

THICKER THAN WATER

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Thicker Than Water

FADE IN

Close ups of a man, TOMMY GRANT, washing his hands methodically, putting on his suit jacket, straightening his tie, putting away his gun, then putting on his glasses. He walks out of a room where another MAN sits slumped in a chair, arms swung around and tied behind him, feet also tied to the chair, a big red hole in his chest.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. - PARKING LOT - DAY

A crime scene. A grubby parking lot, early morning.

Tommy Grant walks into scene and talks with a couple of DETECTIVES.

The body of a WOMAN lies on the ground. Nicely dressed, flowing hair, head and chest framed in blood.

The THREE TAC SQUAD COPS stop talking about what they're going to eat for lunch just long enough to talk to the detective.

CURTIS

Hey, Tommy! Congratulations on the promotion!

TOMMY

Hey, Sarge. It's not official, yet.

SEDGIE

Aw, bullshit on that. You're gonna be our new lieutenant soon. Might as well get used to it!

TOMMY

Sedgie, when it happens, you can buy me the first drink.

SEDGIE

You bet.

Tommy joins the boys and they stand looking down at the woman's corpse.

MEANS

You catchin' on this one?

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TOMMY

Yeah. What've we got?

MEANS

Name's Lily Reilly. Social worker. Early 30's. Kinda cute.

SEDGIE

Yeah, if you like 'em dead. That your type, Means?

Means sneers at his buddy.

TOMMY

Got any idea gave her the new hole in her head?

CURTIS

Nothin', really. She sees all kinds in her line of work. I know one of her clients is a snitch named "Jimmy" something or other. There's rumors he took off with a fat wad of Garza's launderin' money.

SEDGIE

Jimmy Rats. Petty criminal, one of those who ain't goin' nowhere fast and nobody's ever been able to stick nothin' to him.

TOMMY

Why bring him up?

SEDGIE

Other than snitchin' and sellin' the occasional drug, he's got no other means of existence. But he ain't been seen in about two weeks.

CURTIS

Which is when Garza's money went missin'.

MEANS

Could be just a co-inky-dink, Sedgie.

SEDGIE

Yeah, maybe. But a cop over in Cicero precinct heard Garza's hoods been lookin' for Rats ever since.

TOMMY

He got a last name?

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SEDGIE

Garza? That is his last name.

Tommy shakes his head.

TOMMY

No. This "Rats."

SEDGIE

He won't give it out. Refuses to be registered.

CURTIS

Must play Hell with accounting. Fuckin' worthless snitches.

Means shakes his head and stares at his older partner.

TOMMY

Okay, that don't leave much. Guess I'll try to find Rats. Know where I can find him?

CURTIS

Try the warehouse district West of Chinatown. He's got a hole up in there somewheres.

TOMMY

And you guys think she's tied in to this guy somehow?

SEDGIE

Maybe. She knew Garza's son.

TOMMY

Yeah, that sick bastard.

CURTIS

Hey, somebody did us a favor on that creep. Nothing lost there.

Sedgie looks at the body thoughtfully.

TOMMY

And if they were involved in his death?

CURTIS

Garza would eat them both alive.

SEDGIE

You know, Garza's guys wouldn't know her.

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CURTIS

Yeah, well, somebody knew her.

MEANS

Yeah. Well enough to put two inna hat.

TOMMY

All right. Keep me posted. You get anything, you call me.

CURTIS

Will do, Tommy. Hey, and good luck with the promotion, huh?

SEDGIE

Yeah, every extra 25 cents an hour adds up!

MEANS

See you, Tommy. Keep your nose clean!

Tommy turns away and tosses a wave at the boys. He walks back to his car, showing no expression.

CUT TO

EXT. - NEIGHBORHOOD CAFE - DAY

Another part of town, in front of a neighborhood cafe. Tommy crosses the street and...

CUT TO

INT. - NEIGHBORHOOD CAFE - DAY

Enters. At a small table sits a WELL-DRESSED MAN and his BODYGUARD, both sipping coffee. The well-dressed man says something quietly to the bodyguard.

The bodyguard goes to the counter and tells the person working there to go do something for a little while. Then he moves to the door, turns the "OPEN" sign around and locks the door. He stands near the table, his eyes faithfully watching Tommy.

Tommy sits at the table across from the well-dressed man.

The well-dressed man, GARZA, puts his cup down and stares at Tommy.

TOMMY

Scratch the girl off your list. They found the body this morning. They have no idea what's going on.

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GARZA

The money?

TOMMY

No.

The well-dressed man lets out a sigh.

GARZA

I want that boy found and skinned alive. I want that, bad. But more than that, I want the money back.

Tommy watches Garza, says nothing.

Garza looks from Tommy over to his bodyguard, standing a little distance away. He looks back at Tommy.

GARZA

You know the deal. After this one, then you're done. Until then, nothing else in this world matters. You get me?

Tommy nods, maintaining eye contact.

Garza takes a sip from his coffee cup. After setting it back down he talks to Tommy without looking at him.

GARZA

You still here?

As Tommy leaves, the bodyguard hands him an envelope. As he does so he gives Tommy a stare like he's an annoying cockroach. Tommy takes the envelope and goes through the door and across the street without looking back.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. - CITY SIDESTREET - DAY

A nervous looking man walks down the street, looking anxiously around at everyone. This is Jimmy. Good looking, not badly dressed, prone to making the worst kind of mistakes and always in big trouble.

He turns a corner and is yanked into a doorway by Tommy Grant. The two men are silhouetted in the mouth of the alley. Jimmy pleads with the other man -

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JIMMY

Tommy! Thank God it's you, brother -

Jimmy barely has time to yelp before Tommy hits him full in the stomach. Jimmy raises his head, looking as though he's going to say something else, but Tommy punches him full and hard in the face. Jimmy reels back and hits the wall before crumbling to a heap on the ground.

JIMMY

Tommy! It's me! Bro--

Tommy gives the kid another punch. The world goes dark.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

INT. - SMALL ROOM - NIGHT

On the sounds of someone violently punching someone, the sound like a sledgehammer slapping meat. It's Tommy, his coat and glasses off, his shirt sleeves rolled up. He takes another shot at the kid, then stands back and studies the bloodied face.

He takes a break - drinks from a glass of water sitting nearby.

Jimmy, tied to the chair, stirs and raises his head groggily. Blood drips out of his mouth and he spits a tooth onto the floor. He tries to smile.

Tommy looks at him sideways. Then he turns around and comes back, slapping him hard as he walks past.

The slap jerks Jimmy's head around, spraying blood everywhere.

Tommy stands as far away as possible, waiting for his brother to calm down.

TOMMY

Mom always spoiled your sorry ass.

Jimmy raises his head as best he can and smiles broken teeth.

JIMMY

You got me on that one, big brother. Had her wrapped around my little finger.

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TOMMY

I got you on more than one, brother. Your ass is mine.

Jimmy's smile fades and he starts to look worried.

JIMMY

You're full of shit. You're useless without someone telling you want to do.

Tommy paces.

TOMMY

Garza. You pissed off the wrong guy. You took his money, you idiot. You really fucked up good this time.

Jimmy shrugs, trying to look nonchalant, all tied up in the chair with blood on his lips.

JIMMY

So? What's it to you?

Tommy leans over and whispers into his ear.

TOMMY

It's everything. I'm your salvation.

Jimmy's worried expression finally subsides into curiosity.

JIMMY

Salvation? You? I ain't asked you for nothing.

TOMMY

Yeah, but I'm going to help you, just the same. It's different this time. You got nowhere to go. He wants his money. You're just lucky I told him I'd get it. Gave him my word. And then I'd run you out of town. Salvation.

Jimmy mimics him.

JIMMY

'Salvation.' Shit, brother. I'm your fucking blood.

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Tommy paces.

TOMMY

That you are, little brother. And now you're going to tell me where you hid his cash. Or I'm going to whip your ass worse than when we were kids. Remember that, you little fuck?

Jimmy only has to think about it for a few minutes.

JIMMY

I remember. How the fuck you think I got so mean?

Tommy shakes his head.

TOMMY

You can't blame me. I've done all I can for you. All I'm going to. You tell me where the money is, and then we're done.

JIMMY

Fuck you! We ain't little kids no more. I am not going to put up with this shit. Besides, you're a good little Boy Scout who don't bend the rules.

Tommy pulls something out of his folded up coat.

TOMMY

Yeah, that was me. Then I got smart. Know how I got smart?

JIMMY

Actually, I don't care.

TOMMY

You. You taught me. Got it through my thick skull. People fuck you over. Every time you'd turn up for a handout I'd be there. And sure enough, you'd turn it around and fuck me.

JIMMY

So the fuck what? You finally woke up.

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Don't hang that shit on me, you fuckin' cop.

TOMMY

Yes, I am. And a damned good one. I always get my man. And my woman.

He puts a photo in his brother's lap. Jimmy hangs his head and studies it wide-eyed. It's Lily, lying in a pool of her own blood.

JIMMY

What the fuck is this shit?

TOMMY

That? That's reality. Staring you square in the face. You want to know what it's like? Keep stalling me.

Jimmy raises his head and looks at his brother.

JIMMY

Who did this?

TOMMY

Who do you think?

Jimmy stares at his brother, wide-eyed.

JIMMY

I don't believe you.

TOMMY

You really ought to wake up. Things change.

JIMMY

Like what? You mean you?

TOMMY

Like me. Like you. You're getting older. Pretty soon you won't be able to pull that 'charmer' shit. Worked when we were kids, but looks and charm don't last forever.

JIMMY

You've always been jealous of me. Is that what this is about?

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TOMMY

No. This is about a lot of things. How you ruined Mom's life, my life, Lily's life...

JIMMY

Get over it.

TOMMY

You aren't listening. I have. I'm a whole new man.

Jimmy hangs his head and stares at the pictures.

JIMMY

She was the only thing ever believed in me. The only person who ever made any difference in my life.

TOMMY

You mean the only person you ever let make a difference? Cut the bullshit.

Jimmy sobs.

JIMMY

And you're the 'good one' in the family? Everybody always praising you. 'Tommy's the one who goes to school, gets a job, works hard.' You put on a big fuckin' show, you asshole.

TOMMY

Hey, little brother. We're cut from the same cloth. I'm just doing what I need to survive, same as you.

JIMMY

But you didn't have to hurt her. Not Lily. Not after knowing her. You couldn't.

TOMMY

Believe what you want. I do what I'm paid to do.

Tommy goes over to the table where his coat is folded neatly, his glasses resting upon his coat. He pulls out a gun and walks over to Jimmy, cocking and uncocking it. He moves in front of Jimmy and levels the gun at his brother's face.

Jimmy stares back for a moment, then slowly starts to shake. He

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stammers, a few drops of blood coming from his lower lip.

JIMMY

Godammit, Tommy! You always bluffed me when we were kids. I fuckin' hated that shit!

His eyes get wet and he looks like he's going to cry.

Tommy just looks meaner.

JIMMY

Fucking asshole, Tommy! You 'sposed to be the 'untouchable' cop, the righteous cop. Man, you're just another asshole!

Tommy stares him down, cold, malicious.

TOMMY

Where is it, Jimmy?

Jimmy's eyes meet his, finally.

TOMMY

Just get it over with. Tell me and we can all get on with our sorry lives.

Jimmy stares at his brother as if seeing him for the first time. He takes a second, then spills the beans.

JIMMY

It's in a bag, you lousy fuck.

Tommy's unmoved.

TOMMY

And where's the bag?

Jimmy smiles mischievously.

JIMMY

It's right here.

Tommy looks like he's had enough.

TOMMY

Where's 'here,' Jimmy?

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JIMMY

Here. In my bag.

Tommy looks at Jimmy with a little surprise. He picks up the bag and looks inside, then raises an eyebrow. He looks at his brother.

TOMMY

Never thought you'd be dumb enough to carry it around with you.

JIMMY

Where else am I going to leave it? Someone might find it.

TOMMY

You mean one of Garza's boys? Shit, Jim, it's his money. What were you thinkin'?

JIMMY

I'm owed that money. That fuckin' asshole used me and took my stake. He owes me, Tommy!

TOMMY

According to you, everybody owes you.

JIMMY

Fuck you, Tommy.

Tommy steps forward and puts the barrel of the gun against his brother's chest and looks him in the eye.

TOMMY

No, Jimmy. Fuck you.

He pulls the trigger.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. - CITY STREET - NIGHT

On Tommy walking up to his house, bag under his arm, stopping to insert the key in the lock.

CUT TO

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Light from the street outside burns brightly. Still in the dark, Tommy dials a number on the phone.

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TOMMY

Garza there?

After a moment...

GARZA (V.O.)

Yeah?

TOMMY

It's done.

There is a moment of silence on the line.

GARZA

Did you get my money?

TOMMY

It's gone.

GARZA

What do you mean, gone?

TOMMY

As in, 'not there.' Little prick suffered, then he told me he spent it all on the girl, on some junk. It's gone.

GARZA

I want that money, Gr -

TOMMY

Yeah, and I want a year-long vacation, but it ain't going to fucking happen. It's gone.

Another awkward moment.

GARZA

Okay. It's gone. Where's the body?

TOMMY

He's in a warehouse on Cermak and 22nd.

GARZA

Better be. If anything even smells rotten about this, you know I'll come after you.

TOMMY

Yeah. But we're through, right? I did this last thing, we're through.

GARZA

Yeah, you prick. We're through.

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TOMMY

Good.

He hangs up the phone.

CUT TO

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Lily is walking around a corner. Tommy is standing off to one side, leaning against a wall. He pushes off as she comes around the corner.

TOMMY

Lily.

LILY

Shit, Tom. Scared the shit out of me.

TOMMY

Sorry. Where's Jimmy?

LILY

Look, just leave us alone, okay? We just want to get out of here.

TOMMY

And go where?

LILY

I don't know. Far away from here.

Lily looks into his eyes.

LILY

You okay? You don't look so good.

TOMMY

I've been better.

LILY

Me, too.

TOMMY

I miss you.

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LILY

Don't. Don't say that, Tom. It's over between us.

TOMMY

I can't help it. And what the hell are you doing with Jimmy? You going to run with him? Stay on the run? What kind of life is that?

LILY

It won't be long. We'll go somewhere else, start new. You know we can do it.

TOMMY

I don't know anything. I know it doesn't make any sense.

LILY

He hurts, Tommy. He feels bad about what he's done.

TOMMY

So? You're going to ruin your life for him? Just because he feels 'sorry'?

LILY

What if I do? What's it to you?

TOMMY

We had something, Lil -

LILY

I told you, don't say that. We didn't have anything that would last.

Lily turns as if to walk away, seems to think about it, and turns back.

LILY

You know, you cared about your damned job more than you ever did for me. And now I've found someone who loves me, who believes in me, who's there for me.

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Tommy hangs his head and shakes it. When he looks up at her his eyes look very, very sad.

TOMMY

He won't be there long. He'll disappear on you. That's what he does.

LILY

So you say. (beat) Tommy, it'd be better if just forget about me.

She pulls her purse tighter to her.

LILY

I have to go.

TOMMY

Yeah, I know.

She nods at him, turns, and starts to walk away.

Tommy reaches into his pocket, pulls out a gun, takes a step after her, raises and cocks the gun, says...

TOMMY

Lily?

As screen goes black, we hear a gunshot. Then, fading, two more.

FADE TO BLACK