

"The Man: issue 1"

by

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FADE IN

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

A homeless MAN walks slowly along a street, avoided by passersby. He's tall, broadly built and has immeasurable pain held at bay by a pair of intense BLUE EYES that are mostly hidden by a graying beard and overgrown hair.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Man, now cleaned up and wearing a foreign army uniform, lifts his young SON up, high into the air; both of them giggling with joy as they spin in a circle. The Man's WIFE laughs too.

The Man playfully tosses his son onto the couch. His Son, giggling uncontrollably, picks up a toy gun and points it at him. The Man feigns surrender, raising one hand, his other hand removes a rolled up superhero cowl from his pocket.

Son shakes his head and giggles with glee, knowing what comes next. The Man, relishing every moment, rolls the cowl down over his head.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

A tear drifts down the Man's cheek and we see that one of his hands is resting in his jacket pocket. He turns off the sidewalk into an

ALLEYWAY

Walks past a PIMP and his WHORE. A DRUG DEALER counts his money, only stopping to stare at the Man with disdain. Then the Man is alone and nearing the DEAD END that he calls home, the day getting darker.

At the DEAD END we see some cardboard boxes, the Man's home. He climbs under them and pulls the superhero cowl out of his pocket, unrolling it.

Another tear falls down his cheek, then goes in reverse, traveling back up his cheek and into his EYE.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Man circles as his Son, now standing, follows him warily with the gun. The Man feigns to the left but actually goes right, disarming his son with a deft flick of the wrist. His son laughs with joy.

Then his Son stops laughing and a look of horror falls across his face. His Wife looks similarly horrified. The living room door BURSTS OPEN, ripped from its hinges; men wearing ski masks and armed with automatic weapons OPEN FIRE.

The Man is shot twice in the chest, still wearing the cowl he falls helplessly to the floor. He's alive and can only watch helplessly as his Wife and Son are taken away by the men. A single tear forms and falls out over the cowl, dripping onto his cheek.

INT. CARDBOARD BOX HOUSE - NIGHT

A FEMALE'S scream shocks the Man awake. He sits quietly, listening.

SILENCE

A muffled sob, this time followed by a male voice, angry. Slapping sound, the Female cries out.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

There are no windows aside from an internal one looking into ANOTHER ROOM that is at present covered by a curtain. The Man hangs upside down, his body battered and bruised, facing the window.

A TORTURER, standing next to a table full of bloodied and well-used torture instruments, grins maliciously. On the table we also see the superhero cowl.

The Torturer withdraws the curtain from the window. The Man gasps in horror as in

THE OTHER ROOM

we see two figures tied to a chair, one a child, with bags over their heads.

Standing next to the figures is a GUNMAN in a ski mask holding a small pistol. He removes the bag from the tallest figure and we see that it is the Man's Wife.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Man struggles futilely against his bonds. The Torturer laughs.

The Man looks THROUGH THE WINDOW, locking eyes with his Wife. Unable to do anything about it as the Gunman points his pistol at her head and pulls the trigger. The Man's FACE SCREAMS INAUDIBLY.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The Man, still inaudibly screaming, struggles out from beneath the CARDBOARD HOUSE.

Three YOUTHS have a young WOMAN pinned to the ground and they turn at the commotion made by the Man as he falls out of the cardboard. Youth1 laughs and points at him. Youth2 stares intently at the Man, we catch the flash of a blade in his hand. Youth3 has eyes only for the Woman he is about to rape.

Youth2 heads towards the Man, followed by Youth1, bouncing up and down, high on adrenalin.

INT. TORTURE ROOM (FLASHBACK)

The Man hangs, crying uncontrollably as he watches THROUGH THE WINDOW. The Gunman carries out the bodies of his Wife and Son.

The Torturer CLOSES THE CURTAIN and moves back to the table. He picks up a large knife and shows it to the Man, laughing cruelly.

The Torturer picks up the superhero cowl and pulls it half-way over his head before turning to the Man, pulling a comedic face, laughing at his own inane joke.

The Man blinks away tears as the Torturer, now bored, takes off the cowl and throws it onto the floor in front him.

The Torturer puts on some crude knuckle dusters from the table and walks slowly over to the Man, relishing every step.

The Man closes his eyes... then they fly open again as pain courses through his body. The Torturer throws punch after rib-breaking punch.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The Man falls to the ground under the onslaught as the two Youths punch, kick and stamp all over him.

They stop. He's lying there, groaning, holding himself, crying. Youth1 pulls a BOOK OF MATCHES from his pocket. He walks over to the CARDBOARD HOUSE and rips a match from the book. He strikes it and pauses fleetingly before allowing the match to fall.

The CARDBOARD HOUSE BURNS as Youth3 finishes with the Woman and Youth2 takes his turn.

INT. TORTURE ROOM (FLASHBACK)

The Man hangs, bones broken, body bruised, half-dead. The Torturer removes the knuckle dusters and places them back on the table, before turning to look back at the Man, grinning maliciously.

The Torturer selects a large knife from the table, shows it to the Man - lookit this - and does a LITTLE DANCE over to where he is hanging.

The Torturer teases the knife across the Man's throat, just enough to draw a little blood. Then laughs and uses the knife to cut the Man down. The Man crashes to the floor, his hand flopping onto the superhero cowl.

The Torturer goes back to the table, looking at his selection of tools. He picks up a large hammer. Dancing again.

The Man's hand closes over the cowl and he drags it towards him while slowly, painfully he half rises to his feet.

The Torturer is somewhat taken aback. A question of fear crosses his face that is quickly replaced with a look of determination. The Man is clearly broken, he has no strength, has no chance, this is going to be easy.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The Man's hand goes to his pocket and pulls out the rolled-up superhero cowl. The woman's cries have dwindled to sobs as the Youths continue to have their way with her.

The Man struggles to his knees and slowly he...

INT. TORTURE ROOM (FLASHBACK)

places the cowl over his head.

The Torturer grins and tightens his grip on the hammer. Strides forward, he's had enough of this, time to finish the job.

The Man stands fully, now with the cowl completely over his head, just as the Torturer swings at him with the hammer.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The Youths see that he is now standing with the cowl over his head. They look at him strangely for a second or two, taking in the macabre look of the Man in the cowl. Then they stalk towards him. The Man stands, waiting.

Youth2 pulls out his knife and runs at the Man, screaming. His friends pick up the pace but are still some way behind as he gets to the Man.

Without a second thought Youth2 slashes the knife towards the Man's head, his arm arcing through the air where it lands, stopped dead by the Man's vice-like grip. Youth2's face changes to one of fear as the Man uses his other hand to

INT. TORTURE ROOM (FLASHBACK)

grip the Torturer's windpipe between thumb and forefinger. The Torturer drops the hammer as his hands rise to try and protect his throat.

The Man trips the Torturer onto the ground, following him down, still gripped tight to his windpipe. The Man looks in his face and watches as

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

the life leaves Youth2's eyes.

Youth1 sees that his friend is dead, the knife laying uselessly next to him, and runs away.

Youth3 clenches his jaw, he has a closer relationship with the dead Youth. The Man is going to pay, has to pay.

A look of pure fury crosses Youth3's face as the Man slowly stands, picking up the knife as he does so. The Man

INT. TORTURE ROOM (FLASHBACK)

pulls back the curtain and sees the Gunman entering the OTHER ROOM from a door leading outside. The Gunman looks through the window, spots the Man, and slowly raises the gun.

The bullets SHATTER THE WINDOW and while the Gunman is firing, the Man runs towards him using the Torturer's body to absorb the shots, finally discarding the body as the Gunman runs out of bullets and diving head first through the window frame.

OTHER ROOM

The Man lands and rolls to a standing position, catching

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Youth3 with a right hook, sending him sprawling. The Man wastes no time and hurls himself upon Youth3, using a large hand to pin him to the ground by his throat while he repeatedly stabs him.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. OTHER ROOM

The Gunman flails his arms, trying in vain to prevent the Man from strangling him. Eventually the arms fall to the ground and life leaves his eyes.

The Man stands, suddenly remembering he is in pain, and picks up the gun. He heads to the door and tries the handle... it opens. He steps outside into the

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

middle of nowhere.

He is stood near a small hut in a large clearing. Not too far away is a wood or forest and a few feet from him he spots a crude, freshly dug grave. The Man steels himself and shuffles over to the grave site.

He looks into the shallow pit and sees two bodies. One his wife, and the other his son. His wife has her back to him so he reaches in a hand and turns her over.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The Woman looks up at him, shaking badly, inaudibly begging for mercy. The Man, covered in blood and still holding the knife, smiles at her, revealing stained, blackened teeth.

THE MAN

It's OK. You're safe now.

FADE OUT