

THE JUMP

Written by

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INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

A dimly lit, gloomy basement illuminated by a single, dull overhead light. In the center, a gaunt, badly beaten man sits tied to a chair, wearing only boxers, his body covered in bruises and contusions. His thin arms and legs are securely bound to the chair, his head drooping heavily onto his chest as if it's too burdensome to hold up.

The man tied to the chair is SAMUEL (35). Opposite him sits MICHAEL (40), on a similar chair. The key difference is Michael is clothed, unscathed, and not tied up.

Michael gazes at Samuel heavily, for a long stretch, with loathing. Then he starts to speak in a calm, drawn-out voice.

MICHAEL

I was bound to track you down sooner or later, it was just a matter of time. You knew it was coming, didn't you?

Samuel struggles to lift his head, blood streaming down his face.

SAMUEL

Yes.

MICHAEL

I can't let you walk out of here alive. You understand that, right?

SAMUEL

Yes...

Michael kicks back, leg over leg, and fires up a cigarette. He squints at Samuel for a good while, puffing out smoke.

MICHAEL

I wasn't aiming to rough you up... too bad. But once I got going, it was damn hard to stop. Hitting you feels like savoring a perfect medium-rare steak. It's like heroin. Scratch that, it's better. Better than making love to a woman you love. I could've gone at you all day long, no breaks, till my fists bruised up. You get what I'm saying?

SAMUEL

Yes.

Michael brings the burning cigarette close to an open palm.

CLOSE-UP: The lit tip of the cigarette a quarter inch away from the palm.

MICHAEL

I've been toying with the idea of torturing you. To be honest, it's been on my mind... for quite a while.

Michael holds the cigarette close to his palm, we can almost feel the heat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I concocted the most elaborate tortures, then just Googled it, and... gosh... it's a real treasure trove of information!

Michael pops the cigarette back in his mouth.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Everything's already out there. People have come up with so much stuff over thousands of years. A personal fave? Molten lead.

Samuel shifts uneasily in his chair.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

The real kicker with molten lead is you can drip it into all kinds of built-in crevices. Humans have way more natural openings than most think. Nostrils, ears, mouth - the usual suspects. The anus. But the top spot? The urethra. The agony... it's off the charts.

Samuel looks at his captor in horror. Michael finishes his cigarette, flicks the butt away with a snap.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But then I thought, that wouldn't be fair to you. After all, you didn't torture my wife and my twelve-year-old daughter. You didn't beat them.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT - ONE YEAR AGO

The camera tracks down the corridor, heading towards the living room.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

You barged into our house and shot them dead. After that, you looted the jewels and 20 grand in cash from the safe, which my wife opened for you before she died.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 Then you walked out, leaving
 corpses where my family used to be.

The camera glides into the living room.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - ONE YEAR AGO

In the spacious living room, on the blood-soaked floor, lie the bodies of a woman and a girl. Michael, with a briefcase in hand (he's just returned from work), approaches them with small steps.

MICHAEL
 Oh... Oh... Oh... Ah... Oh...

He stops in front of a pool of blood that has flowed from the bullet-riddled heads of his wife and daughter.

CLOSE-UP: Michael's shoe tips an inch away from the glossy, carmine puddle.

Michael shuffles his feet, unsure how to get closer to the bodies without wading into the blood.

MICHAEL
 Oh... Oh... Oh... Oh...

Michael continues to shift from one foot to another.

BACK TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Michael and Samuel are right where we left them.

MICHAEL
 I didn't know how to approach my
 dead wife and daughter without
 stepping in their blood. For some
 reason, I just couldn't bring
 myself to do it-

SAMUEL
 I'm sorry--

MICHAEL
 (shouts)
 Shut the fuck up!
 (calmly)
 You didn't kill them. You executed
 them. I don't know why. Maybe you
 were afraid they'd recognize you,
 or maybe you didn't want to waste
 time tying them up.
 (MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Or maybe you just get off on killing. I don't know the twisted reason, and frankly, I don't give a shit.

Blood from a busted head floods Samuel's eyes, and he blinks rapidly, trying to shake it off.

Michael suddenly stands up, steps towards Samuel, pulling something from his back pocket. Samuel flinches - but it's just a handkerchief. Michael meticulously wipes the blood off Samuel's face while continuing.

MICHAEL

I'm not out for revenge for my wife and daughter, because then I'd just have to shoot you in the head, and that's too kind a punishment for you. I want to avenge myself. And trust me, that's gonna be way, way worse.

The white handkerchief is now blood-red. Michael tosses it aside in disgust and returns to his chair.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

See, by killing my family, you killed me too. Now I'm just a walking corpse.

(lights a new cigarette)

I eat, I smoke, I breathe, but I'm not really alive anymore. I'm dead inside. A hollow shell, and nothing's gonna change that. I wanna drag you down to feel the exact same emptiness. Seems only fair, doesn't it? What's your take?

SAMUEL

I don't know...

MICHAEL

I want to kill you in such a way that you realize I've killed you. I want you to stew in the realization that you're already dead.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - ONE YEAR AGO

Michael sits in an armchair, motionless as a statue. His gaze is glassy, fixed on a single point. In his hand, his daughter's favorite plush bear.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
I want you to feel what I'm
feeling, and I want to feel what
you'll be feeling after I kill you.

BACK TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

We return to the basement. A pause. Michael takes another drag, then crosses his legs again.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
But how's that done? How do you
kill someone and keep them
conscious after they're gone? I
only need a few minutes, not asking
for much. Even though you've had me
in agony far longer than that. Eh?

SAMUEL
I... I don't--

MICHAEL
At first, I thought about slashing
your veins, letting you bleed out.

CUT TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The room is dominated by a large jacuzzi at its center, filled nearly to the brim with eerily thick, crimson water. Samuel's head floats above the surface, his face ghostly pale from severe blood loss, resembling a waxen mask. His eyes are half-closed, a testament to his weakened state.

Michael stands motionless in front of the jacuzzi, holding a gun in his hand.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
You'd bleed out slowly, faint from
the loss, and eventually die.

Samuel's head falls back against the edge of the jacuzzi, he loses consciousness. Michael, still holding the gun, stands motionless.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
But then it dawned on me - that's
not what I'm after. Cutting your
veins isn't a guaranteed end.
People have survived worse,
slashing their limbs to ribbons and
living to tell the tale.

CLOSE-UP: A blade glides over a bare forearm, leaving a bloody trail on the skin.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
Somehow, the body fights back,
stopping the blood loss.

Samuel's head is thrown back against the jacuzzi edge, his mouth slightly open, tongue lolling out. He's dead.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
Secondly, you wouldn't feel that clear line between 'before' and 'after', and I want you to feel it distinctly. 'Before' the killing, when hope still lingers, and 'after' - when there's none left. You need to experience that contrast vividly. Slashing veins is just a slow path to death, so I scrapped that idea.

BACK TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Michael and Samuel in their places. Now Samuel looks at Michael in horror, struck by his monologue.

MICHAEL
Then I thought about poisoning you.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A spacious bedroom. Among other things, on a massive dresser, we see gold-plated statuettes of a man with a dome overhead - awards for achievements in skydiving. Samuel sprawls on a king-size bed, tied up by his wrists and ankles. His mouth is gagged.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
There are certain kinds of slow-acting poisons with delayed effects. It's like waiting for a ticking time bomb without knowing when it'll go off.

Michael, syringe in hand, approaches the bed. Samuel starts to squirm and moan in panic.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
These poisons need time to kick in, anywhere from a few hours to a few days. The wait can be agonizing.

Michael leans over the bed, gripping Samuel's forearm tightly with one hand.

CLOSE-UP: The needle of the syringe pierces the skin. A thumb presses the plunger, injecting the syringe's contents into Samuel's vein.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

But this method's a real chore. You have to calculate the dose just right. Too much, and you die too quickly. Too little, and you don't die at all. Plus, poisons have antidotes. This means you'd cling to hope right up until the end.

Michael steps back from the bed with the empty syringe. Samuel writhes and mumbles furiously. Michael sits down on a chair and begins to wait.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

So, I scrapped that plan as well. It's just a drawn-out murder, a torture of waiting.

BACK TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Back in the basement. Mike rises from his chair and whips out a gun from behind his belt, aiming it at Samuel.

MICHAEL

Like this!

With his thumb, Michael cocks the hammer. Samuel shrinks back, pulling his head down into his shoulders.

SAMUEL

No... Don't shoot...

MICHAEL

If I tell you I'll pull the trigger in exactly...

(checks his wristwatch)

...three minutes. The countdown begins. In three minutes, I'll send a bullet through your head--

SAMUEL

(trembling)

No, please... I beg you... Forgive me... Ple--

MICHAEL

(raising his voice)
 If I tell you that in...
 (checks his watch again)
 ...two minutes and fifty seconds
 you'll be dead, will you feel
 murdered then? Will you realize
 that you're dead now?

SAMUEL

Please, no... Please! Please!

Mike aims at Samuel, poised and waiting.

MICHAEL

No. You'll be terrified beyond
 belief. You might even start
 praying. But until the very last
 second, you'd hope I wouldn't
 shoot. That hope is life. It's the
 agony of waiting, but I need the
 agony of realization.

Michael de-cocks the gun and lowers it. Samuel's body
 relaxes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D.)

Realization that your life is
 already over. That you're already
 dead. A living, walking, talking
 corpse. Just like me.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT - ONE YEAR AGO

Michael, gun in hand, stands before the mirror, his gaze upon
 his reflection empty and expressionless.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

And there's no turning back.
 Because even now, you're still
 hoping to get out. Subconsciously,
 perhaps, but hoping nonetheless. I
 want to take even the slightest
 shadow of hope away from you.

Michael puts the gun barrel in his mouth. He closes his eyes
 tightly.

BACK TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Michael tucks the gun back into his belt and returns to his
 chair.

MICHAEL

I want to snatch away the last,
one-thousandth percent of hope and
crush it underfoot. And when I do,
I want to look into your eyes.

Michael lights a cigarette for the third time.

MICHAEL (CONT'D.)

But how to do it? I pondered long
and hard. And you know what? I
think I found a way. It was so
simple, the answer was right there
all along.

Samuel raises his eyes to meet Michael's, horror reflected in
his gaze. What fate has Michael devised for him?

INT. UTILITY AIRCRAFT - 13,000 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND - DAY

Michael and Samuel at the open door of the plane. Samuel's
hands are tied behind his back. Neither is wearing a
parachute. Both are strapped together with harnesses as if
for a tandem jump.

Michael grabs the fear-paralyzed Samuel by the chest and
pulls him close.

CLOSE-UP: Michael and Samuel's faces opposite each other.

MICHAEL

When I push you out of this door -
I kill you!

SAMUEL

No-no-no-no...

MICHAEL

We're at 13,000 feet! A freefall
from this height lasts just under a
minute. We'll have two!

SAMUEL

No-no-no-no-no...

MICHAEL

The catch is, to truly feel your
emotions, I'll have to jump with
you. And I can't wear a parachute
because then I'd give you hope--

SAMUEL

Nononono!

Michael pulls Samuel closer. He's gone mad.

MICHAEL

But that's alright! I've been dead
for a long time!

In the next second, Michael tightly wraps his arms around Samuel and jumps out of the open door with him.

EXT. 13,000 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND - CONTINUOUS

Michael and Samuel in free fall. Michael (an experienced skydiver) skillfully stabilizes their spin, and they almost level out.

CLOSE-UP: Michael and Samuel's faces opposite each other again. Michael looks into Samuel's face with eager, hungry eyes, trying to absorb all his emotions. All his terror.

MICHAEL

(yelling)

You're dead! I killed you! You're
dead!

Samuel screams in agony.

MICHAEL (CONT'D.)

(yelling)

Calm down! Calm down! I said calm
down!

Samuel stops screaming.

MICHAEL (CONT'D.)

(yelling)

I want to know what you're feeling?
Now? When you're dead? When I've
killed you? Do you like it? Do
you?!

SAMUEL

Nooooo!

MICHAEL

(yelling)

It's all over! You've got nothing
left to fear! You're dead now!

SAMUEL

Nooooo!

Wide shot. Two people plummet towards the earth like stones.
The ground is dangerously close.

MICHAEL

(yelling)

You must feel something else. What
is it?

CLOSE-UP: Samuel looks into Michael's eyes. His face contorts.

SAMUEL
(yelling)
I want it to end!

Michael doesn't hear the response, but he reads the lips. He closes his eyes. He is satisfied.

Wide shot. Two bodies crash into the ground.