHAEL

You do remember me?

After a few seconds a weak smile emerges on Walter's face.

WALTER

Yes, the writer. It's a pleasure to meet you.

Satisfied, Michael turns away from Walter. He stops and turns back to face him.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Oh, I almost forgot.

Michael rummages in his jacket pocket and produces a metal flask. Walter glances at it, unimpressed, as Michael walks over to the table beside him.

WALTER

What is it?

Michael unscrews the flask's lid and begins to pour amber liquid into a glass.

MICHAEL

1962 Dalmore. I understand it's a particular favorite of yours.

WALTER

Yes, very much so.

Michael offers the glass to Walter.

MICHAEL

Call it thanks for giving up your time for me.

Walter takes the glass keenly and nods in thanks. He closes his eyes and sniffs, then sips from the glass, savouring the drink.

MICHAEL

It's a rare event that I find myself interviewing a man of your reputation.

Walter smiles, flattered, raises the glass and takes another sip.

WALTER

I'm glad of the company, I've been stuck on my own in this place for so long. It's nice finally to have someone to talk to.

Michael smiles and turns to take a seat. His foot catches on the carpet and he knocks the flask from the table. Walter's hand shoots out and catches it before it hits the ground. Michael narrows his eyes, then straightens himself, embarrassed.

Michael takes the flask from Walter, places it on the table and limps over to a chair. He pulls it closer to Walter and lowers himself into it, staring intently at Walter.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

Do you remember why I'm here?

Walter sighs deeply and shifts in his seat, thinking for a few brief moments then nods, taking another sip from his glass.

WALTER

You're here to interview me about my life of crime. My exploits before my incarceration.

Michael nods and rummages in his brief case.

MICHAEL

Exactly. I want to tell your story. What led to your imprisonment here.

Michael produces a dictaphone and a notepad, then places them on his knee. He looks up at Walter who's staring back at him, an unsure expression on his face. Michael leans back in his seat and clears his throat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You may have trouble remembering things.

Walter avoids Michael's eye and stares at his drink, embarrassed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

All I want you to do is take your time. To try and remember things as clearly as you can.

Michael stares at Walter intently, trying to catch his eye.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Do you understand ?

WALTER

Yes. I understand.

Michael smiles, satisfied and sets the dictaphone to record.

MICHAEL

Let's start with something simple.

Michael glances at his notepad.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
How did you get your nickname? "The
butcher"?

Walter closes his eyes and bows his head for a few moments,
thinking. He looks up at Michael and shakes his head.

WALTER
To tell you the truth, I can't
remember. It was so long ago.

Walter shrugs and takes another sip of his drink.

WALTER (CONT'D)
It was just a name that stuck.

Michael eyes Walter suspiciously and leans forward,
grimacing from the pain in his leg.

MICHAEL
Years ago, I was called to report
on a crime scene.

Michael pauses for a moment gathering his thoughts.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I'd tell you the specifics, but it
would sound like I made them up.

WALTER
Bodies ?

MICHAEL
Many. So many that if you stacked
them one on top of the other you
could climb to the second storey.
I'd never seen anything like it.

Michael shakes his head, disturbed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Cathcart Towers. Ever been ?

Walter takes another sip of is drink and looks around the
room. He eyes Michael's bent foot and sighs.

WALTER
I remember shooting a cripple at a
place called Cathcart Lodge

Walter shakes his head.

WALTER (CONT'D)
But Cathcart Towers. Never been.

Michael gives Walter a disbelieving look.

MICHAEL
James Eagan.

Walter's face freezes, an unnerved expression on his face.
Michael stares at him impassively.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Heard of him ?

Walter shakes his head. Michael nods and sniffs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You see, I've heard differently.
I've heard you were well-acquainted
with James.

Michael pauses.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
His family, too.

Walter shifts uncomfortably in his chair. Michael stares unblinkingly at him. There is something quietly menacing about his unwavering gaze.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
James was a good man, poor, unable
to provide for his family. So he
stole from a crime syndicate.

Michael pauses again and looks up, trying to gauge Walter's response; Walter avoids his eye.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
They decided to teach him a lesson.
So they hired a man.

Michael points at Walter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You. To kill James and his family.
To show what happened to people who
stole stole from them.

Michael reaches into his briefcase and produces a small pile of old, faded photographs. He aggressively tosses one of the pictures at Walter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

James.

Michael flicks another picture at Walter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

His wife.

Michael flicks another photograph, hitting Walter in the chest. Walter shrinks back into his chair, breathing heavily.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Their son, Eric.

Michael selects a photograph and leans forward holding it up to Walter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

An entire family wiped out in minutes. By you.

Walter glances looks at the photograph for a moment, then looks away disturbed. He rubs his neck and stares at the remaining liquid in his glass.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You don't recall any of this ?

Walter furrows his brow and shakes his head.

WALTER

I..I don't..I --

Michael drops the picture. He shoots Walter a baleful look.

MICHAEL

--Stop. Am I really only one who sees through this performance ?

Walter leans back in his chair, shaken.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

How is it possible that so many have been so stupid for so long ?

Walter smirks as he straightens himself in his chair, breaking away from his hunched over position. He reaches over to the flask and refills his glass.

(CONTINUED)

WALTER.

There are times I have trouble believing it myself.

Michael stares at him incredulously.

MICHAEL

Then why do you bother ?

WALTER

I've made enough enemies in my lifetime. Putting on this act keeps me safe from those who want me dead.

MICHAEL

If you continue with this facade, I'll expose you.

Walter narrows his eyes and grips his glass.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You'll spend the rest of your days in a cell. If you don't answer my questions.

Walter stares furiously at Michael. He quaffs the whiskey and sighs.

WALTER

What do you want to know ?

MICHAEL

Do you remember the Eagan family and what you did to them?

There's a deathly silence between the two men. Only the clock TICKING on Walter's wall and the distant WAILING of another patient intrude on the silence. After a brief moment Walter nods slowly.

WALTER

Yes.

Michael nods, satisfied.

MICHAEL

What you don't know know is that Eric survived.

Michael closes his notepad and stares at Walter who stares back impassively.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You shot him.

Michael places a hand on his leg, wincing from the pain.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Crippled him, but you didn't kill
him.

Michael leans in, glaring at Walter. Walter's eyes widen, comprehension dawning on his face. Michael nods and narrows his eyes at Walter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
It's taken me a long time to find
you. But finally here we are.

Walter sighs.

WALTER
Now you've found me. What do you
intend to do ?

Michael clenches his fists and closes his eyes, trying to contain his rage.

MICHAEL
You took my family away from
me. What do you think I came here
to do?

Walter shakes his head and sneers.

WALTER
Killing me isn't a wise decision,
Michael. I still have friends. If
anything happens to me, they'll
come for you.

Walter takes another sip of his drink and sighs.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Killing me will take you down a
dark path that you won't come back
from.

MICHAEL
I killed you ten minutes ago.

Walter looks at him blankly. Michael smiles and motions at the flask.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You died the moment you drank from that.

Walter stares aghast at the glass and drops it. It hits the floor with a dull THUD.

Michael sighs, reaches into his pocket, produces a small, clear tube of pills and places them on the table beside him.

Walter stares at the pills, shaking. Michael rises to his feet and limps towards him; he crouches in front of Walter, staring impassively into his fearful, bloodshot eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Walter.

As Michael stands Walter cries out, leaps from his chair and tackles Michael to the ground.

Michael flails wildly as Walter pulls himself on top of Michael and wraps his fingers around his throat.

Michael digs his thumb into Walter's eye. Walter cries out and his grip slackens. Michael kicks Walter away from him and staggers to his feet.

He looks at Walter, now propped up against the wall a defeated and helpless expression sits on his face.

Michael gathers the photographs, picks up his briefcase and walks towards the door.

Michael turns and takes one last look at Walter; satisfied, he turns and exits the room shutting the door behind him.

INT. WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Pearson stands in Walter's room gazing around the dark, empty space.

A small dark object under Walter's desk catches his eye. He walks towards it, intrigued.

He picks up the object and examines it. It's Michael's dictaphone. He stares at it intently. After a brief moment he narrows his eyes and presses play.

Cut to black.