

THE ROUTINE

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

SFX: ALARM CLOCK

FADE IN:

INT. HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

A modest place.

CARL CONNORS (36) shuts off the alarm.

INT. HOME - BEDROOM - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The shower runs. Carl HUMS.

INT. HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Carl comes downstairs, dressed for work.

There is a pot of coffee ready for him.

CARL

Yum.

He picks up his briefcase with a smile, pats it twice.

CARL (CONT'D)

Today's the day.

He leaves with his briefcase and travel mug.

EXT. ROADWAY - MORNING

Traffic. Carl drives, looks at his watch.

EXT. DRIVE-THRU - LATER

Carl orders his usual.

CARL

Yeah, I'll have a sausage and egg
on English muffin.

(no reply)

Thanks.

AT THE WINDOW

CASHIER (20s) hands his card back. Then the small bag.

CASHIER
Here you go.
(beat)
Hey, don't I know you?

Carl chuckles.

CARL
I would hope so. Every morning for
the last... as long as I can
remember.

She shrugs.

CASHIER
Have a nice day.

Carl's smile lingers.

CARL
You too.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

SFX: ELEVATOR DING!

Carl heads for the office, juggles briefcase, travel mug, and
breakfast sandwich, smiling and humming, even as he chews.

SFX: LOW OMINOUS HUM

Carl sees his office. Something's off.

His sunshine expression deflates, tilts his head.

He looks behind him, then back.

CARL
Huh?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Carl stands with his nose to the glass.

INSIDE

Cardboard boxes. Dust. No people.

And then a BOOMING voice.

SECURITY GUARD
Can I help you?

Carl recoils.

SECURITY GUARD (30ish), huge, scary.

CARL

Oh! My God you scared the crap out
of me.

Security Guard just stares, waiting for an answer.

CARL (CONT'D)

No. Uh. My office. What is---

SECURITY GUARD

That's not your office.

CARL

Whah... Huh? Of course it is.

SECURITY GUARD

That space has been empty like that
for a long time.

Carl chuckles.

CARL

Yeah, right. I was here yesterday.

Silence.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm going to need you to leave,
sir.

Carl drops his breakfast sandwich.

He clocks the Security Guard.

Carl picks it up, no trash can, carries it out, followed by
the big guy.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Carl is escorted to the curb. Door closes behind him.
Security Guard looms behind the glass.

CARL

(to himself)
Fuckin' hell.

Carl sees a trash can on the corner, heads there.

EXT. STREET CORNER - CONTINUOUS

Carl dumps the sandwich and the wrapper, brushes off his front.

He looks to the parking space where he parked, now empty, and loses it.

CARL
(agitated)
Oh, COME ON!

Looks down. Yellow curb.

CARL (CONT'D)
What!

Panic slowly building, he pulls his cell phone, dials.

SFX: ONE RING

CARL (CONT'D)
Honey. Honey.

SFX: DO DO DOO

VERIZON
We're sorry. The number you've
dialed is not in service.

SFX: HEARTBEAT

Carl's face goes still and pale, his expression - shock.

CARL
What the fuck.

Carl reaches for his chest, wobbles a bit.

He pulls his phone, Uber, destination: Home.

CARL (CONT'D)
That's enough of that.

INT. UBER CAR - LATER

DRIVER (30s), looks in the rearview at Carl.

From the Driver's perspective, Carl looks worn out.

DRIVER
Tough morning?

CARL
What? Oh. Yeah, you could say that.

EXT. HOME - LATER

The Uber Driver pulls away.

Carl pulls his keys, JINGLES them.

CARL
Come on. Come on.

Sticks the key in the lock... doesn't go, tries again.

CARL (CONT'D)
What?

Tries again, irritated.

CARL (CONT'D)
Oh, MAN! What is happening!

Just then, the door opens.

CARL (CONT'D)
Oh, thank God.

STRANGER (50s) stands facing Carl.

CARL (CONT'D)
Who the HELL are you?

STRANGER
Can I help you?

CARL
Yeah! You can get the hell out of
my house!

A second passes.

STRANGER
This is not your house.

CARL
(frustrated)
Fuck You! This IS my house.

STRANGER
Back up and walk away, sir... or
I'll have to call the cops.

CARL
PLEASE! Do that! Yes.

The door closes.

Carl walks away.

EXT. COFFESHOP - LATER

Carl walks up.

The exiting OLDER MAN (60s) clumsy.

OLDER MAN
Oh. Oh. Sorry about---

Carl dismisses.

CARL
Yeah. No worries.

INT. COFFEESHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Carl sits with his arms crosses, coffee untouched.

He starts to mumble.

CARL
My alarm clock. Coffee was already
made. Sandwich.
(beat)
Cardboard boxes?

He sips the hot coffee, burns his lip.

CARL (CONT'D)
Oh! Damn it!

He looks around. No one.

No cashier. No customers.

His eyes shift.

SFX: POLICE RADIO TRANSMISSION CLICK

POLICE RADIO (V.O.)
Suspect last seen entering Joe's
Coffeehouse.

Carl sees the cup he's drinking from. Joe's Coffeehouse.

POLICE RADIO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Suspect possible Armed and
Dangerous.

CARL
Holy Shit.

He slides down under the table.

INT. COFFEESHOP - CONTINUOUS

Immediately across the aisle, cowering under her own table, a
MOTHER (40s) trembles.

Carl's gaze startles her.

MOTHER
Please.

Carl reaches out and talks.

CARL
You need my---

She SCREAMS!

Carl FREAKS, out from under the table, backroom, and out the
back door, and doesn't stop.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

Carl runs, looks back.

Police cars surround the Joe's Coffeehouse.

CARL
Oh shit.

Carl picks up his speed.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Carl hides behind a row of bushes, breathing heavily.

SFX: POLICE SIRENS

THREE COP CARS roll down the cross-street and out of site.

Carl just shakes his head.

A HOMEOWNER on the porch.

HOMEOWNER

Hey!

Carl panics and runs.

EXT. FREEWAY UNDERPASS - NIGHT

Carl clings to his briefcase.

He looks tattered and worn, rocks back and forth.

His eyes fall heavy from the exhaustive running.

His neck lets go, head falls softly.

Carl sleeps.

EXT. FREEWAY UNDERPASS - MORNING

Carl's face is lit with the morning sun. It wakes him.

He looks at his briefcase, his surroundings.

He shakes his head, disappointed.

CARL

Not a dream.

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

Carl looks up at the tall building. DRAKE & WARNER, LLP.

He enters through the spinning doors.

INT. LAW OFFICES - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Carl enters cautiously.

The RECEPTIONIST clocks him and immediately dials a number.

RECEPTIONIST

I need you up here. Now.

Carl looks around, relieved.

CARL

(to himself)

The same.

She turns it on. Smiles.

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning.

CARL
Morning. I need to see---

RECEPTIONIST
I just called him. He's on his way up.

Silence.

Carl continues to looks around.

He checks every detail.

JUDE JENNIGS (40s) approaches briskly.

JUDE
(to receptionist)
Thank you.

Receptionist sits back down in her chair, low.

Jude speaks to Carl in hushed tones.

JUDE (CONT'D)
What... are you doing here?

Carl is bewildered.

CARL
Because I need my fucking lawyer!
Isn't that obvious?

JUDE
Okay. Okay. Calm down.

CARL
Something's going on. Everything's
changed. I---

JUDE
I can't do that thing... I can't do
that thing for you anymore.

Carl is confused.

CARL
What thing? I'm in trouble here.

JUDE
I know. I know. But hiding you last
time... almost cost me my career.

Carl's mouth drops open.

CARL
Last time?

JUDE
Now, I am under a mandate. I have
to call the police.
(beat)
I'm telling you that as a courtesy
to give you a head start.

CARL
This has---

JUDE
Leave now.

Jude turns to the Receptionist.

JUDE (CONT'D)
Make the call.

When he turns back, Carl is already heading out the door.

JUDE (CONT'D)
Frank!

But he's gone.

Jude rubs his temples, turns back to the Receptionist.

JUDE (CONT'D)
Poor bastard.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Frank comes SMASHING out of the front doors.

SIX COP CARS and TWELVE COPS encircle him, guns drawn.

BULLHORN
There's no where to run, Frank.

CARL
Who is Frank? I AM NOT FRANK!

Carl trembles, clinging to his brief case. He whimpers.

CARL (CONT'D)
What do you want from me?

Carl sees the intensity in their eyes.

BULLHORN

Put the briefcase on the ground
slowly and lie face down, hands
behind your head.

Carl whimpers again, but slowly complies.

His knees buckle and slowly bend

His body drags against the glass door.

CLUMP! He falls.

They rush him.

His face is held to the ground, his mouth contorted.

CARL

I'm not Frank Fisk.

(whimper)

I'm not Frank Fisk.

(whimper)

I'm not Frank Fisk.

A heavy in blue grabs him by the arm, hoists him up.

HEAVY COP

Frank Fisk, you are under arrest.
You have the right to remain
silent.

Carl sees them open his briefcase.

CARL

(belligerent)

No! No!

He cries.

HEAVY COP

Do you understa---

CARL

(enraged)

What's the charge!
WHAT'S THE CHARGE!

HEAVY COP

Murder.

A closer look at the opened briefcase reveals its contents:
one thing and one thing only, yesterday's newspaper.

INSERT NEWSPAPER

A picture of Carl and a headline.

TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY - FISK MURDERS

A picture of Fran Fisk and Damien Dalton (lover).

FRANK
(whimpers)
I'm not Frank Fisk.
(beat)
I'm not Frank Fisk.

His expression fades. Resigned.

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END