

With This Ring

By

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EVAN RIDGE, good-looking clean-cut African American male in his mid twenties, stands outside on the sidewalk by the passenger side of a rusted old Honda. Though he's back in his old neighborhood, he looks out of place. His hands are forced into his pocket. He wears all black. The tailoring of his clothes betray their value.

He looks around the old neighborhood. Children are walking in the middle of the street. Neighbors talk on their porch.

LAWRENCE RIDGE, good-looking clean-cut African American male in late twenties to mid thirties, comes out of the house. He tilts his head up in greeting to a young man across the street. He walks with a certain level of street royalty. He, too, wears black. His jeans sag slightly. He sports a tee shirt over his wiry frame. Lawrence is Evan's big brother.

He stops in the middle of the yard. He looks at Evan quizzically.

EVAN

What?

LAWRENCE

We taking yo whip

Lawrence looks to the sleek black Lexus parked behind the rusted Honda. He wordlessly moves to the driver's side of the car.

Evan rolls his eyes up in annoyance. He moves to his car.

LAWRENCE

Toss em

Evan blows him off and opens the driver side door. He gets in. Lawrence is still outside of the window wanting to drive. Evan turns on the car and moves it forward a little. Lawrence throws up his hands in defense and surrender. He goes to the front passenger side and gets in.

Evan looks straight forward as he's driving. Lawrence looks out of the window. He turns to look at Evan. The back seat is filled with groceries. Lawrence has asked Evan to make a quick stop.

LAWRENCE

Females prolly stay on yo jock.
(Beat)How many you got?

Evan does not acknowledge Lawrence. Lawrence pulls out a black and mild. Evan hears the rustling and looks over to Lawrence in the passenger.

EVAN

No smoking

LAWRENCE

I ain't smoking

EVAN

What are you about to do with that?

LAWRENCE

I'm just holding it, bruh. (Beat)
 Why ain't you ever invited me to
 come visit? (Beat) Moms said yo
 spot is nice. Man, pops was- (Beat)
 Yeah man, I bet females stay in
 your face. Yes, Mr. Ridge. Can I do
 anything else for you, Mr. Ridge?
 They ran out of muffins but you can
 -

EVAN

What am I doing next?

LAWRENCE

Make a right up there.

Evan makes a right at the light on the street of their destination.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

For real though, you got a girl?
 Prolly not; knowing you. I know you
 about your money but you've gotta
 give little E some play. He prolly
 ain't had none since Kendra. (Beat)
 It's that one.

Lawrence points at the house. Evan parks in front of it. Lawrence looks over to a visibly angry Evan.

LAWRENCE

I guess you mad. (Laughs) Chill out
 bro.

EVAN

How long are you going to be?

LAWRENCE
Five, ten minutes

EVAN
I'll be back in fifteen

LAWRENCE
You ain't gotta leave bro.

EVAN
What the hell do you expect me to do? Do you want me to sit out here and wait on you while you -

LAWRENCE
Nah, I want you to come in.

EVAN
For what?

Lawrence raises his shirt up to reveal his gun. Evan is rendered speechless. He questions with his eyes.

LAWRENCE
We got at least an hour. (Beat) It shouldn't take that long though.

EVAN
What?

LAWRENCE
You still remember how to hold one of these.

EVAN
What are you doing man?

LAWRENCE
Don't worry about it

Lawrence digs out two pairs of gloves. He throws a pair in Evan's direction. Evan's gloves sit in his lap. He turns on the car.

Evan moves his hand to the gear. Lawrence intercepts his hand and applies painful pressure. Lawrence reaches over and gets the keys out of the ignition.

EVAN
I'm not doing this.

LAWRENCE

You wasting my time, bro. (Beat)
Put the gloves in your pocket.

EVAN

You need money that bad, huh? How
much do you need? I'll write you a
check.

LAWRENCE

I don't want your check. There's
something in there that belongs to
me. That's what I want.

EVAN

What is it?

LAWRENCE

It don't matter. (Beat) You've got
debts, little brother. It's time to
make good. Let's go.

Lawrence gets out of the car. Evan sits in the car for a
moment. Lawrence walks around the car. He knocks on the
window and walks away. Evan takes a deep sigh. He puts on
the gloves and gets out the car.

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EXT - TARGET HOUSE -LATER

3

Evan is visibly tense. He walks up to where Lawrence is
standing. Lawrence looks at him. Evan stares straight ahead.

LAWRENCE

Loosen up; when we get in here, all
I need you to do is be my eyes.

EVAN

We're just going to leave my car
sitting out here for the world to
see.

Lawrence is loose the whole time he walks to the door. As he
picks the lock, he does not hunch. He stands up straight
just like a homeowner would enter his home.

EVAN (CONT'D)

These people probably have an
alarm. Did you think about that?

At the door, Lawrence puts on his gloves. Then, he jimmys
the lock successfully. He walks in the house. Evan hesitates
at the threshold and follows in. He closes the door behind
him.

LAWRENCE
Do you hear anything?

EVAN
People have silent alarms, fool.

LAWRENCE
It's handled, alright. Put your
gloves on.

Lawrence gets the gun from his waistband and hands it to Evan.

Lawrence bounds up the stairs. Evan stands still for a moment He looks around the foyer. He sees a picture. He walks to it. He picks it up. As he holds it in his hand, realization and confusion play across his face.

EVAN
(To himself)
What the hell are you doing?

Lawrence can be heard coming down the stairs. Evan puts down the picture.

LAWRENCE
Let's go.

4 INT - EVAN'S CAR - DAY

4

Lawrence is leaned back in the passenger seat. Evan is still visibly shaken by the picture he just saw.

EVAN
Are you going to tell me what this
is about now?

Lawrence goes for his black and milds once again.

EVAN(CONT'D)
I told you no smoking.

Lawrence lights up.

LAWRENCE
Pops really wanted you to come
home.

EVAN
I'm not talking about Pops. I'm
asking you what we just did.

LAWRENCE

You could've come to see him.

EVAN

My job doesn't allow me to just come home every time somebody thinks something is wrong.

LAWRENCE

He knew this time, didn't he?

EVAN

That was Mrs. Scott's house.

LAWRENCE

Daddy had things he wanted to tell us together.

EVAN

Why were we in there?

LAWRENCE

Daddy kept waiting for you. Night before he died he figured you weren't coming.

EVAN

Answer me!

LAWRENCE

My daddy died thinking about you - died wondering why you couldn't make time for him.

EVAN

Are you trying to make me feel guilty?

LAWRENCE

Nah, I'm just letting you know.

EVAN

Why were we in that house?

LAWRENCE

I hate you for the same reason I respect you. Everything is always on your terms. Whenever you get ready. Whenever you wanna deal with it.

Evan turns his car into an alleyway. He parks it.

EVAN

Ain't nobody playing games with you.

LAWRENCE

You worried? When was the last time you seen Kendra? It's been a minute, ain't it? She still live around here if you wanna stop by and say "hey" or something.

EVAN

What did you do?

LAWRENCE

What I always do; clean up. You know she married, right? He cool. They can't have no kids though. Mama told me. The wreck messed up her real bad. I guess I over did it.

Evan comes across the seat and begins to choke Lawrence. Lawrence struggles with his gun in his waistband. He pulls it out and pushes the pistol into Evans's stomach.

Evan releases his grip. Lawrence leans on the window and takes in deep breaths. After he catches his breath, he begins to laugh.

LAWRENCE

That's who I've been waiting on. That dude right there. Whaddup, E?

EVAN

What the hell is going on?

Evan tries to advance towards Lawrence again. Lawrence adjusts his pistol Evan backs down.

LAWRENCE

Believe it or not, Mama always said I was smarter than you. I just didn't have no common sense. She said that was the only difference between me and you.

EVAN

That ain't the only difference.

LAWRENCE

You're right about that. Did you know that I gotta take a pill to go

LAWRENCE
to sleep. Do you take a pill? Hell
nah. You ain't got no problems
going to sleep.

EVAN
I made my choice. Now, what does
this have to do with Kendra?

LAWRENCE
Nothing

Lawrence pulls out a ring from his pocket. He holds it in
front of Evan.

EVAN
What the hell is that?

LAWRENCE
Ma's ring.

EVAN
What you are showing me that for?

LAWRENCE
Daddy and Mrs. Scott

EVAN
Daddy and Mrs. Scott?

LAWRENCE
Yeah, like ten years ago but he
broke it off with her.

EVAN
You're talking crazy right now.

LAWRENCE
He thought you knew since you used
to always be over there.

EVAN
The ring was in her house?

LAWRENCE
She was going to tell Mama about
them. She said the only way she
wasn't going to say is if he gave
her the ring.

EVAN
Bastard

LAWRENCE
He wanted Ma to have it back.

EVAN
How are you going to explain it?

LAWRENCE
You are

EVAN
No sir

LAWRENCE
Daddy told Ma that he had to pawn
it because he got in some trouble.
Just tell her you tracked it down.

EVAN
It seems like you already have a
good story. Why don't you tell her?

LAWRENCE
I can't lie to her.

EVAN
And you expect me to? Daddy screwed
up. That's not my fault.

LAWRENCE
You screwed up too. That wasn't my
fault but I handled it. You came to
me crying about how a baby would
ruin you. What I do? I took care of
it.

Evan settles back in his seat.

EVAN
(We can slip it back in her
jewelry box and let her find
it. Let her make up her own
story.)

LAWRENCE
That's not what he wanted.

EVAN
He's not here. Now, here's the
story...

5 INT -JANIS HOUSE - LATER

5

Evan knocks on his mother's bedroom door.

JANIS (OS)
Come in.

Evan opens the door to find JANIS RIDGE, a beautiful woman in her mid 50s, sitting in a chair watching television. She smiles at her son. She reaches for the remote and mutes the television.

He walks towards her and sits on the edge of the bed closest to the chair.

JANIS
Do you have to go back?

Janis reaches for his hand. Evan smiles at her.

JANIS
It's been good having you around these past couple of days. Both of my boys in the same house, it felt like old times.

EVAN
You know you can come up and see me anytime. Say the word and you'll be on a plane.

Janis smiles.

Evan adjusts nervously. He hesitantly reaches into his pocket and pulls out the ring. He holds it in front of him. Janis looks at it intently. She takes it from him and inspects it. She brings it close to her eyes.

JANIS
It smells like her.

EVAN
Who?

Janis shoots him a knowing look.

JANIS
I loved your father. I knew he loved me. And I allowed him to come to his senses by himself. Soap can't remove the smell of wandering. How did you get it?

Evan sits in silence.

JANIS

It's okay.

Janis turns around and puts the ring in her jewelry box.

EVAN

You knew.

JANIS

I know lots of things.

Janis gets up from her chair.

JANIS

Nothing ever stays hidden son -
nothing.

THE END