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Already Dead

By Joe Chappelle

Attention, all passengers...
...please do not leave
your luggage unattended.
This is for complete security
measures.
Unattended baggage will be collected
and searched by Security.
Thank you for your cooperation.
- Archer.
- The northbound arriving.
- You get on it.
- Is he alive?
Just get on the train.
Say, "Bye, Dad."
Bye, Dad.
- Yes?
- Next stop, you get off.
I need to know. Is he alive?
Just follow my instructions,
Mr. Archer.
- But...
- At the next stop, get off...
...switch to the red line.
Red line train south is now departing.
Please stand clear of the doors.
Red line train south now departing
at Platform B.
Red line train south now departing
at Platform B.
Next stop, Walnut Station.
Next stop, Walnut Station.
- In the van?
- That's correct, Mr. Archer.
And the bag?
It stays with you.
Put it on.
Well...
...we did it.
- You did it.
- Yeah!
The O.G.O. Complex is...
...well...
...it's this firm's crowning achievement
is what it is.

We went up against the biggest-shots
in this city. But you know what?
We landed it.
Now, there are many of you
to thank.
I'm gonna start with Tom Archer.
Tom, what can I say?
You know how I feel about you.
You are the man.
The work that you and your team did
on this design...
...is stunning.
Simply stunning. And I thank you.
Come here.
He's right, you know.
You are the man.
- It's good to be the man.
- Yeah.
Come here.
- Where is he?
- Through the looking glass, Mr. Archer.
We told the babysitter
we'd be home at midnight.
The babysitter will be fine.
Maybe we should just call.
You know what?
I'll call her when I'm done with you.
I love you.
We can see everything you do,
Mr. Archer.
So do exactly as you're told.
Leave the old key in the gym bag
in the room.
Then take the new key
and the flashlight.
Then go back into the hallway.
Good. Now take a left...
...and go to the end of the hallway
and down the stairs.
You should have called her.
Honey, she's 16. She'll be fine.
Hey.
What?
The door is open.

Amy?

Amy.

Maybe she's up with Tyler.

Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

- No. Tyler!

- Sarah. Sarah.

Sarah, call 911. Go. Go.

Tyler. Tyler?

Tom.

Tyler! No!

No!

Tom!

- Yes?

- Mr. Archer...

...this is the man

that murdered your son...

...and brutalized your wife.

You sure?

We have a positive match

to the blood and hair samples...

...taken from your home.

As you see, he's quite alive.

You'll find everything

you could possibly need...

...in the room.

Remember, we're watching you.

Hi, Dad.

Do you remember this boy?

Look again.

Of course you don't.

But you will.

Don't worry about this.

I'm just warming up.

I'm gonna ask you again.

Do you remember that boy?

You don't remember killing

my son, huh?

You're a fucking liar.

You attacked my wife.

- You feeling any better?

- My wife.

They've already taken her

to County General.

A police officer will give you a lift.
Mr. Archer, I know it doesn't seem
like the right time...
...but can you give me anything more
on the man who attacked you?
Anything?
How about the babysitter?
She have a boyfriend?
- Anything.
- I don't know.
I just wanna see my wife.
Hey.
It's hot.
Well, give it a minute.
Mr. Archer, I'm sorry to intrude
but do you have a minute?
I really shouldn't be here
telling you this...
...but if what happened to you
happened to me, I'd wanna know.
What? What's going on?
I've been reassigned to another unit.
Okay, so who's your replacement?
Well, that's just it, sir.
There is no replacement.
With budget cuts, the department...
...we're short of manpower.
Is it officially unsolved?
What about my son? My wife?
Well, it won't be official. It's just
no one's assigned to the case anymore.
It'll just go away.
But how can you do that?
I'm really very sorry, Mr. Archer.
It's a lousy thing.
Wait.
If I were you,
you know what I would do?
I'd dedicate my life
to finding that piece of shit.
Every penny, every resource,
everything and anything.
I'd find him...
...roast him on a spit.

If you need something, anything...
...give me a call.
Look what you've done.
I need some time.
Away.
To be alone for a while.
Every time I look at you, I see him.
It's killing me.
You're gonna pay.
You're gonna pay.
I'm gonna put this
through your goddamn skull.
Not yet.
Look at me.
Look at me.
All right.
That's fine, tough guy.
We got plenty of time.
Look at me!
Look at me!
You are going to die.
Now look at me.
Good.
- This is bullshit.
- Mr. Archer.
- Detective.
- I got this, fellas.
Mr. Archer, you're upset.
Let's take a seat.
You come to my house and you drop
a fucking bomb on me like that?
Mr. Archer.
I'm a good man.
I follow the rules.
I do everything I'm supposed to do.
I've never had a speeding ticket
and this is what I get?
You call yourself cops?
I tried to explain.
Look, no. My wife.
This has destroyed her.
And... do something.
- My hands are tied.
- They're tied?

Do your fucking job.
Mr. Archer, think about
what's really going on.
Find me the man.
You punched a cop?
I tried to.
- You realize how that sounds?
- You don't understand.
No, and I don't pretend
to understand.
I can't imagine
what you're going through.
But, Tom, you need to ask yourself
if what you're doing is helping.
You haven't been into the office
in three months.
Hey, then fire me.
I'm not gonna fire you.
This isn't about your job.
I want you to take
all the time you need.
Then I want you back.
But I can't use you like this.
Tom, I think you need help.
I'm fine.
You're fine?
Take a look around you, Tom.
I'm bailing you out of jail.
Listen. The desk sergeant said
the detective you took a swing at...
...won't press charges
if you agree to get counseling.
- A psychiatrist?
- Yeah.
The department uses him...
...for officers and fire-fighters
who've been through traumatic events.
Call him.
Rise and shine.
Let's try the other one.
- Yes.
- Are you okay, Mr. Archer?
- Is everything to your satisfaction?
- I don't know.

Do you need assistance?
I just need a minute.
Is everything all right?
I don't think so. No.
What seems to be the problem?
I don't think this is the man
who murdered my son.
There is no doubt he is the man.
Why do you think it's not him?
The tattoo.
He had a tattoo on his wrist.
A tattoo?
In all your statements to the police
you never once mentioned a tattoo.
- I know. I just remem...
- This is the man.
Our investigation was thorough and
state-of-the-art forensics confirms it.
We have to stop this.
Once you begin,
there's no turning back.
That was our agreement, Mr. Archer.
You said you understood.
What if he's the wrong guy?
What you're experiencing
is not unusual.
- I wanna speak with him.
- Speak with whom?
The man I've been torturing.
That is not allowed.
- I'm gonna talk to him.
- Wait a moment.
Let me call Dr. Heller.
Who are you?
Please.
Who are you?
I haven't done anything.
Why are you here?
Why are you here?
I don't know.
Why do you think you're here?
I don't know.
I don't know.
You don't know?

How did you get here?
Two men...
...jumped me.
Threw a hood over my head...
...and I wake up in this chair.
That's all I know.
I'm really sorry...
...what happened to your wife...
...and your kid.
But it wasn't me.
You got the wrong man.
You got the wrong man.
Don't you fucking lie to me.
I'm not.
- What?
- Dr. Heller is on the line.
- I have no idea.
- I left five messages.
- You can't wait in his office.
- I don't care. I'm gonna wait.
You already said that l...
We both know it already.
I'm going inside. I need to see him.
I need to see him.
Well, I wasn't expecting you.
Sorry if I kept you waiting.
You didn't. It's not my day.
- I'm not supposed to be here.
- Nonsense.
- How are you progressing?
- I'm not.
Nothing has changed.
I don't feel any better.
I'm all talked out.
I've run out of words.
I've been coming to you
for three months.
Every time I come here,
it feels like the first day.
It's always today.
And what about tomorrow?
Tomorrow, my son
is still gonna be dead.
Tomorrow, maybe my wife

will be gone.
I don't know what to do.
Let's take a walk.
Off the meter.
You have reason to feel the way you do
and your anger is completely justified.
There's a lot of evil at work
in this world...
...and in my practice
I see it all the time.
Too often it goes...
...unpunished.
If there was a way...
...to find out
and punish the man who did it...
...would you be prepared
to go all the way?
All the way?
What I'm about to say
may surprise you...
...considering it comes from me.
I'm listening.
In cases such as yours, I find...
Bizarre as it may sound.
- That there is only one way to exorcise
those demons that torment you.
What is it?
Putting you and him
in the same room...
...alone.
And the rest is up to you.
How could you do that?
Oh, it can be done.
It's expensive.
Not without risks.
But it can be done.
Hello, it's Dr. Heller.
We got a problem.
I'm on my way to see you right now.
Do nothing till I get there.
Do nothing? Too late.
This business about the tattoo...
...talk to me about it.
The man who attacked me had a tattoo

on his right wrist. He doesn't.
Well, it sounds like your subconscious
is at work here.
No, that's not it.
I know he had a tattoo. I know it.
Now, wait, wait, wait.
Just listen to me, please.
You must be careful.
They're watching
every move you make.
Now, sit tight. I'm on my way.
We'll work this out.i/
I promise you.i/
All right.
Just hurry.
Please.
Could you take the nail out?
This is gonna hurt.
Now what?
We wait for my shrink.
A package will arrive at your home.
Inside will be a cell phone.
Charge it up, turn it on
and then you wait.
A call could come that night
or next week or even in six months...
...but it will come.
And then you must follow
their instructions to the letter.
It's very important that you never
waver, and do exactly as you're told.
These men are to be respected.
They are very serious people...
...and they believe in what they do.
Who are they?
They prefer to maintain
an extremely low-profile existence.
Doc, I'm paying a lot of money
for this.
Who are they?
Well, let's just say
that they're composed of former...
...and I believe current
law-enforcement officials...

...who share one interest in common.
They want to see justice done.
They see a legal system
that is failing miserably every day.
It's their city.
They want to rid it of the kind of scum
that destroyed your family.
You can understand that.
So that's it?
I mean...
...when do I see you next?
- That's entirely up to you.
But I do believe, for the moment,
that's it.
Now, don't try and fool yourself.
None of this
is going to bring back your son.
But when you realize that what you did
had to be done and you walk away...
...you'll know that the book
has been closed forever.
You can get on with your life.
And...
...good luck, Tom.
- Yes.
- Stop breaking the rules, Mr. Archer.i/
Where's Heller?
- Enough, already.i/
- Just bring me Heller.
Put his gag back on.i/
Just bring me Heller!
Could you...?
Could you get me out of this
fucking chair, please?
You know I can't.
- I'm innocent. You know that.
- I don't know shit.
Yes, you do.
- You just said it yourself.
- Shut up.
Who the fuck are you?
Who made you God?
The man who took my son.
That wasn't me!

Archer, this is Dr. Heller.

Let me in, please.

- Are you alone?

- Yes, I'm alone.

Just open the door, please.

- Do you know what you're doing?

- I don't.

You took his gag off and the camera.

- Why?

- Time.

- I need to talk.

- They're concerned, Tom.

- They're very concerned.

- I don't think it's him.

Maybe the stress

has been too much for you.

- But this is truly the man.

- No, I'm not.

I'm a father just like you.

I don't belong here.

Listen, listen, my friend.

They have assured me that this is
the man who destroyed your family.

They assured you?

What the hell does that even mean?

How are they sure?

How do they know?

All right. All right.

Here's what I do know.

He's a career criminal,
a repeat offender, a killer.

A paid killer.

They compile lists

of such individuals...

...individuals who have escaped
from justice.

They track them, they monitor them.

Did he tell you that he was picked up
off a street?

Plucked like an apple from a tree?

Oh, no. No, no.

That man has deserved everything
you gave him tonight.

That I can guarantee.

You came here to right a wrong.
Yes?
Well, this is your enemy.
He deserves to die.
All right.
All right.
I'm no saint whatsoever.
But I don't kill kids.
I don't beat women.
And I don't have a fucking tattoo.
I have a son I love very much.
I'm a mechanic, that's it.
That's who I am.
They've got my 500,000.
Tell them to keep the money.
That's fine with me.
But I paid for this and it ends
when I say so.
Oh, no, no, it's far too late for that.
My dear friend, don't you realize...
...that what's been set in motion here
can't be stopped?
They're not gonna let
the two of you just walk out of here.
I've told you, these people are serious,
deadly serious.
Even if he wasn't the guy,
they don't care.
As far as they're concerned,
he's guilty.
And he is, or he wouldn't be here.
And admit it.
In that moment when he was
the bastard that took your child...
...you felt empowered, didn't you?
Yes.
You felt a release for the first time.
You felt complete.
Am I right?
Yes.
Then finish it.
Take back your life.
I'd like to do this alone.
Please.

It's a mistake.
Tom?
Tom?
Good God.
What have you done?
They'll kill you for this, Tom.
They're professionals.
That's what they do.
Have you ever fired a gun before?
- No.
- Lf you want to live...
...and see your wife again,
you put that gun down and walk out.
Call them.
That is not a good idea.
Call them.
Tell them they can keep my money.
But he goes with me.
Tom, I'm on your side.
I can make this work
if you just listen to sense.
Explain to them this situation.
Oh, this is madness.
Just madness.
Yes.
Yes.
He wants to leave.
With him.
Oh, yes, I explained that.
Very well, I'll tell him.
Listen, they're still on the line.
They're prepared to let you go.
Alone. Now.
Listen to me.
You will never
leave this building alive.
Never.
Take the offer and go.
You haven't seen them.
You can't identify them.
Right this minute, you're no threat.
But if you take this further,
that will not be the case.
Why can't we just go?

We're not gonna say anything.
We're not gonna call the cops.
You haven't been listening, have you?
These are the cops.
No.
- I'm taking him with me.
- Oh, Tom, for God's sake.
Tell them.
Tell them you accept the offer.
To buy time. He's right.
If you say we're leaving,
they're gonna come and kill us both.
Okay.
He agrees. Alone.
Give me a minute. I'll call you back.
Now what?
Lock the door.
You're good with a bat.
How good are you
with a sledgehammer?
I don't think
you're gonna make it, Tom.
- How many of them are there?
- Five or six, at least.
We gotta go.
Come on, come on, quickly.
- So, what happens to you?
- I don't know.
I'll manage somehow.
Mr. Archer.
- Mr. Archer, open the door.
- Open the door.
Mr. Archer, open up this door now.
Come on.
Keep moving.
Bring that son of a bitch out.
Move it.
Move.
- They killed Heller.
- Forget it.
Hey, can you call out
on your phone?
No.
- Did they give it to you?

- Yeah.

Destroy it. They can track us with it.

They come with GPS.

Come here. Help me.

We have to get out of here.

Okay.

- Let me have your gun.

- What?

- Give me the gun.

- No.

Give it to me, please.

You said you don't know

how to use it. I do.

I'm not gonna point it at you.

I'm gonna point it at them.

Trust me.

Give me the gun.

Thank you.

Get down.

Get the gun.

Where are they?

They're down there.

And they lost a weapon.

They have to think about this
for a little while.

You're pretty good with a gun
for a mechanic.

Lucky shot.

So, what do we do now?

You motherfucker. I should fuck you up
for what you did to me tonight.

I should fuck you up big-time.

- I thought that...

- You thought? Right. You did not know.

You thought.

- They told me...

- They told you?

You were going to kill me
for what someone else told you?

Something you wanted
to believe so bad.

And I would have fucking died for it.

Now.

Tell me, how does it feel?

How does it feel?
You're right.
For what happened to my family,
I would have killed you.
Go ahead.
Kill me. You've earned it.
All right.
I need a break.
You said you had a son?
Yeah.
What's his name?
Stephen.
How old is he?
He's 7, I think. No.
Wait. He's... He's 9.
He's 9.
Do you live with him?
No.
When is the last time you saw him?
Come on.
I don't think this
is any of your business.
- I was just...
- Just drop it.
We need each other to get out of here
but that's where it ends.
No more questions.
No more bullshit.
No more small talk, okay?
Okay.
Good.
What time is it?

It's almost 3:

When they brought you in,
did you see the size of the place?
It's huge. It's some sort of
abandoned industrial complex.
Did you see anything else?
They had a hood over my head
until I got outside.
So nothing else?
Just...
...they've got security cameras

everywhere.
Your friend said...
...that there's,
like, six of them, right?
He said there were five or six.
Four, maybe five.
That's good.
Why is that good?
Five people can never lock
this place down.
That's why it's good.
Did you see anything
when they brought you in?
I told you back in the room.
- I wasn't lying.
- I didn't say you were.
Right.
You seem to know
how these guys think.
They play it the way I'd play it.
It's common sense.
For you, maybe. Not for me.
Maybe we should just stay here.
We've got cover.
We just wait and pick them off.
Wait for them to come?
Well, what if they don't come?
You said this place is abandoned.
We stay in this room...
...we die in this room.
Our only chance is to get moving.
We have to find a way out of here.
What's your E TA down there?
Roger that now.
Stay.
- Are you almost done?
- Give me five.
You want this back?
I'll take this one.
Get the radio.
Unit 5.
Five, do you read me?
Five, if you can read me,
you're squelching, over.

What is this, a bomb?
Sort of.
It's gasoline.
They wanna burn us out.
Hey, hey. Do you know
what you're doing?
No.
I was a soldier once.
So close your eyes.
Where do we go now?
I have no idea.
Archer.
Archer.
This has gone far enough.
If you cooperate now, we'll let you go.
Mr. Archer, come out now and live.
We want what's best.
Come out and we'll finish
what you started.
Mr. Archer.
Go. Go.
Mr. Archer, your time is up.
Do you understand me?
Mr. Archer, no more fucking around.
- You're all right?
- Yeah, you?
If you don't come out now...
...after we kill you,
we're gonna kill your wife.
Do you understand me?
You are your wife's only hope.
Show yourself and you're gonna end up
like Heller back there.
Mr. Archer,
am I talking to a dead man?
When they come at us...
...just use short bursts, okay?
What happened?
I hit him.
You think? Or are you sure?
I got him.
Good.
Hey, you're all right, you're alive
and we're almost done here.

There's maybe three or two left.
And one is back down there
but he's hurt.
I got him in the neck.
Hey, I'm not moving anywhere.
So it's all on you now.
Together, we can manage
to get out of here.
But, first, you have to finish him off.
Okay?
Now move.
Why?
Why did you do this?
You wanted justice.
You wanted me to find the man,
remember?
It wasn't him.
Fuck you. He's a piece of shit.
I gave you a way out.
You had an opportunity
to find peace...
...and make the world a better place
at the same time for everyone else.
You fucked it up.
You fucked up everything.
Don't.
You can't do it.
Don't.
You're not gonna do it.
Fucking coward.
Here.
I got you a present.
What about you?
I can run, you can't.
Thank you.
Oh, my God.
Do you remember this boy?
You don't remember killing my son?!
- You gotta help me.
- Come here, sweetie.
Help me.
What am I supposed to do?
I don't think this is the man
who murdered my son.

- Your turn, tiger. Say, "Bye, Daddy."

- Bye, Dad.

Your son.

I could not imagine.

They want me dead

and they used you.

I'm really sorry.

Who are you, really?

You don't wanna know.

You have a beautiful son.

Yeah.

We gotta get out of here.

Hey, come here.

I found another one.

Shit.

Go.

Come on. Come on.

Move.

Is that what this is about?

This is about the money?

Well, which answer do you want?

The real one?

Or the one you prefer to hear?

No, it's me. Kill them.

They're down there. Down the tunnel.

- Well, I wasn't expecting you.

- You must be careful.

They're watching every move
you make.

Have you tried counseling?

The detective won't press charges
if you agree to counseling.

There is only one way
to exorcise those demons.

- Are you prepared to go all the way?

- Stress is too much.

This is your enemy. This is the man.

Tom, I'm on your side.

This is the man
who destroyed your family.

These are the cops.

They'll kill you for this, Tom.

Finish it.

Take back your life.

I'm the man that cleans up after you.
We work behind the scenes.
We create justice...
...all in the name of making
our city a safer, better place.
But you live in a bubble.
And when that safe,
sanctimonious bubble bursts...
...what do you do?
You scream for justice.
Now, this man...
...this is a bad man.
If it wasn't your son he killed...
...it was somebody else's.
And what do you do?
You put him straight back
on the streets.
So I ask you, Tom Archer...
...where's the difference?
I don't need to kill you.
You're already dead.
You really wanted to sit at home
with your wife...
...and wait for him to come
and kill you both?
Take it.
If I wanted that fucking bag...
...you think I'd ask your permission
to take it?
Thank you.
Come here.
Say, "Bye, Daddy. I love you."
Do you remember this little boy?
No?
Do you know what you did
to his family?
You know what you almost did
to mine?
You little fuck.