

The Shelter

by
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INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE -- MORNING

On the shelf of an entertainment center are a few pictures in cheap frames. There is a picture of JIMMY, an eighteen year old kid, smiling with his mother. Another picture shows Jimmy with his grandmother and grandfather.

There are also numerous pictures of Jimmy as a toddler, baby, and a couple of other ages.

JIMMY, dressed in jeans hanging down below his butt and a large football jersey is standing in front of an end table, rifling through the mail.

He finds the one letter he is looking for and throws the rest of them on the table. Looking around quickly, he tears the letter open and retrieves the check inside.

JIMMY'S MOTHER calls from upstairs.

JIMMY'S MOTHER

(O.S.)

Jimmy, honey, did the mail come yet?

Jimmy quickly shoves the check in his pants pocket.

JIMMY

Yeah.

JIMMY'S MOTHER

(O.S.)

Did my check come in yet?

JIMMY

Naw, not in yet. Maybe got lost in the mail again.

JIMMY'S MOTHER

(O.S.)

Lord, I hope not.

Jimmy grabs a set of keys off another table and heads outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Jimmy's house is in the middle of a rundown neighborhood.

He walks out of his house and runs into his brother, RUDY, who is playing on the porch. Jimmy steps on an army man.

JIMMY

Get your shit out of my way.

Jimmy kicks out, sending Rudy's army men scattering.

RUDY
Jimmy, I'm telling mama.

JIMMY
I'll beat your ass.

As he moves down to his mother's Buick Regal, he notices the flat tire on the rear driver's side.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Shit!

He looks back toward the house, then throws the keys inside the car and slams the door shut.

Slowly, he sets off down the street.

A few houses down from Jimmy's is Anthony's house. Anthony is sitting on the front porch, gazing at a tree in the front yard.

Anthony has a run down expression on his face until he notices Jimmy walking down the sidewalk.

ANTHONY
Hey!

Jimmy looks over quickly to Anthony.

JIMMY
Hey.

Anthony gets off his porch and begins walking with Jimmy down the sidewalk.

ANTHONY
You see the game last night?

JIMMY
Stupid. I was smoking with you last night.

ANTHONY
Yeah. That's right. So, it's the first of the month, right?

JIMMY
Yeah, I got it.

ANTHONY
Yeah? Alright!

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- MORNING

Mark's wife, SUZANNE, is in her robe in front of the oven, cooking some eggs. She has a cigarette hanging out of her mouth and some of the ashes are dropping on the floor.

A radio on the window sill is blasting a morning program, while a toddler seated at the table screams. Suzanne turns to her child.

SUZANNE

Would you shut the hell up?

The toddler quits yelling and grabs a handful of Cheerios as she turns her head to yell upstairs.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Mark, come on! You don't wanna be late again! You get fired and it's your ass!

MARK

I'm coming! Get off me!

Suzanne turns back to her cooking and starts muttering under her breath.

SUZANNE

Oh, I'll get on you if you get fired again, you lay shit.

Suzanne looks up at the clock, which shows a quarter till nine.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

You got fifteen minutes to get to work! Move your ass!

MARK BURKE bursts into the kitchen, still tucking in his shirt. He is dressed in jeans, a work shirt and boots.

MARK

Why don't you shut the hell up! All you do is bitch all day and night! You wanna let the neighbors know how much a bitch you are?

Suzanne stares calmly at Mark, with slightly rolled eyes.

SUZANNE

Now, you got eight minutes.

The toddler starts crying again as Mark finishes tucking in his shirt.

MARK

I got plenty of time.

He grabs his keys that are hanging by the door and exits.

SUZANNE

Yeah, you got plenty of time. That's what you said the last time.

Suzanne whips her head back to the screaming toddler.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

If you don't shut your face right now, I'm gonna beat your butt.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Jimmy and Anthony are walking down a different street. Jimmy is counting a few dollars as he walks.

ANTHONY

I wonder if Art's at the park today, cause I really don't wanna see that fucker.

JIMMY

Art's always at the park. Better make sure Brandon's at the park if you want your shit.

ANTHONY

He'll be there. He's always there.

JIMMY

Unless the po-po chased him.

ANTHONY

Yeah.

Jimmy stops in front of a driveway.

JIMMY

Five bucks short!

ANTHONY

What!

JIMMY

That fucker took five bucks extra.

ANTHONY

So what? You'd smoke it anyway.

A car pulls down the driveway and stops a few feet from the boys. Mark sticks his head out the window.

MARK

Hey, get the fuck out of the way!

Jimmy looks up sharply.

ANTHONY
Shut the hell up, bitch, before I
bust your ass!

Anthony brings his fist down on the trunk of the car, suddenly mad as hell.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Come out here and tell me to get the
fuck out of your way!

Jimmy moves Anthony down the sidewalk away from Mark.

JIMMY
Come on. I don't have time for this
shit.

ANTHONY
Yeah. I'm toastin'.

Mark backs sharply out of his driveway, squealing his tires, and drives the opposite way down the street, away from Jimmy and Anthony.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK -- DAY

A pitiful excuse for a park. Rusted swings and dented up slide.

Under a nearby tree are Jimmy, Anthony and BRANDON, the crack man. Brandon is really just a kid, like the other two, but his eyes are a little deeper and they dart around constantly.

BRANDON
So, how much?

JIMMY
How much, how much?

BRANDON
Fifty a rock.

ANTHONY
Better be a big fuckin' rock.

BRANDON
It's big enough. So, come on. I
got things to do.

Jimmy grabs a bill from his pocket and thrusts it at Brandon.

JIMMY
Here.

Brandon takes the bill quickly, shoves it in his pocket and hands Jimmy a clear plastic container with a crack cocaine rock in it.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

So, where you gonna be later?

BRANDON

I'll be around.

ANTHONY

Yeah. Come on.

Jimmy and Anthony take off as Brandon looks at his cell phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK -- LATER

Jimmy and Anthony are in a concrete drainage ditch, smoking their crack in a pipe. They swap turns taking hits off the pipe, then sit back and space off.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK -- EVENING

Jimmy turns to Anthony. Both are extremely groggy and out of it.

JIMMY

I'm gonna get some more.

Jimmy begins to pat his pockets down, but cannot locate any more money.

ANTHONY

You spent the last a few hours ago,
you dumb shit.

JIMMY

You got any bills on you?

ANTHONY

No. Besides, I'm good.

Jimmy stands up.

JIMMY

I'm not.

Jimmy staggers off while Anthony closes his eyes.

ANTHONY
Catch ya later.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET -- EVENING

Jimmy is staggering down the street in semi-darkness. The people and objects he passes are just blurs and stretched lights.

He passes someone on the street who, when they say something to Jimmy, sounds really slow and evil.

PASSER-BY
Hey, dude. You look like shit.

Jimmy continues on his journey. After a few more minutes of walking in a crack-induced haze, Jimmy lifts his head and looks around, recognizing his whereabouts.

He lifts his finger and counts the houses, resting his finger pointing at a dark house halfway down the block. Slowly, he staggers toward that house.

When he reaches the porch, he bends down and lifts up the welcome mat. Seeing nothing, he sweeps his hand over the concrete.

JIMMY
Shit.

He looks around the porch and locates a small potted plant. He picks it up, walks to the front door and smashes the glass with it.

Across the street, a light turns on in a top bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE -- NIGHT

An older MAN peers out the window and watches as Jimmy breaks into the house across the street. The voice of his wife is heard from the bed.

WIFE
What is it, honey?

MAN
Some punk's breaking into the house
across the street.

The WIFE sits up in bed.

WIFE

That poor old woman. Shouldn't you
be calling the cops?

After a moment of silence.

MAN

Yeah.

He reaches over to pick up the receiver.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE ACROSS STREET -- NIGHT

Jimmy is inside the house now. It is completely dark as he runs into a coffee table.

JIMMY

Aw, shit!

He flicks on a table lamp, which illuminates the small room. Looking around, he notices the end table, upon which are several pictures and a large snow globe.

One of the pictures on the table is of Jimmy, Jimmy's Mother and Jimmy's Grandmother, Gloria.

Jimmy staggers over to the table, wrenches the drawer open and begins to rifle through the contents.

A noise is heard, causing Jimmy to turn and look at the stairs.

Step by step, GLORIA, an elderly woman and Jimmy's Grandmother, descends the stairs gripping a baseball bat in her hands.

GLORIA

You better just get the hell out of
here right now!

Jimmy grabs the snow globe and backs up a step.

Gloria reaches the bottom of the steps, recognizes Jimmy, and slowly lowers the bat.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Jimmy, is that you, honey?

She steps closer to him.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Did you break my window?

Savagely, Jimmy leaps forward and brings the snow globe crashing down upon Gloria's head.

She screams and falls to the ground.

Suddenly, the living room windows light up in blinking reds and flashing lights, as outside the house police cars pull up.

Jimmy looks around like a trapped animal and takes off, full speed, through the kitchen and toward the back door.

He opens the door and runs directly into the police officer standing in front of him, who grabs him and throws him to the ground outside.

POLICEMAN

(O.S.)

Brooks, did ya get him?

BROOKS, the policeman in the backyard has his knee planted firmly in Jimmy's back and is struggling to place the hand cuffs on him.

BROOKS

Yeah, get back here!

Jimmy, breathing heavily and making grunting noises, reaches back and scratches at Brooks' face. Brooks reels back for a moment, but keeps his knee firmly in place.

The other POLICEMAN comes barreling out the back door and grabs Jimmy as well. Brooks stands up.

BROOKS (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Brooks kicks Jimmy in the face, knocking him out cold.

BROOKS (CONT'D)

And that's for the scratch, you little shit.

The other Policeman, sitting on top of Jimmy's inert body, points at the house.

POLICEMAN

Jesus! You should have seen what he did to that old lady in there.

BROOKS

Stupid crack head!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

Jimmy, dressed in an orange jump suit with chains on his arms and legs, is standing in front of the JUDGE. The Judge is sifting through a manila folder stuffed with papers.

In the rows of onlookers are Jimmy's Mother, Rudy, and Grandmother, Gloria. Gloria has a bandage on her head, while Jimmy's Mother is crying hysterically into a rag.

Rudy simply stares at Jimmy.

The Judge, disgusted, closes the folder.

JUDGE

Young man, this is your first offense, so the court has cause to be lenient. However, due to the violence associated with your offense, the court feels an obligation to enforce a slightly stricter discipline than would be normally called upon.

The Judge writes a note on the outside of the manila folder.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

James Edward Robinson, this court convicts you to nine years in the Madison County Penitentiary and three years parole.

The Judge bangs his gavel as the guard leads Jimmy to a door. Jimmy looks back at his Mother and Grandmother, who are both weeping.

Rudy's and Jimmy's eyes lock. Rudy's are full of tears while Jimmy's are hard as rocks.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON BUS -- DAY

Jimmy is sitting on a prison bus, still dressed in the orange jump suit and chains. He looks out the window as the world flies past.

FADE OUT:

"Seven Years Later"