

GRAVE DANGER

First TenPages

Written by

Jeff McMahon

[essayfilms@yahoo.com](mailto:essayfilms@yahoo.com)

FADE IN

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

PERFUMERY

Gum-chewing TIFFANY (20s), close to anorexic, but with catwalk looks, sprays a sample of fragrance on the wrist of a prospective CUSTOMER #1.

She surreptitiously checks the time on her smart phone on one side of the counter:

PHONE SCREEN:

The time is close to four-thirty p.m.

RESUME SCENE:

The Customer #1 whiffs her wrist, impressed, examines the label on the sprayer:

"LIBERTAS"

TIFFANY  
It's French.

CUSTOMER #1  
Latin, actually.

A bemused look from Tiffany.

CUSTOMER #1 (CONT'D)  
Roman Goddess of freedom.

Tiffany looks around at her snotty-nosed work environment.

The Customer #1 decides against the perfume, wanders off.

Tiffany stifles a bored sigh. Glances again at her phone.

Her MANAGER lingers nearby, a watchful eye.

EXT. PRISON GARDEN - DAY

Two PRISON GUARDS supervise a motley collection of male PRISONERS at work on garden beds in what is, in effect, a commercial market garden, enclosed within high wire chain-link fencing.

NICK RUEBENS (30-ish), well-fed, well-honed abs, shades of Jim Morrison, busies himself with a long handled hoe in tandem with TOMMY HYDE (mid-30s), gaunt, almost frail.

GUARD #1, a bruiser of a woman, checks her watch, blows a whistle.

FEMALE GUARD

Okay, time gentlemen.

The Prisoners, eager to comply, cease their tasks and, tools in hand, form a single file on a path.

FEMALE GUARD (CONT'D)

And drinks are on our friend  
Ruebens tonight, guys.

A PRISONER #1, at the head of the line calls back to Ruebens, venom in his voice.

PRISONER #1

What strings did ya pull, eh  
Ruebens? Ya sick-o bastard.

Riled, Ruebens brandishes his hoe.

The Female Guard intervenes, ushers Prisoner #1 on his way.

The MALE GUARD calms Ruebens.

MALE GUARD

Don't blow it, Nick.

Hyde looks compassionately at his work partner.

Ruebens acknowledges him with a slight nod, calms himself.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

MARIA (20s), short, pretty with Mediterranean features, in beauty salon outfit, propped on an ottoman stool, gives a pedicure to a short ELDERLY MAN, vacant-faced, similar Mediterranean features, seated in a whicker chair.

MARIA

Any of the boys come to visit?

The Elderly Man doesn't respond.

She makes a final touchup with a nail file.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Nah, didn't think so.

She puts on his loafers, packs up her gear in an old style vanity case that has seen better days.

Deflated, she eases herself from the ottoman, places it alongside the single bed.

On the wall above the bedhead, a wooden carved crucifix.

She returns to the Elderly Man, kisses him on the forehead, picks up her vanity case.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Someone will be in later, get you tucked in.

No response.

MARIA (CONT'D)

See you in a few days, then. Okay? Sleep tight.

No response.

Maria slips out of the room without further ado.

INT. PRISON CELL #1 - DAY

All is clean and neat. Ruebens sits on the tidy bunk, towel dries his damp locks. He picks up and reads an opened letter.

RUEBENS

... good with garden tools.

He shakes his head resignedly, as if to say, '*fuck me*', folds the letter, inserts it into its envelope, tosses it on the top of a packed duffle bag nestled on the end of the bunk, leans back against his pillow.

The envelope is addressed to:

MANAGER HIFIELD MEMORIAL TRUST

INT. TIFFANY AND MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gum-chewing Tiffany, in her department store uniform, reclined on the sofa, exhausted.

Maria wanders in from the bathroom, towel around her torso, drying her hair with another.

MARIA

Good day, eh?

TIFFANY  
Need a filthy rich bastard - a  
Bezos or Musk.

WTF from Maria.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
Gotta get outta that dump.

MARIA  
Beggars can't be --

Tiffany sticks out her tongue.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Does it matter how rich he is, just  
as long as he -- ?

TIFFANY  
Gives you a good home and lot's of  
kids, right?

Maria shrugs ... Her friend has a point.

Tiffany eases from the sofa, heads for the bathroom.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
'Til then.

EXT. POPULAR STRIP - NIGHTCLUB #1 - NIGHT

Prospective CLUBBERS queue along the pavement, wait to enter  
the Nightclub, one of many along the strip.

INT. NIGHT CLUB #1 - NIGHT

Crowded dance floor - young CLUBBERS, loud Dance Music.

Maria, socially awkward, holds a small black clutch bag as  
she dances with BFF Tiffany.

They are approached by a YOUNG MALE, twenty if he's lucky, no  
class nor style. Off his face.

He grinds his groin against Maria's buttocks.

YOUNG MALE  
Fancy a slow hand, sweetie? Or is  
fast and furious more your style?

Maria shuffles away from him, uneasy.

Tiffany intervenes, shoves him away.

TIFFANY

Creep.

The Male puffs his chest out.

Tiffany chews her gum in his face. She appears an inch or two taller than him.

He tries hard to save face as he slinks away and joins a group of PALS.

They all leer at the fragile Maria.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Should be locked up.

Tiffany grabs Maria's hand, drags her away from the scene.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Let's go. Won't be riding with Space-ex tonight.

EXT. PRISON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Hyde, forlorn, now with full-on beard, sports duffel bag in hand, walks from the Admin Building, makes his way along the long driveway, past a parking lot, toward ...

EXT. BUSY FOUR-LANE - DAY

A grubby, working-class suburb.

Hyde in jeans and op shop bomber jacket, lingers a few paces behind other disaffected passengers waiting at a Bus Stop.

EXT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Hyde, apprehensive, duffel bag in hand, gently taps the knocker on the front door of the well-kept house in the leafy middle-class suburb.

The door is opened by JOSIE (30s), trim and healthy, dressed in yoga pants, trainers.

She presents well, although her face suggests a few bad years as well as good.

Not overly excited to see Hyde, she ushers him inside anyway.

INT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

HALLWAY

Josie takes Hyde's duffel bag.

JOSIE  
 Forgot it was today. Should've  
 phoned me. Could've picked you up.

HYDE  
 Didn't want to put you out.

JOSIE  
 No?

HYDE  
 (fawns, reaches for bag)  
 Forget it. I'll --

Josie dismisses the appeal and heads along the Hallway.

Hyde follows like a petulant child to a ...

SPARE ROOM

Very little in the way of furniture.

Josie tosses the duffel bag on a small bed - not much bigger  
 than a child's cot.

She picks up a cardboard archive box, places it on top of a  
 file cabinet in one corner by the sash window, opens the  
 white plantation shutters to lighten the room.

HYDE (CONT'D)  
 One cell to another.

JOSIE  
 You got the run of the house.

HYDE  
 There's that, I suppose.

Hyde flops his buttocks on the bed. It creaks even with his  
 light frame.

JOSIE  
 Except you know where.

Hyde nods, understood.

She assesses his scrawny beard.

JOSIE (CONT'D)  
Not a good look, Tommy.

He shrugs indifference.

PRE-LAP:

The WHISTLE of an electric kettle fades in the background.

INT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

CHILD'S BEDROOM

Hyde stares through the doorway to the neat and tidy bedroom, peers in at two small beds, small rocking horse in a corner. A small computer sits atop a study desk.

Josie sidles up with two cups of coffee. Hands one to Hyde, pulls the door closed. A deliberate act.

A pained look comes over Hyde.

He holds up a hand, as much in defense as in acceptance.

JOSIE  
Any way, they're with Allan and Raynie. Thought it best.

Silence.

They move into ...

LOUNGE ROOM

Josie sinks into a modular sofa, leaves Hyde standing.

JOSIE (CONT'D)  
So how long this time?

HYDE  
I'm not going back.  
(off her cynical look)  
I'm not.

JOSIE  
Toe the line and you won't.



EXT. POPULAR STRIP - NIGHTCLUB #2 - NIGHT

Late night revelers on the busy strip. Autos cruising.

Hyde wanders aimlessly along the sidewalk, sidesteps the usual suspects looking to score whatever, drugs, flesh, aggro.

He passes the entrance to the club, assesses the queue.

Nothing for him here. He strolls along, disinterested.

EXT. SLEEZY CITY LANEWAY - NIGHT

A group of THUGS linger near a stainless steel public toilet kiosk covered with graffiti, watch proceedings.

Hyde approaches and chats up a TEENAGE MALE.

After the briefest conversation, the teenager wanders off through the gross nightlife crowd, leaves Hyde despondent.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Alone, on his back and worse for wear, Hyde stirs, picks himself up from the damp grass, rubs the back of his neck.

He searches his pockets - empty, shakes his head in self-pity.

He wanders across an open playing field, high-rises in the distance, comes to the perimeter of bushes and tall trees.

He skirts the copse, checks under the canopy of a drooping tree - it's vacant.

EXT. PARK - DAY (SUNRISE)

The rising sun peeks in, light penetrates through the leaves of an old tree, its branches drooped low to touch the ground.

The light irritates Hyde's eyes. He stirs in what is a makeshift, but comfortable enough cubby space. He unabashedly takes a piss where he stands.

EXT/INT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A Volkswagen Golf enters the driveway lined with manicured rose bushes, pulls to a halt alongside the house.

Josie exits, lifts the hatch, removes a couple shopping bags, lugs them to the stoop ...

... where she encounters Hyde nestled behind a huge potted plant that shields the view from the street.

He stirs, a sorry sight.

JOSIE

Up to your old tricks?

HYDE

I ran out of money. Couldn't get a cab that would take me on credit.

She deposits the shopping bags on the stoop, brushes past him, opens the door.

JOSIE

And the key I gave you?

He shrugs, cowers before her.

She gives a pitiful shake of her head, unlocks the front door, picks up one of the bags, enters the house.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

Looked at yourself lately?

He takes the hint, takes the other bag inside, vigorously scratches the full-on growth on his face.

INT. SLEEZE HOTEL - NIGHT

Hyde, now clean-shaven, meanders aimlessly among the CROWD of mostly deadbeats.

He ambles up to a body with generous black locks and a nice ass, propped up at the bar, chatting with a painted-up WOMAN.

He gathers courage, pinches the nice ass.

Ruebens turns around, pleased and aggro at the same time.

RUEBENS

Cunt.

(registers Hyde)

Fuck me. The gardening guru. You're out?

Hyde loosens a little, pleased that he's been acknowledged.

HYDE

Period. What about you? Still on parole?

RUEBENS

Yeah. Another month.

The Painted Woman stiffens at the word 'parole'.

HYDE

In other words, you shouldn't be here.

Ruebens gives the Painted Woman a leery glance.

RUEBENS

Why not? Need a balanced diet. You know what they say. Can't live on just bread alone.

The Painted Woman steps back from the bar.

PAINTED WOMAN

Gotta go to the ladies.

Ruebens leers after her.

She joins a few bodies of indeterminate gender heading toward a REST ROOM sign.

He calls after her ...

RUEBENS

In a woman, out a man.

He gives Hyde serious scrutiny.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

You look like you could do with a bit more than plain ol' bread.

He holds up a set of car keys, impresses Hyde.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Let's go.

EXT/INT. POPULAR STRIP - CAR TRAVELING - NIGHT

Busy with late night revelers. Autos cruise the strip.

Hyde rides shotgun to Ruebens driving a 2010 silver-gray Chevrolet Impala.