

Overpressure

written by

Adam Nadworniak

Based on true events

Address  
Phone  
E-mail

EXT. REYNOLDS ESTATE - UPSTATE NEW YORK - PREDAWN (SUMMER)

The imposing, stone and timber Reynolds mansion looms in the pre-dawn gloom, almost swallowed by the dense evergreen forests surrounding it. A long, winding driveway disappears into the trees, emphasizing its isolation.

INT. AVA REYNOLDS' BEDROOM - SAME

AVA REYNOLDS (19) sleeps peacefully, surrounded by classic furniture and art. A SHADOWY FIGURE, MARCUS THRALL, stands over her. His face is obscured by a black tactical mask.

He moves with an unsettling, precise grace. In his gloved hands, he holds a complex, metallic device. Wires snake out, glinting faintly.

Ava stirs, a soft sigh. Her eyes snap open. She sees him. A strangled whimper escapes her. Marcus's hand, surprisingly strong, clamps over her mouth.

MARCUS (VOICE ELECTRONICALLY  
DISTORTED, GUTTURAL)

Not a sound, little bird. Not one.

He forces the heavy, intricate collar around her neck. It's cold, metallic, and incredibly tight. Ava struggles, panic seizing her, but he's too strong. He locks it with a sharp click. The device hums faintly, a small red LED blinking ominously.

He presses a folded, heavy-stock paper into her trembling hand. His eyes, visible through the mask, burn with an unsettling intensity.

MARCUS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

This is not a game, Ava. This is a reckoning. Your father stole everything from me. He let me rot for ten years while he walked free. Now, he pays. You are the collateral. He steps back, his masked face turning to the door.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

The note contains your instructions. Follow them. Precisely. Or your father watches his empire... and his daughter... burn.

He slips out, leaving the door ajar, the pre-dawn silence amplifying the terrifying hum of the device.

Ava is left alone, gasping for breath, tears streaming down her face. Her fingers brush the cold, unforgiving metal around her throat. She opens the note.

CLOSE UP - THE NOTE

Typed, in a clinical font, with schematics of the device:

This is a live explosive device. Any deviation from these instructions, any attempt to remove it, any contact with law enforcement, will initiate immediate detonation.

Your father, James Reynolds, will transfer \$100 million to the specified offshore account within six hours. Failure to comply, or alerting authorities, triggers the sequence.

A timer begins now. And a final warning: The trigger is also remotely controlled. Consider your movements... carefully.

A diagram of the collar with an angry red X over a 'cut wire' section.

INT. AVA REYNOLDS' BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ava's breath hitches. Her eyes dart around the opulent room, now a cage. The humming of the collar is the loudest sound. She tries to move her head, gently, but the device digs in, a stark reminder of its presence.

Her cell phone isn't on her nightstand. Panic flares hotter. She remembers charging it in the living room, near the kitchen.

Her heart hammers. She slides off the bed, every muscle tensed, fearing any sudden movement could trigger it. Her bare feet hit the cold hardwood floor. The collar feels like an anvil.

She tiptoes to the bedroom door, peeking out into the hallway. Darkness still clings to the corners of the vast house.

INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Each step is agonizing. She moves like a phantom, her gaze fixed on the floor, on the intricate patterns of the antique runners, as if a single misstep would be her last. The collar hums, a constant, low thrum against her carotid.

## INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The living room is massive, a cavern of dark wood and plush fabrics. Moonlight filters through the tall, leaded-glass windows, casting long, distorted shadows.

Ava scans the room. The charging station is on a side table, near the sprawling sectional. It feels miles away.

She shuffles forward, her arms held stiffly at her sides, like a tightrope walker. Her eyes are wide, darting from the collar to her feet to the distant glint of her phone's screen.

Every floorboard creaks like thunder. Every breath is too loud. She imagines Marcus Thrall watching, his finger hovering over a remote, somewhere in the vast, dark woods outside.

Finally, she reaches the side table. Her hand, trembling violently, reaches for the phone. Her fingers brush it. The phone slides slightly.

Her breath hitches. She manages to grasp it, pulling it close to her chest, as if shielding it. The simple act feels like summiting Everest.

She slides her thumb across the screen. The familiar glow illuminates her terrified face. Her fingers hover over the emergency dial. 9-1-1.

She takes a shaky breath, then presses the numbers.

## INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hours later. The house is a maelstrom of controlled chaos. SWAT officers secure the perimeter, their uniforms stark against the opulent backdrop. FBI agents and local police swarm the expansive living room.

Ava sits on an antique sofa, rigid, eyes wide with unfathomable terror, the collar an obscene, undeniable presence around her neck.

DETECTIVE LARA DIAZ (40s), sharp-eyed and intense, kneels before her, speaking with a strained calm. Beside her,

SERGEANT MILLER (50s), the bomb squad leader, scans the device with a specialized reader, his face grim.

LARA

Ava, can you tell us again?  
Everything he said? Every word?

AVA (VOICE BARELY A WHISPER,

He said... he said it was a  
reckoning. For my father. He said...  
if the money wasn't there... or if I  
tried anything... it would explode.

Miller's device beeps ominously. He mutters into his comms.

MILLER

(To Lara, his voice low) It's live,  
Detective. High-yield plastic  
explosives. Pressure triggers.  
Remote detonation capability. This  
guy is no amateur. He's built this  
to kill.

Lara's face hardens. She glances at Ava, who shivers, tears  
still silently tracking paths through the dust on her cheeks.

LARA

How long, Sergeant?

MILLER

Based on the note's instructions  
and the integrated timer... we have  
about four hours left. And that  
remote trigger... it means he's  
watching. He could be anywhere.

Just then, a commotion at the front door. JAMES REYNOLDS,  
Ava's father, bursts in, flanked by uniformed officers. His  
face is pale with terror, eyes wide as he takes in the scene,  
his daughter at the center of it.

JAMES (FRANTIC)

Ava! My God, Ava! What's  
happening?!

LARA (BLOCKING HIM GENTLY)

Mr. Reynolds, we need you to stay  
back for now. We have it contained.

JAMES (EYES LOCKED ON AVA, HORRIFIED)

That... that thing on her neck...

AVA (VOICE CHOKED WITH EMOTION)

Dad...

INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A team of FBI cyber specialists frantically work on multiple screens, trying to trace the ransom demand, looking for any digital footprint left by Thrall.

AGENT COOPER (30s) (Into comms) No luck on the IP, sir. It's routing through a dozen proxies, off the dark web. Clean as a whistle. This guy planned every step.

INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The tension is unbearable. Ava hasn't moved. Every breath is shallow. Miller, sweat beading on his forehead, is carefully probing the device with tiny tools, his movements excruciatingly slow. James stands a few feet away, powerless, watching his daughter with agonizing helplessness.

MILLER (MUTTERING TO HIMSELF)  
The pressure plate under the chin...  
if she moves too much... a micro-  
switch... damn.

Ava stares straight ahead, eyes glazed with fear. She can feel the cold metal, the ticking

presence.

AVA (BARELY AUDIBLE)  
Can you... can you get it off?

Miller pauses, looks at Lara. His expression is grim.

MILLER  
This isn't like the movies, kid.  
One wrong cut... one twitch... and it's  
over. We need to disable the  
primary trigger first, but it's  
shielded. And the remote...

Suddenly, an alarm BLARES from the collar. The red LED starts blinking faster. Ava's eyes snap open wider, pure terror.

AVA  
What was that?!

LARA (To Miller) Sergeant!

MILLER (SHOUTING) HE KNOWS!  
He knows we're here! He's triggering  
it! Get back! Everyone, fall back!

Panic erupts. Officers scramble. Miller, however, stays, a look of grim determination on his face. He sees the terror in Ava's eyes, the girl frozen by the immediate threat. James lets out a guttural cry, straining against the officers holding him back.

MILLER

(Calmly, but with urgency)  
Ava! Listen to me! You need to hold absolutely still. Don't breathe. Don't even blink if you can help it. I'm going for the fail-safe. It's a long shot. He reaches for a tiny, almost invisible panel on the side of the collar. His hands, usually so steady, tremble slightly. The alarm shrieks louder.

Ava squeezes her eyes shut, tears forcing their way out. She can feel her heart pounding in her chest, a frantic drum against the metal.

INT. THRALL'S HIDEOUT - ABANDONED CABIN - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS THRALL watches a live feed of the Reynolds mansion on a bank of monitors. He sees the commotion, the police scrambling, James Reynolds bursting in. A cruel smile plays on his lips. He holds a small, custom-made remote control. His finger hovers over a red button. His surroundings are rustic, cluttered with old tech, deep in the woods.

MARCUS

(To himself, a low, guttural growl) )  
Ten years in a cage for insider trading, all because you flipped, James. You walked free, built your empire, while I lost everything. Now, you watch yours implode.

He presses the button.

INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miller's hand is steady. He snips one wire. A faint spark. Ava flinches but holds still.

He snips another. Nothing.

The green light on the collar begins to flash, faster and faster.

MILLER (GRUNTING)  
He's overriding it! He's trying to  
detonate!

He reaches for a third, more crucial wire.

AVA (WHISPERING)  
Do it!

INT. THRALL'S HIDEOUT - ABANDONED CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Marcus Thrall presses the red button. A triumphant, maniacal  
laugh escapes him.

INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A blinding flash of light from the collar. A deafening ROAR.

BLACK SCREEN. SILENCE.

LONG MOMENT. NO SOUND.

INT. REYNOLDS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY (A FEW MONTHS  
LATER)

Sunlight streams through the tall, clean windows. The room is  
immaculate, restored. The only

lingering sign of the horror is a faint, almost invisible  
scorch mark on the antique sofa where Ava sat.

AVA REYNOLDS, looking healthy and vibrant, is laughing with  
her father, JAMES REYNOLDS. She wears a simple, elegant  
necklace - a stark contrast to the device that once held her  
captive.

JAMES  
(Smiling warmly, but with  
a deeper resonance) )  
Your new university program starts  
next month, huh? Still set on that  
marine biology degree?

AVA (BEAMING) ABSOLUTELY.  
Can't wait to be knee-deep in  
saltwater. Far away from tech,  
corporate takeovers, and... well,  
everything else.

She glances briefly at the sofa, a shadow passing over her  
eyes for just a second, quickly replaced by a quiet strength.



JAMES  
(Putting an arm around her  
)  
You've been incredibly brave,  
sweetheart. We're all so proud of  
you. I... I'm just so grateful.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS THRALL, now gaunt and broken, sits opposite DETECTIVE LARA DIAZ. He stares blankly at the table.

LARA (CALMLY, BUT FIRMLY)  
The device was disarmed, Mr.  
Thrall. Sergeant Miller made the  
right cut at the last possible  
second. Ava Reynolds is alive and  
well. Your revenge failed. And yes,  
we know why you did this.  
James Reynolds cooperated with our  
investigation, but he did so as a  
witness in a larger federal case.  
You were rightfully convicted of  
insider trading. The evidence  
against you was insurmountable,  
even without his testimony on that  
specific charge.

Thrall doesn't react. Just a slow, vacant blink.

LARA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
You're facing life, possibly  
without parole. Justice will be  
served.

She rises, leaving him alone in the sterile room, his grand  
plan utterly shattered.

EXT. REYNOLDS ESTATE - UPSTATE NEW YORK - SUNSET

Ava walks through the sprawling gardens, the crisp air  
carrying the scent of pine. She stops by a newly planted  
tree, a symbol of growth and resilience. She touches its  
young bark, a gentle smile on her face.

The sun dips below the horizon, painting the sky in hues of  
orange and purple. Ava looks out at the vast, peaceful  
landscape. The darkness of the past is behind her. She  
breathes in the fresh, clean air, truly free.

FADE TO BLACK.