

ALL THIS DEATH

Written by

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Never Let Go of My Hand  
By; Kerry E. Wagner

FADE IN:

1 EXT. STREET - DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT 1

RAIN PUMMELS the pavement. THUNDER EMITS periodically throughout the entirety.

The white shoes of Big Eric intrudes frame. His arm rises.

BIG ERIC'S POV

Wrist watch. A flash of LIGHTNING ILLUMINATES the time. It displays 4:17 am.

Across the street a dark dilapidated house comes to life.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
I never liked this house. It  
started with my daddy, my  
grandfather, my younger brother and  
now her. She left it to me... all  
this death.

Glide across the street, to the walkway, then hover over a darkened area of the cement, then up the steps.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
Because of that spot right there.  
If I didn't have to realized or  
remember, I could be alright.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
My daddy was shot and left for dead  
there when I was 5. Well actually I  
was 4 when he was shot and 5 when  
he died.

Leer in through the living room window. CLICK! The sound of CAMERA SHUTTER.

2 MEMORY HIT - INT. MAMA DOROTHY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 2

A lightbulb's flicker overshadows a well-manicured modern/retro 70's decor. Antique like items spruce up. Scan past multiple framed photos; the first of the images to appear is Button. Then Button and his gangster like homies.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
See my daddy was what you called  
ruined. Spoiled rotten if you will.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
 Being the only child he got  
 everything he wanted basically. All  
 the drugs, well syrup. That's what  
 they were doing back then. He had  
 the money. Not his own, but when he  
 ran out of that, he went to get  
 more where that came from --

Rest on the picture of MAMA DOROTHY (60 yrs.) The God-fearing  
 matriarch.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
 -- My grandmother. She just  
 couldn't stand to tell him "no", I  
 guess? And that cost him his life,  
 and some of hers too.

THUNDER RUMBLES. The lightbulbs flicker becomes faint.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
 He was shot in the stomach. Then he  
 said they? Never saying who "they"  
 were. Drove him around and tried to  
 wait on him to bleed to death.

At this precise instance LIGHTNING STRIKES then BLACKOUT. The  
 sound of the RAIN SETTLES.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
 Well let me tell how I remember it.

3      FLASHBACK - EXT. QUAIN T HOUSE - NIGHT (1970)

3

A porch light comes on and the front door opens. Mama Dorothy  
 appears through the burglar bars. Her eyes roam patiently. A  
 light THUNDER GRUMBLES, uncertain she shuts herself in.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
 My grandmother didn't sleep well at  
 night, because both my dad and my  
 granddaddy would stay out all night  
 and not come home until the wee  
 hours of the morning.

4      INT. QUAIN T HOUSE - NIGHT

4

A lamp lights the backdrop.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Mama Dorothy's hand turns the key in the DOOR lock. CLICK.

The BOLT shoots through the crevice in the door and STICKS.

The old chair appears next to the lamp table. Mama Dorothy's bottom plops in.

Beneath the lamp on the end table Mama Dorothy's hand comes in. She removes a 1970's Jet magazine and a bible appears. She grabs the bible exposing a worn front page of an article. It reads "The death of Big Al at a dead end".

The lamp string hangs; Mama Dorothy's hand enters frame and pulls it.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
 She was more concerned if they  
 would even make it home at all.  
 That's why whenever I was over, I  
 slept in the bed with my  
 grandmother.

It goes DARK. The sound of Mama Dorothy's FOOTSTEPS FADE.

5 INT. QUAIN T HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT (HOURS LATER) 5

The lamp lights the hall but not the bedroom. An anxious Mama Dorothy gets out of bed, dons her robe off the door and comes past. An awkward silence looms.

The sudden sounds of TAPS come from the bedroom WINDOW. Ease in on the bedroom.

6 INT. MAMA DOROTHY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 6

LIGHTNING PERMEATES the silhouette of a MALE figure in a yellow raincoat outside the window.

On the bed, the covers snatch over a subject. Trembles develop.

BUTTON (O.S.)  
 (hush tone)  
 Mama -- mama -- lemme' in.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
 Mind you I don't ever recall seeing  
 my father in person before. So this  
 shadow and whisper is the only  
 recollection to this point I would  
 have of him alive. Then it happened  
 again --

BAP! BAP! BAP! HARD KNOCKS on the window in quick successions!

BUTTON (O.S.)  
Mama! Lemme in.

LIL ERIC (4) A real little rascal. Raises hell all during the day but scared as hell in the night, eases from under the cover then sits up. Fear evolves in his brows.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)  
As scared as I was, I wanted to see him so bad I got the courage to get up because I got some new shoes like his, just to wear for him.

A pair of white shoes appear against the wall next to the entrance when Lil Eric zips into view. He glances at the window, slips his feet into the white shoes.

He checks out the window again.

The Male Figure vanishes.

Lil Eric's jaw drops, he dashes out.

7

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

7

FAUCET RUNS. Mama Dorothy's hands rinse beneath the water.

Lil Eric runs in and yanks on the end Mama Dorothy's robe, he eyes up.

Mama Dorothy eyes down. Lil Eric's white shoes stand out.

LIL ERIC  
(points behind)  
Mama Dorothy, my daddy say let he in!

Mama Dorothy turns handle on the faucet. WATER OFF. She towel dries her hands and lifts him eye level.

MAMA DOROTHY  
You and them shoes. Let he in?  
(kiss)  
You so precious. Now why would yo' Daddy need me to, "let - he - in", when he got a key?

She puts him down and at this precise moment, THUNDER UPSURGES. Lil Eric flinches and cringes her leg. His eyes dart about behind him.

LIL ERIC'S POV

The morbid feel of the living room stretches.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

I had just got them shoes, just to wear for my daddy. Who I assumed after that, would just come in the door. However my grandmother kept it like a mortuary 'round there with all that fancy ass funeral home furniture -- that's what I called it. So, I was glued to her ass after that. I wasn't about to go back in that bedroom by my lil' 4-year-old bad self. She was gon' have to come in that room wit'me.

BACK TO SCENE

Mama Dorothy's eye line follows Lil Eric's.

MAMA DOROTHY'S POV

Rain showers and distorts the view out the living room's front window.

BACK TO SCENE

Mama Dorothy secures Lil Eric's hand, flips the light switch as they head into the hallway. It goes DARK.

8 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

8

Mama Dorothy and Lil Eric come down the hallway and just as they reach the entrance -- TAP! TAP! KNOCKS on WINDOW. Beady eyed they stop in their tracks. PAWING sounds filter in from the window SCREEN.

Mama Dorothy holds Lil Eric back but eases forward, then moves in when she recognizes the voice.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

This time a scratching sound. Like a cat that wants to alert its owner it wants to get in. Then again --

BUTTON (O.S.)

(faint whisper)  
-- Mama lemme' in, lemme in.

MAMA DOROTHY

Button? Button -- is that you?

Lil Eric peeks around but his view momentarily obscured as Mama Dorothy quick paces back out to the hallway.

Lil Eric's now left alone. His eyes transfix in the direction of the window.

9

EXT. QUAIN T HOUSE - NIGHT

9

The front door opens and Mama Dorothy emerges. Not long after Lil Eric scoots in.

Lil Eric's fingers clinch into her robe.

Framed in the doorway they both stare out.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

Before he could answer good she was at the front do' and I was right there beside her.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

Though I was scared. I was ecstatic about getting the chance to tell my mama and my lil' sister, that I saw my daddy in person... for the first time. This was going to be my defining moment.

A suspicious old school styled car speeds past.

Mama Dorothy's eyes follow the car down the block. Like a mirage the plates disappear into the darkness.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

I didn't know who it was but I knew it felt strange.

Mama Dorothy guides Lil Eric to back in. Behold the prominent jitter of her hand as she closes the burglar bars, then the door shuts in our face.

10

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

10

Mama Dorothy pulls the string on the night lamp. It goes dark, intercut with BRRING! Rotary dial house PHONE RINGS.

MAMA DOROTHY (INTO PHONE)

Hello.

(pause)

(MORE)

MAMA DOROTHY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Earlier.

(pause)

Well the same here. Somebody was at the window.

(pause)

I thought it might be him. But when I went to let him in. I didn't see him.

(pause)

Whatcu' say -- That might've been the same car we seen.

(pause)

Okay, I'll keep you posted.

(pause)

Hah -- everywhere I'm at --

(eyes Eric fiddling)

-- wit dem shoes child.

(pause)

Naw, I didn't have the nerve to tell it's because the picture is in black and white.

(chuckles)

Okay well keep an eye out. We locked up in here. One of'em should be here directly.

She places the phone on the hook. The sound of the LAMP STRING CLICKS. Light develops. Mama Dorothy pulls the Bible from the nightstand, kneels and opens it. She peeps up at Lil Eric.

Lil Eric closes eyes.

Mama Dorothy bows her head.

Lil Eric re-opens one eye, then the room drowns in silence.

Mama Dorothy appears to pray. Her mouth moves here yet there's no volume from her.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

My grandmother had a remedy for situations like this -- pray. Once she discussed things with God... everything was gon' be alright; to her anyway.

Bible shuts. VOLUME WARPS in.

Mama Dorothy places the Bible on the nightstand. The time on the clock shows "11:47 pm."

Her hand pulls the lamp string. Lights OFF.



11 INT. QUAIN T HOUSE - NIGHT 11

Ghostly floats the square footage past mementos.

12 INT. MAMA DOROTHY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 12

Dark. The clock's time registers, "4:17 am." The sound of a car DOOR SHUTS!

Mama Dorothy's eyes buck open. With a sense of urgency, she waddles out of bed to the door.

MAMA DOROTHY  
There he is!  
(dons robe)  
Stay there Eric.

Eric raises up in the bed and views Mama Dorothy down the hall until she turns out of sight.

Lil Eric's eyes gingerly peel in the direction of the window. Mama Dorothy's voice filters in.

MAMA DOROTHY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
We gon' surprise him when he see  
you in my bed.

13 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 13

Across the street the front door of the quaint house door opens, and Mama Dorothy comes forth.

VROOM! The same suspicious SPORTS CAR RACES pass.

14 EXT. QUAIN T HOUSE PORCH - NIGHT 14

Mama Dorothy's eyes travel with the suspicious sports car. She hurries to pull the door shut when it pauses --- the door re-opens.

15 INT. QUAIN T HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 15

Mama Dorothy's ear appears. She listens. A faint whisper chimes.

BUTTON (O.C.)  
(injured)  
Mama -- mama I'm down here.

MAMA DOROTHY  
 Butt'n -- Button?

BUTTON (O.C.)  
 Here mama. Down here.

Mama Dorothy steps out. The sounds of indistinct MURMURS  
 ASCEND from below.

16 EXT. QUAIN T HOUSE - NIGHT

16

Mama Dorothy traverse the steps to the walkway.

BUTTON'S POV

Mama Dorothy creeps towards the shrubs when, her hands throw  
 over her mouth.

MAMA DOROTHY  
 (deep gasp)  
 Ahhhh.

BACK TO SCENE

MAMA DOROTHY'S POV

Button's face obscure, in a yellow raincoat and white shoes.  
 His hands cover his abdomen area soaked in blood.

BACK TO SCENE

Mama Dorothy turns to rush in but freezes in her tracks. She  
 clasps her chest.

MAMA DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
 (gasp)  
 Ahh!

Lil Eric in the doorway, witnesses.

17 INT. QUAIN T HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

17

Mama Dorothy rushes in past Lil Eric.

Lil Eric eavesdrops on the indistinct murmurs.

Mama Dorothy intrudes frame and dumps a sheet on Lil Eric's  
 head. INTERCUTS WITH:

18 EXT. QUAIN T HOUSE - NIGHT 18

In the doorway Lil Eric uncovers his head. He notices Button's white shoes.

In the driveway Mama Dorothy lumbers with Button into her car.

She races back up the walkway.

19 INT. QUAIN T HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 19

SERIES OF SHOTS

Lil Eric's eyes widen.

The blood stain on Mama Dorothy's robe comes into focus.

Mama Dorothy yanks Lil Eric out of the frame by his arm.

Mama Dorothy drags Lil Eric down the walkway to her car.

20 INT. MAMA DOROTHY'S CAR - NIGHT 20

In the front seat, Mama Dorothy nestles Lil Eric into the sheet. His feet dangles and his white shoes become apparent.

Mama Dorothy races past the front window to shut the house down, the sound of BUTTON'S MURMURS surface.

Lil Eric's face falls. The noise around dissipates and only the sound of the narrator fixes.

Lil Eric's far away gaze deepens.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

Without me ever getting that world  
famous glimpse of my daddy, I sat  
my 4 year old butt in the front  
seat -- I listened to my daddy moan  
and murmur --

BUTTON (V.O.)

-- I'm gon' geddem' , I'm  
gon' geddem'.

The sound of the driver's side DOOR OPENS when she enters,  
the sound emerges.

21 EXT. MAMA DOROTHY'S CAR - DRIVER'S SIDE - NIGHT 21

Lil Eric snaps out it and eyes over. His eyes come in as Mama Dorothy SLAMS the DOOR.

22 EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY 22

Sunny day. Button's tombstone drifts in.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

Six weeks later he was dead from a secondary condition from the bullet wound. He had gone into a coma. But befo' he went, all he would say to anyone was --

BUTTON (V.O.)

I'm gon' gedd'em -- I'm gon' gedd'em.

BIG ERIC (V.O.)

(pregnant pause)

He never did. My grandmother was there Jan 9th, 1971, when he took his last breath. He died holding her hand... and she ain't never let go.

Overview of Lil Eric in his white shoes, hand in hand with Mama Dorothy. Dark clouds introduce. The THUNDER MURMURS.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

23 EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - YARD - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAWN 23

Rain pours over Big Eric in a yellow raincoat and white shoes on the lawn. Big Eric leaves frame and the for sale sign in Mama Dorothy's yard becomes prominent.

An overview of Big Eric travels up the sidewalk creating distance between him and his old house... for good.

The rain lets up.

FADE OUT.

THE END