

A Swing And A Miss

By

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EXT. SCARY CONEY ISLAND ON THE WEST SIDE OF DETROIT - NIGHT

Through the kitchen window, a cook is seen making Coney Dogs.

In the reflection of the dining room window, a beat up car is seen parking. A man dressed in slacks, a sport coat, and thick framed glasses, gets out of the car.

A zoom in on his face reveals he just crawled out from the losing end of a fist fight.

Roger pushes tissues into his busted nose. This is ROGER.

He does a rather painful looking shuffle through the front door, into the light of the restaurant.

Roger takes a seat at the counter.

The cook brings over a cup of coffee, Coney Dog. They seem to know each other.

The voice of an old rich man chimes in. This is FREDERICK GRANT.

INT. BOXING GYM - DAY

Roger walks in and stands near the entrance.

FREDERICK is in the ring, sitting on the ropes.

FREDERICK(V.O.)
Wife, kids, wise investments... I'd
piss it all away for her.

A boxer is working on his footwork behind him.

Frederick motions for Roger to come closer. Roger moves around, inspecting things, but getting closer until Frederick can hand Roger a picture.

C/U: ROGER POV: POLAROID PHOTO: FREDERICK AND HIS BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WIFE, VERONICA, SITTING IN A CONVERTIBLE MERCEDES.

Roger looks closely at the picture, and turns his back to look around at the posters of famous boxers from the history of the gym.

FREDERICK(V.O.)
Best way to describe my baby, was
to beautiful to live. Every time
she stepped outside, hell even in
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FREDERICK(V.O.) (cont'd)
front of a window, some creep got
hooked. But a few months ago, this
one guy, showed up, and kept
showing up--

Roger gets intrigued and sits down on one of those stools a
fighter sits on between rounds.

Now Phil stands up, starts to walk around. The old man
suddenly seems seven feet tall.

FREDERICK
Of course, I tell him to leave.
This is my wife I say. I even ask
nicely. The first two times. The
third time, I came after him with a
pipe. Very strange man. Long, lanky
limbs, pale, sickly skin.

Now Frederick is directly over Roger.

FREDERICK
Now, she is gone.

ROGER
This is all creepy, but
interesting! But personal cases are
not my thing.

Roger stands to leave.

FREDERICK
I'm sorry. Please forgive me... I
must sound crazy. Love makes you
crazy. And I do love my wife. More
than anything. And the thought of
her. Maybe tied up. In some dark
place. With that... Man. Doing...
Things.

Roger seems to be getting worried about the woman in the
photograph now to.

Roger takes a step close. Frederick holds out his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Roger drives, keeps checking his mirrors, seems a Crown Victoria is following him.

INT. APARTMENT FOYER - SOON AFTER

ROGER POV: RAQUEL MARGUEZ: APT 9.

Roger flips a notebook open. The name matches. He rings the apartment. No answer. He rings it again for a long time. No answer. Then he proceeds to ring the bells of every other tenant. Finally an old woman buzzes back.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Roger takes the stairs to the top floor. On the way, he puts on surgical gloves. He walks down the narrow hallway to APT. 9. He is going to pick the lock, but then sees someone else already broken in, more crudely.

INT. RAQUEL'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Roger finds a record player, puts on an album, turns the volume up. Then he starts rustling through the place.

ROGER(V.O.)

Any friends she might be staying
with?

FREDERICK(V.O.)

Not that I know of.

Drawers are opened, clothes are thrown on the bed. The place is mostly empty. Someone left fast.

Roger goes through what belongings are left. Some lacy underwear on the floor gets his attention. Then, on the dresser he sees the same picture Frederick showed him in the office. He inspects the garbage. He finds a bloody cotton ball.

FREDERICK(V.O.)

I don't know. I hardly knew her.
She kept me on the outside,
looking. I'm sure you know what
women can be like. Listen to me. A
living joke. Chasing after a woman
the age of my daughters.

(CONTINUED)

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4.

Roger finds a half smoked joint in an ashtray. He lights it, making sure not to touch it during the inhale.

He notices a pair of binoculars on a hook by the window.

BINOCULARS: Roger snoops through the neighboring apartments. His gaze drifts down the street.

POV ZOOM: Roger spots the Crown Victoria parked across the street.

TIGHTEN: The license plate is DMC3070.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

ROGER(PHONE)

Hello, operator, can you pull up
the number to my last call
please...And the one before that...
And the one before--

Roger opens his notebook, and writes down number.

ANGLE ON NOTEPAD: 3135502591, 3132207570

INT. CAR - SONIC

A milkshake is dropped off at Roger's window. He nods a in thanks. He focuses on the notebook.

3135502591 BAKER'S JAZZ LOUNGE - MOMENTS LATER

A lounge singer performs on stage. The place is run down. But still has some charm. There is a small audience.

Roger sits at the bar.

ROGER

Scotch and water.

The bartender is an old hippie. This is NEIL. He studies the bad caricature of Roger's face on his business card.

NEIL

I don't see the resemblance. Guy in
your profession should know when he
is being conned.

Roger's is distracted by the surprisingly passionate performance of the lounge singer.

(CONTINUED)

Roger shows a picture of Raquel to the waitress.

ROGER
So, she sang here?

WAITRESS
Yes, sad songs.

ROGER
Then, just, poof?

WAITRESS
That's one way of putting it.

EXT. BAKER'S JAZZ LOUNGE - NIGHT

Roger walks outside, and spots the Crown Victoria across the street.

ROGER(V.O.)
How long has she been missing?

FREDERICK(V.O.)
Three days.

INT. PRIVATE EYE OFFICE - DETROIT - LATER

ROGER(V.O.)
Have you called the cops.

FREDERICK(V.O.)
I can't have the police coming to my house. What do you think that would look like?

INT. LAUNDROMAT - EVENING

ROGER(V.O.)
With my case load, I don't know how much time I can spend tracking down a lounge singer.

Frederick's voice briefly gets furious

FREDERICK(V.O.)
Don't you ever call her that!

Roger sits alone, watching the clothes spin.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - MORNING

Roger grabs some Chinese food.

FREDERICK (V.O.)

Listen, Angel said you were the man, he said you're the guy, he said, I should call you. Roger he'll handle it.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

A group of six nurses walk out of the bar, for a smoke break. Some wear green scrubs. Some wear blue scrubs.

Roger walks by, nods, and smiles. They seem like a tired bunch.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Roger sits with a crowd at the bar, watching the game. WILLIAM MILLER, the bartender, slides Roger another shot and beer. Roger clearly wants to be left alone with his thoughts.

WILLIAM

You ever wondered if maybe smoking isn't that bad for you?

ROGER

No.

WILLIAM

Be honest, have you ever seen someone working in the healthcare profession who is not puffing at least two packs a day? I understand, it's a stressful job, but I'm starting to think it's all a clever marketing scam. And they are in on it. Think about it.

ROGER LAUGHS.

ROGER

I think you may be onto something.

WILLIAM

Don't patronize me. Look, all I'm saying is just because something looks, somehow, doesn't make it fucking so.

INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The bar has only one customer, a woman sitting at the far end.

LONG LENSE ZOOM: TRYING HIS LUCK ON THE WOMAN SITTING ALONE.

She seems receptive. Roger order another round.

Suddenly the woman bursts into a frenzy of intense sobbing. Roger looks around nervously, then promptly leaves.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The cook puts a hot dog in a bun. Puts the bun around a napkin. Puts the bun wrapped in a napkin on a small paper plate and walks it over to ROGER. Roger, coffee, hot dog, alone at a Diner in the middle of the night. The place is empty aside from a few night owls and an off duty CLOWN sitting in a booth.

INT. CAR - DAY

Roger checks his mirror, sees the CROWN VIC once again.

INT. PAYPHONE - DAY

Roger parks at a hotel. He waves off the luggage guy. He hurries for the wall of pay phones. He dials a number and hopes the ringing stops. Roger intently watches the fellow patrons that come around the corner.

ROGER(PHONE)

Joel, whats happening? Listen, I need your truck. Just like last time. Yes and it wasn't damaged. Same spot as last time will yah? thanks.

INT. CAR - DAY - LATER

Roger, driving fast, checks his mirrors, the CROWN VIC tails four cars behind.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - LATER

Roger makes a quick turn into a parking garage. He hits the gas. He speeds around the turns as quick as possible, until he sees a spot on the fourth floor.

He takes a quick turn, speeds into a spot, slams the breaks.

He jumps out, and runs down the row of cars. In the process he pulls on a Barracuda jacket, and a Detroit Tigers baseball ball cap. He heads straight for a Ford pickup.

He climbs into the cabin, and lays across the seat. A set of keys is waiting for him under the sun visor. He puts on his eye glasses. then -

ANGLE ON MIRROR: THE CROWN VIC SLOWLY DRIVES PAST, SLOWING TO A CRAWL BEHIND OF HIS CAR. IT TAKES A TURN.

Roger starts the pickup and pulls away. undetected.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR 76 KERBY - LATER

Roger parks Ford pickup outside of a luxurious house.

KERBY - MOMENTS LATER

A woman walks out of the home, pulling out of the driveway, ROGER follows her.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

The WOMAN, driving along in a MERCEDES.

The WOMAN walks out of GROCERY store.

The WOMAN DRIVING

The WOMANS car parked out of BANK

The WOMAN playing Tennis with a coach

END MONTAGE: CUT TO:

INT. CAR - 76 KERBY - NEXT DAY

ROGER lights a cigar.

ROGER V.O.

What do you think made her jump
ship? If that is what she did.

FREDERICK V.O.

She's young, I'm old? I'm married,
She wants to be?

INT. EMPTY BAR - NIGHT

ROGER sits at the bar playing chess with the bartender.

GEORGE

Roger?

(CONTINUED) CONTINUED: 9.

Roger isn't listening while going through his personal mail.
He looks at his phone bill. Each call he's made, and to whom
is listed. It is also long past due.

ROGER

What?

GEORGE

Your move..

EXT. 76 KERBY - NEXT DAY

Woman, steps out of her home. Her Mercedes pulls out of the
drive way. Roger doesn't follow this time.

CUT TO:

EXT. 76 KERBY BACK ALLEY

Roger climbs the wall of the handsome house. Sneaking
through the narrow corridor he looks into the windows, the
house is quite.

KERBY BACK ALLEY

Roger's head is on a swivel. He finds the dumpste. He takes one more look around, before digging through the trash. Sorting through it like he's done it before. Tearing through them he stops on a phone company envelope.

ANGLE: PHONE BILL, (313)9801435 LISA SUPIRO - 76 KERBY,
DETROIT MICHIGAN 48236

A long row of anonymous phone numbers.

HOOR DINER - NIGHT

Roger and the line cook both have bored looks on their faces. They are cross checking each phone number starting with the day "LISA" called RAQUEL.

ROGER

Any numbers with a dollar symbol
next to it?

COOK

No.

ROGER

Any with a exclamation point?

COOK

...Yes. four

ROGER

Okay give them to me.

COOK

\$3132124841...

ROGER

And?

COOK

They're all the same.

INT. CAR - PHONE BOOTH - LATER

Roger near a phone booth, in a derserted part of the city.

ANGLE: CU ON TELEPHONE NUMBER IN BOOTH. 3132124841

Roger walks up and down the barren stretch of Jefferson Ave.

INT. ROGERS CAR OUTSIDE PHONE BOOTH - LATER

Roger waits with hot coffee and a crossword puzzle in hand.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

A car parks in front of Roger's car. A woman gets out of the passenger seat. Roger doesn't look up until he hears the car door slam shut. He doesn't notice which door she gets out of.

ANGLE: ROGER HOLDING THE PHOTO OF RAQUEL.

The woman in the phone booth is dressed in a raincoat. Her hair is wrapped under a scarf. She's half a block away, but it looks like it's her.

INT. ROGER IN CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Roger opens his glove box. There is the envelope of money and in a holster is a snub nosed 38. He holds the pistol, flipping the revolver open, he empties all the bullets, before tucking it into his jacket.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Roger gets out of his car. Moving up towards the phone booth, his focus is on the slender figure in the booth, her back turned away from him.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Raquel is clutching the phone tightly to her bruised face. Her face. Looks like someone used her face as a punching bag.

RAQUEL(PHONE)
we're leaving town,

bu-- senses Roger behind her,

Roger knocks hard on the booth.

ROGER
I'm sorry it's just I'm waiting for
a call---

Suddenly Roger is getting the most vicious beating of his life, and he has taken many.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGERS OFFICE - EARLIER

Roger, leaning back in his chair, gazes out the window, there is the CROWN VIC parked outside and down the block.

ROGER

200 hundred a day plus expenses
gets your lounge singer back.

FREDERICK

Here is five. But know I want this
done priority.

CLOSE UP: THICK ENVELOPE OF MONEY PASSED ACROSS TABLE.

Roger takes the envelope.

INT. CROWN VICTORIA - MOMENTS LATER

Two suits sit in it. Looks back at his FREDERICK. FREDERICK looks uneasy in his seat.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

When Roger is sufficiently beaten he has time to get in a question.

ROGER

Lady, you all right?

Raquel shakes her head.

A vice grip lands on Roger's shoulder, whipping him around. A clenched fist follows next. Roger goes down fast. He takes a few swift kicks.

Standing over him, smiling, is a hulking man in Denim jeans, and Denim jacket. This is DAVIS VONLEY.

Davis rustles through Roger's pockets. He gets his card, and gun. He looks at the card then back to Roger. He tosses it on the ground.

DAVIS

Can't tall which one's worse.

(CONTINUED)

ROGER

Now hold on a second, I---

Davis hands the pistol to Raquel. She points it like she means it at Roger. Davis takes the envelope of money out of Roger's glove box.

DAVIS

Shit fire!

RAQUEL crouches next to ROGER, picking up the card.

RAQUEL

Sorry to do this. Old Freddy needs to learn how to take a hint.

Davis is revving the engine.

DAVIS

We got us real nice head start now baby. Lets go!

Raquel gets in what used to be Roger's car, and drives away.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The cook methodically makes Roger his usual of a hotdog with coffee.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Roger is back in the parking garage. His nose is bandaged. It takes up the entire center of his face.

He is walking down the isle of cars until he finds his cheap rental car. Cars are hurrying out of the lot.

He happens to look in the direction of a mother and daughter.

The mother has her attention pulled away from her daughter by an advertisement.

The little girl begins to walk into the lane. A car is coming fast, the driver, adjusting the radio levels.

Roger jumps inbetween the girl and the car. They barely avoid death

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

Are you okay?

The girl laughs. The mother clutches her daughter tight. She looks up at Roger.

MOTHER

Thank you! Uh, sir. That was, it was, selfless. Amazing--

ROGER

No big deal. Happened without thinking about it.

The mother and daughter get in their Range Rover, and disappear into traffic.

THE END