

THE MANTLE

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Rain pours down. An old rundown house.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Officer, HANK GRIMES, 33, is taking cover next to the house's entrance door with his firearm raised.

Officer, JOHN BLAKE, 30, is doing the same on the opposite side.

Hank nods to John.

John nods back.

BASH!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The front door falls to the ground.

Hank, gun raised, quickly enters. John follows.

Hank looks at John and points to the kitchen with his head.

John nods and takes cover next to the kitchen entrance. He looks at Hank.

Hank takes cover next to the bathroom door.

Hank raises his hand...

3 fingers...

2 fingers...

1 finger.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

The kitchen light flickers. Numerous plates are scattered on the tiles. The dinner table has food scraps and half empty glasses.

John enters the kitchen, gun first.

He notices a red substance smudged over a couple of tiles.

John kneels down, touches the red substance and rubs it with his thumb and index finger.

John stands and walks over to the fridge.

He spots a note stuck to the fridge written in blood.

John grabs it.

ON NOTE:

**"I LOVED THEM.
I'M SORRY.**

- J"

BACK TO SCENE.

CRACK!

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM

A bolt of lightning lights up the dark bathroom for a moment. A broken shower curtain lays on the tiles. The medicine cabinet mirror is shattered.

Hank enters the bathroom with his gun aimed straight ahead.

He turns to the left and then to the right.

Hank walks over to the sink under the medicine cabinet.

He inspects it further.

Pills rest near the drain hole.

Hank opens the medicine cabinet and notices an empty medication bottle. A Polaroid is rolled up inside.

Hank unscrews the bottle cap and takes out the photo.

He straightens out the photo to reveal a man, woman and child, smiling, outside. Behind them balloons are tied to the legs of an outdoor table; a strawberry birthday cake in the centre.

ON PHOTO:

**"HAPPY 10th BIRTHDAY, JAY.
MUM & DAD LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.
- LOVE JACK & JULIE."**

A woman SCREAMS.

BACK TO SCENE.

Hank drops the note and races into the living room.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

John is looking over at the stairs aiming his gun.

Hank enters the living room gun first.

John looks at Hank and points toward the stairs with his head.

Hank nods.

Hank cautiously walks over to the foot of the stairs and looks upstairs.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Hank enters the upstairs hallway.

John follows behind.

There are broken paintings on the walls and broken ceramic on the carpet. A phone off the hook hangs from a small hallway table.

A girl WHIMPERING.

Hank looks at John.

John points to the first room on the left.

Hank grabs the door knob and attempts to turn it. It's locked.

A girl CRYING.

Hank looks at John.

John turns to face the second room on the right.

John moves closer to the door and puts his ear up to it.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM

The door knob slowly turns and the door swings open.

Hank enters and John follows.

A child's bedroom. Toys are scattered around the room. Some of the fluff from the soft toys cover the floor and bed.

A laptop on a desk next to the bed is playing a video.

John begins examining the room.

Hank approaches the laptop.

ON VIDEO:

A woman crying on her knees in the bedroom. A man standing over her with a knife. His face can't be made out.

WOMAN

(crying)

"Why...?"

(beat)

Your own family...?"

The man is unresponsive for a moment.

He raises his knife and slices the woman's throat.

She falls to the ground.

BACK TO SCENE.

A hand taps Hank on the shoulder.

Hank quickly turns around, gun raised.

John instinctively moves out of the way and protects his chest.

Hank calms down.

So does John.

John points at the wardrobe.

The wardrobe door opens.

Hank covers his nose to block out the smell.

John looks at Hank.

The woman from the video's dead body is laying on the floor next to a young boy's dead body.

Blood covers the wardrobe interior.

Next to the boy's body is a key.

Hank picks it up.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

The room on the right's door opens.

John enters the hallway followed by Hank.

Quiet murmurs can be heard coming from the locked room.

John and Hank look at each other and nod.

Hank takes out the key from his pocket.

INT. HOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM

A MAN, 55, with blood on his clothes paces back and forth.

He's holding a knife.

MAN

(to himself)

I had to do it. I had to do it. I
had to do it. I had to do it. I had
to do it...

CRASH!

The door falls to the ground.

The man is startled.

Hank and John enter with their guns aimed at the man.

FREEZE!

JOHN

DON'T MOVE!

HANK

The man recognizes John. Stares at him.

MAN

I had to do it. I had to do it. I
had to do it. I had to do it. I had
to do it--

Hank looks at John.

John's not responsive.

Hank turns to the man:

HANK
TOSS YOUR WEAPON TO THE SIDE, PLACE
YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK AND GET
ON THE FLOOR!

The man stares at Hank repeating himself.

HANK (CONT'D)
NOW!

The man looks at John.

MAN
I had to do it... *Jay*.

OVER BLACK:

BANG! BANG! BANG!

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM

Hank awakes, groggy, and notices the man's dead body laying
in front of him. Two bullets through the chest.

Hank realizes he's cuffed to a chair.

JOHN (O.S.)
How ya feeling...?

HANK
(groggy)
J-John...?

John enters holding the man's knife.

JOHN
Crazy, right??

Hank's in pain.

He looks down and notices he's been shot in the stomach:

HANK
(in pain)
What's going on??

JOHN
You know... On my tenth birthday,
my mother baked the most amazing
strawberry cake... I'll never
forget the taste.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

The strawberries were freshly picked from our garden. It took her hours.

(beat)

Unfortunately, my father hated it... He was never happy with anything my mother did...

(beat)

So he killed her. Shot her twice.

Hank slips a needle out of his thumb.

Begins picking the handcuffs' lock.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I guess he had a point. You see, mom always wasted time on things like this. Instead of looking at the bigger picture, like my dad did.

(beat)

My father married again. Seven times, actually.

(beat)

He killed every single one.

(beat)

Took me under his wing. Showed me how to kill and how to get away with it.

Hank is still picking the handcuffs' lock.

JOHN (CONT'D)

After a few years. As I learned more and grew wiser. I gave my father suggestions on improving our workflow. It was my idea to join the force.

Hank picks the handcuffs.

They pop open.

HANK

The man. He's name is Jack.

JOHN

You should've applied for detective, Hank. You have a natural ability to see things most people can't.

HANK

What would Julie think if she saw you, now... *Jay*?

JOHN

She'd be proud. The father became the son and the son, the father...

HANK

Your mother was never a killer... She loved you and your father!

Hank looks down at his boot.

A hidden firearm.

JOHN

She loved herself! Do you think she did anything for me?! Or for my father?! She was a selfish person!

(beat)

My father slowly began turning into my mother. He become a nagging, selfish and weak human being. I couldn't allow that to happen. I told him how pathetic he was...

(beat)

And what does he do...? He ONLY kills his stepson. What a joke?!

(beat)

How about wife number seven?! Huh?!

(beat)

I claimed my birth right! I did what my father could no longer do!

(beat)

Sorry, Hank... You know too much.

John raises his gun...

BANG! BANG! BANG!

John is dead on the floor next to his father.

Hank pushes the button on his shoulder radio:

HANK

This is Officer Hank Grimes. I need immediate assistance. I have two men down including an Officer. I repeat... I have two men down including an Officer.

Hank looks at the dead bodies of John and his father.

HANK (CONT'D)

The son became the father and the
father, the son.

FADE OUT.

THE END.