

EMMA'S REPRIEVE

Written by

Vicky L. Neal

3024 Apple Knoll Lane
Middletown, Ohio 45044
(513) 539-0258
vickyneal5@yahoo.com
www.vickylneal.com

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

SUPER: "1994"

A sunny day. All is quiet, except for a LAWN-MOWER running in the distance.

A Dodge sedan pulls up in front of the large, split-level house. LINDA RUTHERS (17), in cheerleader outfit, gives DAVID HARRIS (18), a handsome boy in letterman's jacket, a wet, sloppy kiss before she steps out.

As Linda walks to the house, David leaves the car.

DAVID

Hey!

He takes off his jacket and tosses it to Linda.

LINDA

You mean it?

Clutching the jacket to her, she walks back to David.

DAVID

Yeah.

Linda kisses him again, even more passionately than before.

DAVID

Will your mom freak out?

LINDA

I don't worry about my mom. It's my asshole dad that scares me.

DAVID

Call me later. Maybe we can hit the drive-in this weekend.

With a wink and a skip, Linda returns toward her front door, putting on the jacket as she goes.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Linda steps inside.

LINDA

Mom! I'm home. Guess what David gave me!

The house is quiet. Almost too quiet.

LINDA

Mom?

Family photos grace the walls. A decidedly female feel to the decor with flowers and doilies and decorative pillows and quilts. The only thing male is the photo of a handsome man on his wedding day with a beautiful bride.

LINDA

David gave me his letterman's jacket.

She looks around. Something isn't right. Linda makes her way down a hall, very slowly. A door stands ajar.

OFFICE

All male. Small with a desk and leather chair. Fishing trophies and a Marine Corps plaque on the wall belonging to "Charles Ruthers". A bookcase with lots of hunting and rifle books.

A military trunk lies open, the contents (papers, magazines, newspaper articles about Vietnam) strewn about. A box of letters is spilled.

More letters lie on the desk, open and read.

Linda, confused, looks over a few of them.

INSERT - LETTERS

Each one begins with headings like "My Dearest Charles", "To My Love", "Darling", etc.

BACK TO SCENE:

LINDA

Mom?

Linda, breathless, glances through more of the letters, dropping them in her haste. She exits the room.

LINDA

Mom!

MASTER BEDROOM

Linda throws open the door to find more letters on the floor. A phone is off the hook with a loud BEEP-BEEP-BEEP emitting from it.

LINDA

Mom!

She flees the room, across the--

HALL

-- and down a set of steps.

FAMILY ROOM

A pool table in the center, a pinball machine in the corner. Pictures of good times - camping, school photos, birthdays, hang on the walls. Many are splattered with blood.

Linda's mother lies on the floor. Gun in one hand, note in the other. A fatal gunshot wound to the side of her head has caused a puddle of blood to pool underneath her.

Linda stops short, her face flooded with terror.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Crime Scene Investigators come and go.

Linda stands off to the side in shock. Nearby, two POLICE OFFICERS talk to each other quietly. Through Linda's confused state of mind, she picks up on key phrases.

OFFICER
... having an affair.

OFFICER #2
... letters hidden away. She found them and went to her room and got the--

OFFICER
... basement where she found her.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

Police cars and unmarked vehicles remain at the scene.

A taxi pulls up to the curb. CHARLES RUTHERS (38), a serious man married to his career, dressed in a business suit, jumps out and runs up to the house.

A couple of officers stand in the open doorway. Before Charles can say a word, he spots Linda to the inside of them and catches her glare. He might as well be dead to her.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Linda, wearing the letterman's jacket, sits quietly at the table eating cereal.

SUPER: "TWO WEEKS LATER"

Charles, in a suit, enters.

CHARLES

It'll be good for you to get back
to school. Back to the grindstone.

Linda stares at her bowl.

CHARLES

Have you seen my briefcase?

Linda's gaze shifts to the briefcase that lies on the kitchen countertop.

CHARLES

I'll be gone for two weeks. Are
you gonna be okay?

Linda says nothing.

CHARLES

I'll take that as a yes. No
parties, no drinking, nothing while
I'm gone. Understand?

Charles looks at himself in a small mirror hanging on the wall. He runs a hand through his hair and checks his teeth.

CHARLES

I've asked Sam to stop by on
occasion, just to make sure you're
obeying my rules.

He stops preening to gaze at his daughter.

CHARLES

Look, Linda. I'm terribly sorry
about your mother. There's a lot
of things you don't understand.
Things I did wrong and things your
mother did wrong.

Linda glares up at him.

CHARLES

That's right, your mom ain't innocent in this whole aff... situation.

LINDA

Yeah, but my mom's dead and you're not.

Charles lays a hand on her shoulder.

CHARLES

Linda--

Linda shrugs off his hand.

Charles saddens.

CHARLES

Go to school. Get good grades. Stay out of trouble. Don't get pregnant.

He grabs his briefcase and storms outside through the back door, slamming it closed behind him.

Linda goes to a cabinet, where she removes a home pregnancy test. She studies the box, growing sad.

EXT. UPPER MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - HOUSE - NIGHT

Loud ROCK MUSIC comes from one of the houses. More than a dozen cars are parked in the driveway and at the curb.

SUPER: "PRESENT DAY"

Through shades and thin draperies on the downstairs windows, many human shadows move about.

The main door flies open. EMMA HARRIS (17), a rebellious girl out to defy the whole world, staggers through the doorway dressed in a cheerleading uniform. She laughs in an inebriated manner.

NATALIE MARTIN (17), fellow cheerleader with perfect hair, follows. Natalie is drunk as well.

The girls snicker as they trot over to a new sports car parked on the street. They climb in, Emma behind the wheel.