

"DON'T WAKE THE BABY"

Written by

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EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. DAY.

We pan across a row of near-identical triple brick houses, painted cream and pastel. There are autumnal leaves on the footpath and post-war jazz on the radio --

-- then stop by the passenger window of a Mainline Ford. In the front seat, a MAN in a fedora (we don't see his face) reads a newspaper and chews on a toothpick.

INT. CAR. DAY.

CLOSE ON the newspaper's front page: "IS THIS THE SUBURBAN SLASHER?". And in smaller type: "THIRD VICTIM FOUND". Below that is a rough sketch of a man in (you guessed it) a fedora.

The paper closes, revealing the face behind it, who we'll call JACK (37), in exactly the same pose as the sketch.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. DAY.

Jack opens the newspaper again, peering over the top as commuters come out of their houses, holding their briefcases or pushing prams.

There's one exception: a haunted young woman, ALICE (28), peering furtively from the dilapidated house directly across the street from Jack's car. She doesn't see him.

Alice steps back into darkness, pulling the curtain closed.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Jack waits for the road to clear and puts down his newspaper.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. DAY.

He steps out from the driver seat and flicks his toothpick away, leaning in to the back passenger window to fetch a leather sample bag, then crossing the street to the --

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. DAY.

Jack skips down the path, and stopping at the front door, adjusts his hat.

He knocks in time with the music, which stops abruptly.

EXT. / INT. HALLWAY. DAY.

From inside, the front door opens a crack, revealing Jack wearing the warmest, most practiced smile you've ever seen.

ALICE

Hello?

She smiles back, a touch shy and checking over her shoulder.

It's unclear whether she's scared of Jack or just generally of a nervous disposition, but the door stays mostly closed.

JACK

Good evening, madam.

(tips hat)

Jack Dorsey, Door-to-Dorsey, they call me. May I come in?

ALICE

I'm sorry, I just put down the baby and --

JACK

I won't take a moment of your time, Mrs. Galvin.

ALICE

It's Miss, actually. How did you --

JACK

I apologise, Miss Galvin. There's no Mr. Galvin?

WOMAN

No. It's just me and ... the baby.

JACK

Well, I'm not here to judge, Miss Galvin. Can I call you Alice?

ALICE

I --

JACK

I'm not here to judge, Alice.

(beat)

I'm here to help. May I?

He smiles even wider, pushing his way gently (firmly) inside.

INT. HALLWAY. DAY.

The interior is tidy but something is off. There is a lot of dust. The furniture is old and worn.

ALICE
I'm sorry, who are you?

Jack clears his throat.

JACK
(booming)
Let me begin by --

ALICE
Please!

Looking nervously at the clock, She ushers him in to the --

INT. FRONT ROOM. DAY.

The furniture fits the period. There is a small couch and armchair (both with doilies) and a coffee table. No TV, but there is a wireless. Lace curtains dampen the sunlight.

Jack gestures and Alice sits on the couch. He stands.

ALICE
The baby is sleeping.

Jack nods in apology and begins his pitch again. Quietly.

JACK
Let me begin by saying I make it my business to get to know potential customers before I meet them. I've serviced a number of your neighbours and your name came up more than once.
(beat)
Everyone who knows about you is worried about you, Alice. All alone with the baby, the two of you shut away.

ALICE
(peevd)
Well, now. I'm sure that's terribly nice of them, but --

JACK
Why, anything could happen to you, and who would even know?

Alice swallows and looks nervously at the doorway.

JACK (CONT'D)

So I thought: what this Alice gal needs is to feel fresh and pretty and wanted. And if the lady won't come to the shops, why not bring the shops ...

Jack flicks his sample bag around, extending four telescoping legs. He opens the case, lid concealing its contents and holds out a pretty dress.

JACK (CONT'D)

... to the lady?

She's tempted. But flicks her attention back to the hallway.

ALICE

Well, I suppose I could ...

(beat)

I mean, the baby won't ...

(beat)

Will this take long? I just put ...

JACK

... the baby down. I know. And don't worry. I'll be very quick.

Jack positions a long curved knife behind the lid of his sample case. Alice doesn't see it.

JACK (CONT'D)

And very quiet.

She sits back, relieved. A small smile.

ALICE

Okay.

JACK

Attagirl.

CLOSE ON Jack as he gives his sales pitch. As he mentions an item, he brings it out of his apparently bottomless case.

JACK (CONT'D)

We at Suburban Sales provide retail goods at wholesale prices.

Kitchenware. Underwear. Things to cut a smile from ear to ear.

(beat)

Tell me, Alice, does this carpet

stain easily?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

A swirl of plastic as Jack whips a large sheet of plastic flat on to the floor. Alice is amazed, although gestures that it's a little loud.

JACK

This, Alice is miracle polyethelene. It is waterproof, messproof, yet totally see-through.

ALICE

Gosh.

JACK

An impermeable barrier that'll keep your carpet spotless and prevent any unsightly marks. Why, they're making bags out of the stuff.

It's true. He has one, holding an orange. He jiggles it.

Jack takes the orange out of the bag and cuts it with the curved knife. It's a blood orange, and red liquid seeps out on to the carpet.

ALICE

(concerned)

Oh!

JACK

Don't worry, Alice. Look! Wipes right off.

He demonstrates. Alice is still skeptical.

JACK (CONT'D)

And when you're done you can crumple the thing up and throw the whole mess away. It's cheaper than linen.

He walks on it. Tromp. Trromp.

Alice shushes him. He tromps a bit more.

ALICE

Please! It's remarkable, I'll grant you that. But it's also so noisy and I don't want to wake the baby.

Jack nods.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

CLOSE ON Jack's hands as he winds a pair of nylon stockings around them, like a garrotte, and pulls them tight.

JACK

I call these Smilin' Nylons. They won't stretch, they won't ladder, and yet ...

Jack lets them hang loose and uses them like a skipping rope. Each time he jumps, it makes a loud thud.

JACK (CONT'D)

They're as flexible as a skipping rope.

ALICE

Mr. Dorsey! Mr. Dorsey!

Jack stops.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Please, Mr. Dorsey. I don't need any stockings or a skipping rope. And please try to be quiet. I don't want to wake the baby.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

BZZZZZ! Jack is wearing an apron and hockey mask, wielding a electric carving knife.

JACK

(shouting over the knife)
How many times has this happened to you?

ALICE

Stop! Stop! Stop!

The electric knife whirs to a stop. Jack flicks up the mask.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Mr. Dorsey, I do appreciate everything you've shown me. But I'm simply not interested.

JACK
Alice!

ALICE
Good day Mr. Dorsey.

She gestures out of the kitchen.

Beat.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Mr. Dorsey, please leave.
(beat)
This was a mistake. The baby --

JACK
No.

Alice raises an eyebrow.

JACK (CONT'D)
No! I have never failed to make a sale, and I'm not going to start today.

Jack upends his sales kit, sending his samples tumbling out with an almighty CRASH.

ALICE
What are you doing?

JACK
Neckties! Everyone needs neckties!

With a deft twist of the arm, he loops the tie around her arm and the other end around the doorknob. She's stuck.

ALICE
Please!

He picks up two wicked looking carving knives and runs them together, as if sharpening them.

JACK
Carving knives! Sharp enough to cut through bone and guaranteed to last longer than you do.

He advances menacingly. Alice is distraught.

ALICE
(stammering)
No, no. You can't do this.

JACK
I gave you a chance, Alice. I give you all a chance. But you didn't want to take it. Oh, no.

ALICE
You're making so much noise. You're going to ... you're going to wake ...

JACK
(hysterical)
I know! I'm going to wake the baby. Well, let him wake. Let him cry. Let him call out, alone, while his mother dies. Don't you know who I am, Alice? I'm the Suburban Slasher! The mail-slot murderer!

A shadow flits behind him.

JACK (CONT'D)
I am the discount pedlar of death. And you, madam, are going in my sales kit because --

CLOSE ON Jack's head and shoulders. Behind him is SOMETHING, but we can't see it clearly.

JACK (CONT'D)
I ... am ... Jack D--

Jack freezes. It is darker in here now, and Jack's breath is visible in front of his face.

He looks down. There is a sharp talon or blade (it's unclear) sticking out from the side of his belly, the blood spreading through his shirt.

ALICE
(genuinely irritated)
Well, shit.

Looking back at Alice, Jack trembles as a five long, taloned fingers curl around the edges of his head.

CLOSE ON two grey withered lips in Jack's ear. The thing's voice is dark and wet, but also infantile.

THE SOMETHING

Hello Jack.
(beat)
I'm the baby.

His eyes widen in horror.

We never clearly see what has him, but we see Jack pulled backwards, his arms outstretched, leaving the knives to clatter to the floor.

INT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

Jack is dragged into the corridor, slamming against one wall and on to one sideboard, then the other.

We never quite see the creature, but it seems to be very big, grey and hairy.

Jack screams as the thing tries to drag him around a corner, into a room. He manages to hold on to a doorframe for a moment, but is dragged inside.

The door slams shut. Hanging from it is an old-fashioned decorative sign that says 'Nursery'.

We hear crashing and banging, Jack screaming and a tinkling glockenspiel playing Brahm's lullaby.

INT. NURSERY. NIGHT.

The music continues as we float through a nursery decorated with period paraphernalia, dominated by a single old-fashioned basinet.

Alice gently rocks the basinet and hums along.

Pushing in to the basinet reveals that the baby is Jack, his adult-sized head and hands on a tiny doll's body. He sucks his thumb and looks around in terror.

CUT TO BLACK.