

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

PANORAMIC VIEW OF A CITY STREET. THE CAMERA FOCUSES ON THE ACTION THAT IS OCCURRING AROUND THE STREET; PEOPLE MILL ABOUT, ALL WALKING TO WORK OR HOLDING CONVERSATIONS. THERE IS A SLOW FOCUS TO MICHAEL, WHO IS THE ODD ONE OUT: A BUM. THERE IS A TIME-LAPSE THAT SHOWS HIM THROUGHOUT THE DAY, NOT DOING MUCH BUT HOLDING OUT A CHANGE CUP FOR MONEY, WHICH HE NEVER RECEIVES.

EXT. CITY STREET - ALMOST NIGHT

Michael is shivering in the cold as the night sets in, looking at his empty change cup. DEE walks up to him, bending over to talk to him.

DEE

You want to make some money?

Michael nods, looking wary but willing.

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON OR EARLY MORNING

Five years pass. Michael is walking down the same street in a suit and tie. He stops and looks at the spot on the street where he used to sit. Then he smiles to himself, holds his head a bit higher, and keeps walking.

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

Michael is walking the same street in the middle of a phone call. He listens to his instructions:

DEE

Your part of the cut is inside the case. Deliver it to the next checkpoint by five o'clock.

Michael discretely picks up the briefcase and walks home.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - AFTERNOON

Michael walks into his house, stops in the foyer, and opens the case to pull out his money. Cara, a teenager, enters the scene. Michael closes the case and pockets the money quickly to keep her from seeing.

CARA

Hey, Dad!

Cara comes in to give him a quick hug. Michael lights up when he sees her; she's obviously a daddy's girl. Michael hugs her, and the camera focuses on their sweet embrace.

MICHAEL

How was school, pumpkin?

CARA

It was okay. I got a B on that bio quiz, though.

MICHAEL

That's not bad at all.

CARA

I guess not, but I studied so hard! Mom put it on the fridge, anyway.

They begin to walk up the stairs towards the kitchen, with Cara ad-libbing more about her school day and Michael only half-listening.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Jennifer is washing dishes by the sink. She looks up as Michael and Cara enter the scene.

CAMERA FOCUSES ON THE FRIDGE WITH CARA'S TEST IN THE BACKGROUND.

Michael leans in to give his wife a kiss on the cheek. She pulls away from it, frowning at him. He tries to smile, looking tense and tired.

JENNIFER

You're never home this early.

She sounds suspicious of him. Michael doesn't react; he pulls the wad of cash out of his pocket and holds it out to her.

MICHAEL

I want to take you out this weekend. Take this and go buy yourself a new dress - we'll go somewhere nice.

Jennifer looks slightly perturbed. She takes the cash and begins to count it, looking surprised with every bill she counts.

JENNIFER

Fifty dollars? Where did this come from?

Michael laughs his next words, in an attempt to brush the topic aside.

MICHAEL

Why does it matter?

Michael looks down as Cara is handing him an envelope and piece of paper.

CARA

Dad, look - my report card came in. I made honor roll.

Cara points to her report card, her eyes hopeful. She's proud of her achievement, and wants her father to be, as well.

MICHAEL

That's nice, sweetie.

He isn't really looking where Cara is pointing, but is instead focused on his concerned wife.

JENNIFER

Cara, can't you go do your homework or something?
We're trying to have a discussion.

She gives Michael a pointed glare. Cara rolls her eyes and drops the letter on the counter, heading for the staircase and presumably her bedroom.

CARA

As she heads up the stairs, she begins to mutter:

Discussion my ass.

JENNIFER

Jennifer looks up sharply, obviously annoyed.

What was that? You want to repeat that?

Cara stops halfway up the stairs and leans over the railing to reply:

CARA

No, no, I'll let you get back to your argument - I
mean "discussion."

She puts the word in air quotes, showing off her teenage sass. Jennifer is about to retort when Michael stops her:

MICHAEL

Would you just go to your room, please?

Cara stomps the rest of the way upstairs, and both parents look towards the ceiling as they wait for the tell-tale slam of the door. As soon as they hear it, they turn back to each other to continue their argument.

JENNIFER

I don't want this.

She pushes the money back at Michael across the kitchen counter.

MICHAEL

Why the hell not?

Michael is getting more agitated.

I worked hard for that money and I want to *treat* you with it.

JENNIFER

I know where this money comes from.

She looks upset and frustrated, her words sharp and pointed.

What happened to men who did an honest day's work and came home *without* a criminal record?

She spits out her words, obviously annoyed with Michael for his line of work.

MICHAEL

There's no money in regular work. If I worked a normal job, we couldn't afford to live like this.

Jennifer glares at him for that line, as it is apparent he's bringing up an old argument by calling out who wanted the house more.

You used to want more money, but now you're too good for it. What do you want from me?

He acts affronted, using hand gestures to emphasize the emotion.

JENNIFER

I want you to stop this. I don't know you anymore. The late nights, the strange calls, the large amounts of cash. I know what you're doing.

She leans in towards Michael to whisper the next lines, the intensity in her voice rising. She sounds accusatory, not sympathetic.

You're going to go to *jail* if you keep this up.

MICHAEL

What am I supposed to do? Cut off all ties? They'll kill me! I'm getting ten thousand for a deal next week coming in from Brazil. You want me to turn that kind of cash down?

He steps closer as he tries to convince her, making direct eye contact.

A few more years of this business and I'll be a top contributor. They'll come to *me* with loads of money and plenty of work. We'll be able to do all of the things we've wanted to do for years.

JENNIFER

It's not right to use this.

She gestures to the cash.

You're bringing drug money into this house. You're bringing this business near *our daughter*. What happens when your colleagues decide they don't need you anymore? What happens when Cara doesn't have a father anymore?

She gets teary-eyed over this, having finally hit the point of anger that turns into sadness.

MICHAEL

It'll be *fine*. Just take the money.

He hands it back to her, and she immediately crumples it in her fist, slamming her hand against the counter.

JENNIFER

I don't *want* this in my house.

She's sad, angry, and handling multiple emotions at once. There's a pause, a tense silence. It is obvious in her face that she's chewing these words over inside. She's making a big decision. Her next words are exasperated, as she has finally hit her breaking point.

If you're not going to make a change, just... Get out.

MICHAEL

Fine, you want me to leave?

Michael has hit his breaking point as well. He grabs the money back from where she set it on the counter, wrenches off his wedding ring and throws it at her.

THE CAMERA FOCUSES ON THE RING AS IT BOUNCES INTO THE SINK, SETTLING IN THE LEFT OVER WATER FROM THE DISHES.

I'll be using this money to contact my lawyers, then.

He stalks outs of the kitchen and runs down the stairs. He's breathing heavily, infuriated by the fact that she would kick him out.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - ALMOST FIVE

Michael reaches the foyer, gets to the door, and slams his fists against it. He rests his head against the frame for a moment. In the background, you hear more steps as Cara descends from the third floor to the second and stops.

CARA

Mom? *What did you do?* Dad!

CAMERA FOCUSES ON CARA, WHO LEANS OVER THE RAILING AND LOOKS DOWN INTO THE FOYER. CAMERA TAKES ON THE POINT OF VIEW OF CARA.

She pieces it all together and turns to run down the stairs. She hits the first landing and turns the corner, staring in shock at her father. Michael picks up the briefcase and pulls on the collar of his suit jacket, as if straightening out any wrinkles.

CARA

Dad?

MICHAEL

I'll see you soon, pumpkin.

Michael looks at her sadly for a moment, but tightens his grip on the briefcase handle. He looks at her, then down at the case, and makes up his mind. He opens the door and walks out, not looking back at Cara. He walks out to the driveway and Cara races after him, stopping when she realizes he's leaving. He gets in the car and drives off, leaving Cara standing in the driveway.

CAMERA FOCUSES ON CARA WHO STANDS IN THE DRIVEWAY, ALONE. THE SUN IS SETTING, MAKING THE SCENE HAUNTINGLY BEAUTIFUL.

INT. BOILER ROOM - FIVE

Michael gets out of the car and enters the warehouse, pausing to check his watch. It's five o'clock on the dot. He opens the briefcase and does a head-count on the merchandise.

EXT/INT. SCENESHOP - STILL FIVE

Michael enters the scene shop. He greets Dee with a nod. Dee is a little twitchy, presumably handling some form of withdraw.

DEE

Hey, Michael, long time no see. You got my merchandise?

Michael approaches her with the briefcase and opens it for her to see.

MICHAEL

It's all right here.

DEE

MICHAEL REMAINS HOLDING THE BRIEFCASE OPEN FOR DEE. FROM OVER MICHAEL'S SHOULDER, THERE IS A SHOT OF DEE LOOKING IN AT THE DRUGS.

Looks like good quality stuff, man.

MICHAEL

Of course it's good stuff. It's fresh from Brazil, just like we arranged.

DEE

Yeah, yeah, sure - whatever. Here's a little extra for your troubles, delivery-man.

She hands Michael some money, which he accepts. He crumples it in his fist for a moment though, just as Jennifer had.

MICHAEL

You have no idea.

He sets the case down on a nearby table and walks out. This is the last we see of Michael.

CAMERA FOCUSES ON THE BACK OF MICHAEL AS HE EXITS AND CONTINUES OFF INTO THE PARKING LOT.

INT. WAREHOUSE - AFTER FIVE

Dee begins humming a melody. She purposefully puts down the briefcase on the table, moving slowly, obviously caring about the safety of the cargo inside. She takes her time opening it, humming all the while. The second the case clicks open, the scene fades to black, with the song she's humming beginning as the end credits music.