READINESS

A Television Series
in Five Episodes

Written by
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EPISODE 1 — THE MURDER

LOCATION — INT — HOUSE — 10 DUNMORE ROAD — KITCHEN — NIGHT

The kitchen is small. Too small for two people. Red curtains, faded, closed. A table with two chairs, one pushed back. Potatoes on a cutting board, half-chopped. A package of uncooked meat, still wrapped, sitting in its own blood. A coffee machine, unplugged. A dryer, broken, with a note taped to it. The room is lit by one overhead bulb, too bright, humming.

LUCA stands at the counter. His hands are at his sides. He is looking at the potatoes.

AME is at the table. Coat on. Purse in her lap. Phone face-down on the table. She is looking at him the way you look at a bus that's late. Mildly annoyed. Already gone.

AME
You're not even listening.

Luca doesn't respond. He's looking at the potatoes.

AME
I said I'm going.

LUCA
I heard you.

AME
Then say something.

LUCA
What do you want me to say.

AME
I don't want you to say anything.
I want you to do something.
Anything. You just stand there.

She stands. Puts her purse on her shoulder. Looks at him.

AME
You know what your problem is? You think you're a good man. You think you're trying. You're not trying. You're waiting. For what? For me to leave so you can be the victim?

Luca turns. The knife is in his hand. He doesn't remember picking it up. He doesn't remember turning. He's just... there. Facing her. The knife is in his hand.

LUCA
I'm not the victim.

AME
No. You're the thing that happens to other people.

She looks at the knife. She doesn't flinch. She looks at it the way you look at a chair. Something in the room. Not something to be afraid of.

AME
You're not going to do anything. You never do anything. That's the whole—

The sound cuts out. Ame's mouth is moving. Luca is watching her mouth. The knife is in his hand. He is not moving. He is not breathing. He is not there.

And then —

— the knife goes in.

Not a decision. Not a lunge. Just: the knife, and then the knife in her. Ame's mouth stops moving. Her eyes go wide. Not afraid. Surprised. Like she's just realized she was wrong about him.

Luca pulls the knife out. It makes a sound. Wet. Small.

He stabs her again.

And again.

And again.

He is not screaming. He is not crying. His face is blank. His body is doing the thing and he is not inside it. He is watching it happen the way you watch a car crash from the sidewalk. He cannot stop it. He is not driving.

Ame goes down. The chair tips. Her purse spills. Her phone hits the floor. The screen lights up — an Uber confirmation. 4 minutes away.

Luca is standing over her. The knife is in his hand. It is red. His hands are red. The floor is red. The red curtains are red. Everything is red.

He drops the knife.

It clatters on the tile.

Silence. The tap is running. He doesn't remember turning it on.

CUT TO:

LOCATION — INT/EXT — HOUSE/CAR/BRIDGE — NIGHT

Post-murder clean-up.

INT — KITCHEN — CONTINUOUS

Ame is on the floor. Her blood is spreading. It is dark and thick and it moves slowly, like it has somewhere to be. Her eyes are open. They are not

looking at anything.

Luca is on his knees beside her. He is not looking at her face. He is looking at the blood. He puts his hands in it. He doesn't know why. He lifts his hands. They are red. He watches the blood drip from his fingers onto the floor. Drip. Drip. Drip.

He stands. He walks to the sink. He turns on the tap — it was already running. He puts his hands under the water. The water turns pink. Then red. Then clear. He watches the water. He doesn't wash the knife. The knife is on the floor, next to Ame.

He turns off the tap. He looks at the knife. He looks at Ame. He looks at the blood. He looks at the potatoes. Half-chopped. The meat. Still wrapped. The coffee machine. Unplugged. The dryer. Broken.

The Uber confirmation on Ame's phone is still glowing. 3 minutes away.

CUT TO:

INT — LIVING ROOM — LATER

A carpet. Rolled. Tied with cord. It is the wrong shape for a carpet. It is the right shape for something else. There is a stain on the outside of the carpet. It is spreading.

Luca is dragging it. He is struggling. The carpet is heavy. He is sweating. He is not making a sound. He drags it through the living room. Through the hall. To the front door. The trail behind him is red.

CUT TO:

INT — CAR — NIGHT

Luca is driving. The carpet is in the back seat. It is leaking. He doesn't look at it. He looks at the road. The radio is off. The car is making a noise. It has always made a noise.

The road is empty. The road is always empty.

CUT TO:

EXT — BRIDGE — NIGHT

Sodium light. Orange. Unreal. The bridge is long. The bridge is empty. The water below is black. It is not moving. It is a photograph of water.

Luca is standing at the railing. The carpet is at his feet. It is still leaking. He is looking at the water. He is not crying. He is not praying. He is not saying goodbye. He is just standing there, looking at the water.

He lifts the carpet. It is heavy. It is wet. He struggles. He tips it over the railing. It falls. There is a splash. A real one. A wet, heavy, final one. The water ripples. Then it is still.

Luca looks at his hands. They are red. He looks at the water. It is still a photograph.

He walks back to the car. He doesn't look back at the bridge. He doesn't look back at the water. He gets in the car. He drives home.

CUT TO:

INT — HOUSE — KITCHEN — NIGHT

The kitchen. The red curtains. The too-bright bulb. The potatoes. The meat. The knife on the floor. The blood on the tile. The tap is still running.

Luca stands in the doorway. He looks at the room. The room is empty. There is no body. There is no Ame. There is only the blood. Only the knife. Only the potatoes. Only the meat. Only the red curtains. Only the too-bright bulb. Only the tap, still running.

He walks to the phone on the wall. He picks it up. He dials. He waits.

CUT TO:

LOCATION — INT — HOUSE — KITCHEN — NIGHT

The kitchen. Same red curtains. Same too-bright bulb. The tap is still running. The potatoes. The meat. The blood on the floor is starting to dry. The knife is still on the floor. There is no body, no Ame. There is only the room.

Luca is sitting at the table. The chair Ame sat in. He is not looking at anything. The phone is in front of him. He dials. He waits.

We hear the ring. Once. Twice. Three times.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Emergency. Which service do you require?

Luca doesn't answer immediately. He is looking at the floor. At the blood. At the place where she was. The place where she isn't.

LUCA
Police.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Connecting you.

Another ring. Another wait. Luca doesn't move. He doesn't fidget. He doesn't breathe loudly. He is waiting the way you wait for a bus.

POLICE (V.O.)
Police. What is your emergency?

LUCA
I want to report a murder.

The tap runs.

POLICE (V.O.)

Sir, can you confirm your location?

LUCA
10 Dunmore Road.

POLICE (V.O.)
And who is the victim?

Luca looks at the floor. The blood. The empty space. She is not there. She is in the river. He put her there. He remembers putting her there. He remembers the splash.

LUCA
Ame. Her name is Ame.

POLICE (V.O.)
Is the victim with you now, sir?

Luca looks at the chair across from him. It is empty. It has been empty the whole time. He looks at the floor. The blood. The knife. The place where she was. The place where she isn't.

LUCA
No.

POLICE (V.O.)
Can you tell me what happened?

Luca looks at the potatoes. The half-chopped potatoes. He looks at the meat. The uncooked meat. He looks at the knife on the floor. The blood on the blade. He looks at his hands. They are clean. They are always clean.

LUCA
I killed her. In the kitchen. With a knife.

Silence. The tap runs.

POLICE (V.O.)
Sir, is there anyone else in the house?

LUCA
No.

POLICE (V.O.)
Are you injured?

LUCA
No.

POLICE (V.O.)
Sir, I need you to stay on the line. Officers are on their way. Do you understand?

LUCA

Yes.

He doesn't hang up. He doesn't move. He sits at the table, in the too-bright kitchen, with the red curtains closed, and the tap running, and the blood drying on the floor, and the knife on the tile, and the empty chair across from him. He waits. He is good at waiting. He has been waiting his whole life.

The phone is still in his hand. The operator is still talking. He is not listening. He is looking at the empty chair.

LUCA
(quietly, to the empty chair)

I told them.

The chair doesn't answer. The tap runs. The bulb hums. The blood dries.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: READINESS

LOCATION — INT — POLICE STATION — INTERVIEW ROOM — DAY

OPENING — THE ROOM

The interview room is small. Too small for two people. A table bolted to the floor. Two chairs. A tape recorder. A two-way mirror. The walls are grey. The light is fluorescent. It hums.

HAMISH sits across from LUCA. Hamish is mid-forties. Tired. Functional. He has done this a thousand times. He has the file in front of him. He has a pen. He has a cup of coffee that has gone cold.

Luca sits across from him. His hands are on the table. They are clean. He is wearing the same clothes from last night. There is a stain on his shirt. It might be blood. It might be coffee. It might be nothing.

Hamish studies him. Luca doesn't look at him. He looks at the table. At his hands. At the tape recorder. At nothing.

HAMISH
You want to run this by me again?

LUCA
I killed her.

HAMISH
Yeah. I got that. I'm asking for the details.

Luca doesn't answer. He is looking at his hands. They are clean. They are always clean.

HAMISH
Mr. Luca. You came in here. You confessed. You want to tell me what happened, or do you want to

sit there and waste my time?

Luca looks up. He looks at Hamish the way you look at a stranger on a train. Not hostile. Not scared. Just... present. Barely.

LUCA
We argued. In the kitchen.

HAMISH
About what?

LUCA
Everything. Nothing. She was leaving.

HAMISH
She was leaving you?

LUCA
She had her coat on. Her purse. She'd called an Uber. I saw the confirmation. Four minutes.

Hamish writes it down. Slowly. Deliberately.

HAMISH
So she was leaving. And you... what? Tried to stop her?

LUCA
No.

HAMISH
You just let her go?

LUCA
No.

Hamish stops writing. He looks at Luca. Luca is looking at the table. At his hands. At the place where the knife was. Where the knife isn't.

HAMISH
Help me out here, Mr. Luca. You're not making a lot of sense.

LUCA
I picked up the knife.

HAMISH
You picked up the knife.

LUCA
I don't remember picking it up. But I had it. I turned around. She was still talking. She said something. I don't know what. And then—

He stops. He is not crying. He is not shaking. He is just... there. In the room. In the memory. In the kitchen. In the red.

HAMISH
And then what?

CUT TO:

FLASH — THE KNIFE

One frame. The knife in his hand. Ame's mouth moving. No sound.

Back to the room.

CUT TO:

LUCA
And then she was on the floor.

CUT TO:

FLASH — THE FLOOR

One frame. Ame on the tile. Her eyes open. The blood spreading. Dark. Thick.

Back to the room.

CUT TO:

HAMISH
You stabbed her.

LUCA
Yes.

HAMISH
How many times?

Luca doesn't answer. He is looking at the table. At his hands. At the place where the knife was. He is counting. He is trying to remember. He can't.

LUCA
Three. Maybe four. I don't remember.

HAMISH
You don't remember how many times you stabbed your girlfriend.

LUCA
No.

Hamish writes it down. He is not looking at Luca. He is looking at the file. At the empty page. At the case that is not a case yet. Because there is no body. There is no blood. There is no evidence. There is only a man

who says he did it.

HAMISH
What did you do with the body?

LUCA
I put her in a carpet. I dragged her to the car. I drove to the bridge.

HAMISH
Which bridge?

Luca looks at him. He doesn't answer. He doesn't know. He doesn't know which bridge. He just knows there was a bridge. There was water. There was a splash.

CUT TO:

FLASH — THE BRIDGE

One frame. Sodium light. Orange. The carpet at his feet. The water below. Black. Still.

Back to the room.

CUT TO:

LUCA
I don't know.

HAMISH
You don't know which bridge you dumped a body off?

LUCA
No.

Hamish leans back. He looks at Luca. He looks at the tape recorder. He is trying to figure out if this is a confession or a breakdown. He can't tell. Neither can the audience.

HAMISH
Okay. So you stabbed her. Multiple times. You wrapped her in a carpet. You drove her to a bridge — a bridge you can't name — and you threw her in the river. Is that right?

LUCA
Yes.

HAMISH
And then you went home.

LUCA

Yes.

HAMISH
And then you called us.

LUCA
Yes.

HAMISH
Why?

Luca looks at him. For the first time, he looks directly at Hamish. His eyes are flat. Not cold. Not empty. Just flat. Like a pond in winter.

LUCA
Because I did it.

HAMISH
You did it.

LUCA
Yes.

HAMISH
You could have gotten away with it. No body. No evidence. Just a missing girlfriend and a guy who says he did it. We can't charge you without a body, Mr. Luca. You know that?

LUCA
I know.

HAMISH
Then why confess?

Luca doesn't answer. He is looking at Hamish. He is looking at the table.

LUCA
Because if I don't say it, it's not real. And I need it to be real.

Hamish doesn't know what to do with that. He looks at the tape recorder. He looks at the two-way mirror. He writes something down. He doesn't know what.

HAMISH
Okay. Here's what's going to happen. I'm going to get this typed up. You're going to read it. You're going to sign it. And then you're going to be detained while we look for the body. You understand?

LUCA

Yes.

HAMISH
You have the right to a solicitor.
Do you want one?

LUCA
No.

HAMISH
You're sure?

LUCA
Yes.

Hamish stands. He picks up the file. He looks at Luca. Luca is still sitting at the table. His hands are still on the table. They are still clean.

He walks to the door. He walks out. The door closes. Luca is alone.

He looks at the table. At his hands. At the place where the knife was. At the place where Ame was. At the place where she isn't. At the place where she never was.

The fluorescent light hums. The tape recorder clicks. The room is silent.

LOCATION — INT — HOUSE — 10 DUNMORE ROAD — KITCHEN — DAY

CUT TO:

The kitchen. Daylight now. The red curtains are open. The too-bright bulb is off. The room looks different in the day. Smaller. Sadder. Ordinary.

HAMISH stands in the doorway. He has been told there's nothing here. He has read the report. No blood. No body. No evidence. The scene has already been processed. The scene has already been cleared.

He doesn't believe it.

He walks in. Slowly. He looks at the potatoes. Still on the cutting board. Half-chopped. Going brown at the edges. He looks at the meat. Still wrapped. Still in its own blood. He looks at the coffee machine. Unplugged. The dryer. Broken. The note taped to it.

He looks at the floor. The tile. Clean. He crouches. He runs his hand over the tile. He is looking for something. A stain. A scratch. A sign. There is nothing.

He stands. He looks at the table. Two chairs. One pushed back. He looks at the chair Ame sat in. He looks at the chair Luca sat in. He looks at the space between them.

He walks to the sink. The knife is in the sink. Clean. Dried. He picks

it up. He turns it over. He looks at the blade. No blood. No residue. Nothing. He puts it back.

He walks to the bin. He opens it. Nothing. No carpet fibres. No cord. No evidence of a cleanup. He closes it.

He walks to the door. He looks at the doorframe. No blood. No scratches. No sign of a struggle. He looks at the lock. Undamaged.

He stands in the middle of the kitchen. He looks at the room. The ordinary, sad, empty room. He takes out his notebook. He writes:

> No blood. No body. No evidence. Scene clean.
>
> Too clean.

He puts the notebook away. He looks at the red curtains. He looks at the potatoes. He looks at the meat. He looks at the knife in the sink. He looks at the empty chair.

He doesn't know what happened here. He doesn't know if anything happened here. But he knows something is wrong. He can feel it. The way you feel a word you've said too many times. The way you feel a photograph that's been developed wrong.

He takes out his phone. He calls the station.

HAMISH
(into phone)
It's Hamish. I'm at Dunmore Road. The scene's clean. No blood. No signs of a struggle. Nothing.

He pauses. He listens.

HAMISH
I know. I read the report. I just wanted to see it for myself.

He pauses. He looks at the kitchen. At the empty chair.

HAMISH
No. Nothing. There's nothing here. Just a kitchen. Just a man who says he did it. And a woman who isn't here.

He pauses. He listens.

HAMISH
Yeah. I'll come in. But I want the Uber records. And the phone records. And I want to know where she went. If she went anywhere.

He pauses. He listens. He nods.

HAMISH
Because I don't believe him. And I don't believe there's no body. There's always a body.

He hangs up. He looks at the kitchen one more time. The ordinary, sad, empty kitchen. The red curtains. The potatoes. The meat. The knife. The empty chair.

He walks out. The door closes behind him. The kitchen is alone again. The potatoes go brown. The meat sits in its blood. The knife sits in the sink. The chair stays empty.

CUT TO:

INT — POLICE STATION — HOLDING CELL — DAY

Luca is sitting on a bench. His hands are on his knees. They are clean. He is looking at the wall. The wall is grey. The light is fluorescent. It hums.

He is alone. He is waiting. He is good at waiting.

CUT TO: