

SUICIDE HOTLINE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A two-story house that is eerie due to the darkness inside. A storm rages. A panicked voice comes from within the home.

PETER (O.S.)

No!

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - SAME

Flashes of lightning showcase CINDY (late 20s) hanging by a bedsheet wrapped around her neck from the ceiling fan, swaying slightly. PETER (30), panicked, takes Cindy into his arms as he fights to unwrap the sheet from her neck.

She falls into his arms. Momentum takes both to the floor. Peter checks Cindy's bruised neck for a pulse. Tears run down his face.

The next flash of lightning illuminates a DARK FIGURE standing behind Peter with a tire iron in their gloved hand. The figure whacks Peter in the right side of his head with the iron. He falls off to the side, heavily dazed.

The figure stands the tire iron against the bed and reaches into their pocket, where they produce a hand gun. The figure stoops next to Peter and places the gun into his right hand. Turns it so the gun is pressed against the spot where the iron struck him, their finger holding Peter's to the trigger.

Peter comes around just enough to realize what is about to happen. His eyes go wide.

PETER

No, wait!

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A clap of thunder sounds at the same moment a gunshot is heard. A flash of lightning helps to conceal the gunpowder flash in the upper window.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

OFFICERS and DETECTIVES come and go from the house and the upstairs. DETECTIVE MARLA SANCHEZ (30s), attractive in a professional sense, enters the house. She holds a tall cup of coffee from a coffee house and sips from it.

She is met by DETECTIVE JAKE WINTERS (30s) as he trots down the steps. He spots Marla and stops before reaching the bottom.

JAKE

There you are. About time.

MARLA

My coffeemaker went out.

She lifts the cup as a gesture.

MARLA (CONT'D)

I had to stop on my way and got stuck in the drive thru. Everyone wants coffee this time of day.

JAKE

Mornings? Yeah, go figure.

MARLA

What have we got?

JAKE

I'm not sure.

Jake leads Marla up the steps.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

The bodies are still on the floor. A pool of blood has spread outward from Peter's gunshot wound. He still holds the gun in his hand. A crime scene PHOTOGRAPHER takes pictures of the mess.

Jake and Marla enter. They stand back to study the sight. The photographer steps out.

JAKE

It appears that the female hanged herself and the gentleman shot himself in the head.

MARLA

Double suicide? Unheard of.

JAKE

It's definitely rare, but there's no sign of murder.

Marla eyes the bedsheet hanging from the fan.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You're not buying it.

MARLA

The whole thing doesn't feel right.

JAKE

You're saying he strangled her with a sheet?

MARLA

Maybe he didn't have a rope.

JAKE

Then you use a cord. Anything but a sheet. It's just too awkward, especially when hanging someone from a fan.

MARLA

You're the smart one.

JAKE

And don't you forget it.

Marla smirks as she shoves her coffee into Jake's hands. She puts on a pair of gloves from her pocket and stoops next to the bodies for closer examination.

Jake studies the coffee cup in his hands with a frown.

INT. SUICIDE HOTLINE OFFICE - NIGHT

On the third floor of an office building. A small room inside a larger office with a desk and landline phone. A bookcase contains books on suicide prevention. A window faces the street.

JERRY MILNER (30) goes through a notepad of hand-written notes at the desk. His jacket is draped over the chair back.

HALEY PATTERSON (20s), vibrant and stylish, wearing a fancy jacket, opens the door and enters with a cup of coffee shop java.

HALEY

Good evening.

JERRY

Loading up on the evening caffeine, I see.

HALEY

I'd never make it through the night without it.

Jerry gets up, leaving the notepad behind.

JERRY

I couldn't do the night shift if my life depended on it so my hat's off to you.

Jerry grabs the jacket and puts it on.

HALEY

Anything exciting happen today?

Jerry looks at her with concern.

JERRY

You didn't hear?

HALEY

Hear what?

JERRY

Haley, they found Cindy dead this morning.

Haley reacts with shock.

HALEY

What? I just had lunch with her yesterday.

JERRY

I hear it looks like suicide but her boyfriend took his life, too. A couple of detectives came by earlier to ask if I knew why Cindy would kill herself.

Haley plops down into the chair, taking it all in.

HALEY

She tried to keep people from committing suicide. It doesn't make sense.

JERRY

Maybe talking with all of these desperate callers got to her. I get it.

Haley loses herself in thought.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Today was quiet otherwise. Well, there was a young woman who called to complain about her lousy boyfriend.

Haley forces a look of interest.

HALEY

And you listened to her life story.

JERRY

What else did I have to do?  
Sometimes I feel guilty when I get  
my paycheck, then I get over it.

They exchange a smile.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Have a good night.

HALEY

You, too.

Jerry leaves and closes the door.

Haley removes her jacket and places it over the back of her chair. She looks at the notepad and settles on a blank page. The phone rings. Haley grabs the handset.

HALEY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

You have reached the Suicide  
Hotline. This is Haley.

A long pause on the other end.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Hello? Are you there?

JAMES (ON PHONE)

I lost my job today.

Haley grabs the pen and takes notes while they talk.

HALEY

I'm very sorry to hear that. What  
kind of job was it?

JAMES (ON PHONE)

Management, at a Fortune 500  
Company.

HALEY

That's terrible, but there will be  
other jobs.

JAMES (ON PHONE)

Not like this one. I haven't done  
anything else since college.