

Untitled

By

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NICK MASON is sitting at a table in a small urban café somewhere. On the table are two meals: one in front of Nick and the other at a chair we cannot see. There is a glass SALT SHAKER on the table between the two meals.

Throughout this scene, the presence of a second person is implied, but we never see him. Instead, Nick addresses all of his lines at the Salt Shaker, as if it is talking back to him. Traditional dialogue shots on the Salt Shaker, even though it doesn't actually speak.

NICK MASON

I don't care; I won't do it!

SALT SHAKER

(Salt Shaker's lines are silent. Subtext only.)

You will. It's the only way to get free of this thing.

NICK MASON

Only way? The only way!? You're nuts! **I** must be nuts for even talking to you about it.

SALT SHAKER

You aren't crazy, Nick. You're just confused. Desperate. You'll do the right thing; I know you will.

NICK MASON

Oh, fine for **you** to talk about the "right thing." Don't you understand? I could go to prison!

SALT SHAKER

You won't go to jail. It's self-defense. You clearly don't have a choice.

NICK MASON

There are always choices. I don't have to do it this way.

SALT SHAKER

You do. Eventually you'll get that through your head.

NICK MASON

No. I can't. You... It isn't right.

(CONTINUED)

SALT SHAKER

He'll kill you first if you don't.

NICK MASON

Well I'll just have to take that chance, won't I?

SALT SHAKER

You're a coward. You don't even have what it takes to save your own life, and your wife's.

NICK MASON

Sarah? What do you mean? Is he going to...? My Sarah?

SALT SHAKER

He'll kill her. He wants both of you out of his life forever, and he'll do anything to see it happen.

NICK MASON

No, no, I won't let that happen! But... Do I...? Is it really the only way?

SALT SHAKER

The **only** way.

NICK MASON

(quietly)

The only way. (long pause) Okay.

Fade out.

2 INT. NIGHT -- INTERROGATION ROOM

2

Both of NICK'S wrists are handcuffed to a chair. The space he is in is non-specific. There is a table with some papers and a ballpoint pen within arm's reach, if only his arms could move.

An INTERROGATOR leans against the table, looking at Nick expectantly. He wears a police badge on his belt and an empty gun holster.

INTERROGATOR

So? Do you have anything to say for yourself?

(CONTINUED)

NICK MASON
 (stares at him mutely,
 resigned)
 Would it make a difference?

INTERROGATOR
 It might. At least, if I understood
 why you did it... Well, let's just
 take one thing at a time. Why?

NICK MASON
 It was self-defense. I had to. He
 was going to... He was...

INTERROGATOR
 Self-defense? You shot him in the
 back, Nick.

NICK MASON
 In the back. Yeah. No! No, he was
 going to kill Sarah!

INTERROGATOR
 Sarah? Your wife? Sarah was at
 home. And why would he kill her,
 Nick?

NICK MASON
 Because he... He wanted... Why? No!
 It had to be done! It was the only
 way!

INTERROGATOR
 Alright, let's just take a step
 back here. Why don't you just tell
 me what happened in that garage?

NICK MASON
 (woodenly)
 In the garage. Alan always leaves
 between six and six-fifteen.

3 INT. NIGHT -- UNDERGROUND GARAGE

3

NICK is lurking in the inky shadows, peering around a corner
 at the door. He nervously pats at something under his jacket
 with his right hand. In his left, he is clutching the SALT
 SHAKER.

NICK MASON
 (V.O.)
 He came into the garage, and he was
 carrying... something.

(CONTINUED)

ALAN comes through the door during the VO, dressed finely and carrying a briefcase. He smiles and waves at someone through the door before letting it close behind him.

Nick pulls a gun from beneath his coat and points it at Alan. His hand is shaking. Alan does not see him.

Nick fires.

4

INT. NIGHT -- INTERROGATION ROOM

4

NICK MASON
(suddenly enraged)
No! No, he was going to kill her!

INTERROGATOR
(shouting Nick down)
She wasn't there! Sarah wasn't there, and Alan didn't have a weapon! You murdered him in cold blood!

NICK MASON
No! No, I didn't hit him! I missed!

5

INT. NIGHT -- UNDERGROUND GARAGE

5

We are looking down the barrel of NICK's gun. A bullet hits the wall beyond ALAN, who reacts in fear.

Reverse, we see Nick staring back in shock. Alan starts to run away. This prey-like response startles Nick into a predator mode. He chases Alan deeper into the garage.

Nick rounds a corner to find Alan trapped by a locked door. Nick deliberately raises his gun and shoots Alan twice in the back.

Cross-fade to Nick staring down at Alan. His face is slack and his eyes empty, as if he has no will left in him. He drops both the gun and the SALT SHAKER on the floor and continues to stand there.

The Salt Shaker either breaks when it hits the ground, or enough salt falls away to reveal a microchip hidden inside it.

Cross-fade to Nick's face. There are now red-and-blue police lights flashing across him. We hear someone shouting at him to put his hands on his head and step away from the gun, but the voice seems to come from far away.

Cross-fade to...

6 INT. NIGHT -- INTERROGATION ROOM 6

NICK's face, at the same angle and with the same expression.

NICK MASON
I didn't have a choice. Really.

INTERROGATOR
No choice.

NICK MASON
None.

INTERROGATOR
Will you sign that confession?

Nick leans forward to look at the papers. The Interrogator uncuffs his right hand. Nick picks up the pen and signs the bottom of the typewritten page.

The Interrogator puts the handcuffs back on Nick, picks up the pen and the paper and leaves the room.

7 INT. NIGHT -- AN EMPTY HALLWAY 7

The INTERROGATOR makes a call on his cell phone.

INTERROGATOR
Mrs. Mason? I have your husband's confession. As soon as I see the remainder of the money in my account, I will have it delivered to the judge.

He pauses to let Sarah speak.

INTERROGATOR
No, I don't think deprogramming is called for. He would not do well in prison with his old instincts. Thank you for your business, Mrs. Mason. Enjoy your inheritance.

Cut to black when the phone flips closed.