

DEADBEAT DAD

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A strong wind blows through the trees.

INT. HOUSE - CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - SAME

2-YEAR-OLD ROSE GREENE sleeps in her twin bed. The room lacks any decor and only has a few toys. Rose cuddles a stuffed bear.

Light passes over Rose as the door opens. Her mom, SHARON GREENE (25), concern behind her motherly smile, approaches Rose. She sits down next to her little girl and lightly brushes the hair back from her face. Rose stirs but settles back in to sleep.

Sharon kisses Rose's head.

O.S. A dog barks nearby, barely audible over the sound of the wind.

Sharon's head whips to the window. Showcasing terror, she slowly gets up and moves to it. Cautiously peers around the drapes.

OUTSIDE

A MAN stands in front of the house, wearing a coat and knit hat. He looks up at the window.

BACK TO SCENE:

Sharon gasps as she releases the curtain. She fumbles to remove her cell phone from her pocket. Activates it. Pulls back the curtain for another look.

OUTSIDE

The man is gone.

BACK TO SCENE:

Sharon hesitates. She hurries out of the room.

UPSTAIRS HALL

She closes the door quietly behind her and descends the stairs.

## DOWNSTAIRS HALL

Sharon checks the front door. It's locked. She scampers down the hall to the...

## KITCHEN

She comes to an abrupt stop when she sees...

The back door stands open. A hole is in the glass, next to the knob with broken fragments on the floor.

Sharon rushes over and closes/locks the door.

O.S. A small thud comes from somewhere near the front of the house.

Sharon grabs a butcher knife from the counter and ducks down beside the island. Still holding the phone, she dials 9-1-1. It rings.

9-1-1 OPERATOR (ON PHONE)  
9-1-1. What is your emergency?

SHARON  
(quietly, into phone)  
My ex-husband broke into my house.  
Please hurry.

9-1-1 OPERATOR (ON PHONE)  
I see that you are calling from a  
cell phone. Can you give me the  
address?

SHARON  
516 Halifax.

O.S. Footsteps approach.

Sharon silences. She ignores the phone to hold the knife ready.

The intruder creeps around the island. Sharon stays down low as she stays on the opposite side. When she arrives on the end near the open living room, she scurries toward the couch.

## LIVING ROOM

Sharon ducks into hiding behind the sofa and stays completely still.

The intruder barely steps into the room and stops to survey the situation. The darkness helps to obscure his face. He approaches the couch.

Sharon breathes rapidly as her grip tightens on the knife. The intruder is on the closest side and moving in.

O.S. Footsteps race up to the front door.

The intruder darts out of sight toward the kitchen, a split second before...

A hard pounding on the front door.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)  
Police! Open up!

Sharon races to the door. Her hands fumble to unlock it while still holding the knife and phone. It opens to two POLICE OFFICERS.

SHARON  
He ran out back!

The officers spot the knife in her hand and draw their weapons aimed at her.

POLICE OFFICER  
Drop the weapon!

Sharon drops the knife and holds up her hands. The phone is still in one.

POLICE OFFICER  
Stay here.

The officer races to the kitchen, where the back door stands open. He takes a cautious look outside before charging into the darkness.

The second officer stays with Sharon. He kicks the knife away and returns the gun to his holster.

Sharon lays a hand against the wall and catches her breath.

LATER

Sharon is sitting on the couch with a sleeping Rose in her arms. The officers question her.

POLICE OFFICER #2  
So you never saw the intruder's  
face.

SHARON

No, but it had to be my ex-husband. He's about to lose custody of our daughter and wants me dead so he can have Rose.

POLICE OFFICER

How do you know?

SHARON

He was my husband. I know how he thinks.

POLICE OFFICER

Has he ever abused you?

Sharon hesitates with the answer.

SHARON

He hit me a few times at the end. That's when I left. It was mostly verbal abuse.

The officers exchange a skeptical look.

SHARON

He told me after our last custody hearing he will never let me have our daughter.

POLICE OFFICER #2

That can mean different things.

SHARON

No, it can't. You didn't see the crazed look in his eyes when he said it. That's why I packed up and moved here, so he wouldn't find us.

POLICE OFFICER

Yet you claim that's exactly what he did.

SHARON

He's smart. That's why he's so dangerous.

POLICE OFFICER

Look, we try to stay out of domestic disputes, but someone broke in here tonight so it's not safe for you to stay until those doors are fixed.

(MORE)

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)  
Pack a bag and we'll take you to a  
relative's house.

Sharon gets up with Rose and goes to the steps, then up them.

The officers exchange a questioning look.

EXT. HUGHES HOUSE - DAY

A very nice one-story house in the suburbs. The kind of place  
where neighbors look out for each other.

SUPER: 4 years later

SHARON (O.S.)  
No more icing.

INT. HUGHES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - SAME

Sharon puts icing on a cake with a professional touch. She is  
five months pregnant. Rose, now six years old, stands on a  
little stool so she can watch. She sucks icing off her  
finger. A spot on the edge of the cake has a smudge where she  
touched it.

ROSE  
I can't stop. It's soooo good.

Sharon smoothies out the place Rose touched.

SHARON  
Know what isn't good? A tummy ache.

Sharon finishes with the icing. Both admire the excellent  
result.

ROSE  
It's so pretty, but shouldn't it  
have Dad's name on it?

SHARON  
Whose birthday is it?

ROSE  
Daddy's.

SHARON  
And does anyone else in this house  
have a birthday today?

ROSE  
No.