

THE GREYSON

written by

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IN BLACK

DISC JOCKEY on transistor radio.

RADIO DJ (V.O.)
Johnny River for C.F.I.X. Eleven-
seventy. Here's a new one from Ian
and Sylvia -- Four Strong Winds.

IAN AND SYLVIA (V.O.)
(singing)
FOUR STRONG WINDS THAT BLOW LONELY.
SEVEN SEAS THAT RUN HIGH...

There's another sound buried beneath the FOLK TUNE -- METAL
SCRAPING AGAINST METAL.

OPEN ON:

INT. WINDOWLESS BASEMENT - TIME UNKNOWN

Metal trowel, held by a YELLOW RUBBER GLOVE, scoops up the
last bit of wet cement from a metal tub -- butters brick.

WORK BOOTS on the move, passing -- camping gear -- rotted
canoe -- bucket labeled Canadian Night Crawlers. PERSON IN
BOOTS, plaid shirt, cap hiding hair, climbs a wooden ladder
standing before a FRESHLY BRICKED WALL -- an open space waits
for the final brick.

FAINTLY HEARD. Through the open space. MOANING.

Yellow glove drops three crystal deodorizers, kind found
inside toilets, into the black hole.

MUFFLED CRIES GROW FRANTIC.

PERSON IN BOOTS
Shhh.

Final brick slides in, CHOKING OFF THE MERCY PLEA.

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK: "INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS."

FADE IN:

EXT. PARKDALE - JAMISON AVENUE - MORNING

Tired, mid-rise apartment buildings line the street, view --
leafless trees and frozen power lines. Residents in rush
mode navigate icy sidewalks. Another grey, cold day.

SUPER: "TORONTO, CANADA. NOVEMBER, 1973."

Canada Post truck pulls to the curb. MAILMAN, mailbag, carrying a box, heads for eight floors of weathered grey brick and pitted metal balconies. Out front, the maintenance man, STEFAN BRULE (40s), tall, thin, unhappy eyes, has been tasked with replacing a cut chain on the lawn sign.

Askew sign: THE GREYSON -- NO VACANCIES.

MAILMAN

Quite the skift of snow we got last night, eh, Stefan?

Whack! Snowball hits Stefan. Culprits -- SCHOOLBOYS.

SCHOOLBOY #1

Hey, Lurch!

SCHOOLBOY #2

You rang, strange and deranged?

MAILMAN

Bugger off, you little shits.

Stefan keeps a cold watch on the scrambling Schoolboys.

MAILMAN (CONT'D)

Don't let those punks ruin your morning.

Mailman continues for the glass, main-floor lobby.

A moment of humanless quiet for Stefan. He closes his eyes, stands peacefully still, breath visible. The silent solitude is broken by a shrill voice:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Stefan!

Stefan casts a weary eye up. Leaning over her second-story balcony, MRS. KLEIN (70s), hair in rollers, old bathrobe.

MRS. KLEIN

My bathroom sink is leaking again, and I can't reach Barbara.

INT. THE GREYSON - MAIN LOBBY - MORNING

Sorting mail, Mailman clocks Stefan as he enters.

MAILMAN

I've got a package for the new tenants in seven-0-two. Mind taking it up?

Dutifully, Stefan takes the box, waits by the elevator.

Elevator door opens -- decor, smoked glass and brass rails. Inside is a PRETTY BLONDE (30s), holding a basket of folded laundry. She's creeped out by Stefan but nods politely. He gets on, eyes down. As the elevator door closes, CUT TO:

INT. TURKOWSKI APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

GEORGE TURKOWSKI (late 40s), dark hair, dark eyes, drapes a tie around his neck, makes a Windsor knot. George is an unassuming man, someone you'd pass on the street and forget. Not unless you looked closer at those troubled eyes.

George grabs his suit jacket, gives it a brush. He has to maneuver around large furniture and moving boxes to get out.

INT. TURKOWSKI APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MORNING

Sidestepping more unpacked boxes, George nearly loses his footing on a strap-on roller skate. He snatches it up, yells at no one in particular. George has a slight Polish accent.

GEORGE

What did I say about leaving...?

George checks his emotions, carries the skate into...

INT. TURKOWSKI APARTMENT - BOYS' ROOM - MORNING

Twin beds press against opposite walls, each with a distinctive personality. Above one, rock posters: Rush, Neil Young, Led Zeppelin. Above the other: Toronto Maple Leafs and television show The Starlost.

George feels most guilty about this room. As he puts the skate on a shelf, the DOOR BUZZER RINGS.

INT. TURKOWSKI APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Floral sofa, matching chair, end tables with pearl-drop lamps, television console. Like every other room, the decor is much too opulent and ill-fitted for the space. George crosses through, opens the door. It's Stefan, with the box.

STEFAN

This came for your son.

INT. TURKOWSKI APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Simmering pots. Mixer on the counter surrounded by ingredients. ELLIE TURKOWSKI (40), attractive, overwhelmed, balances motherly duties with some type of party preparation.

Seated at the banquette, MARK (9), precocious, and ANDY (16), long hair, earpiece, listening to a transistor radio.

POP. Toast up. Ellie's to the toaster.

ANDY
(nudges Mark)
Your legs broken or something?

MARK
No.

ANDY
Then get up and butter your own toast.

MARK
I don't want toast. I want waffles.

ELLIE
No place to put the waffle maker.
Sorry.

Mark reaches for the last of Andy's bacon. Andy slaps his hand away -- too hard.

MARK
Mom!

ELLIE
(routine)
Mark, stay out of his food. Andy,
don't hit your brother.

George enters, removes Andy's earpiece.

GEORGE
Not at the table.

Andy takes out the earpiece, turns off the radio.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You got a delivery from Sam's.

ANDY
(flash of excitement;
quickly dims)
Oh, right. I'll send it back.

GEORGE
What is it?

ANDY
Nothing I need anymore.

GEORGE
That's not what I asked.

ELLIE
It's the reel-to-reel he bought for
his basement studio.

ANDY
I'll send it back.

GEORGE
Hold on to it.

ANDY
It's no big deal.

GEORGE
Just hold on to it.

George sidesteps Ellie, pours himself coffee.

ELLIE
There's eggs on the stove.

GEORGE
Just coffee. I have a showing.

ELLIE
New listing?

GEORGE
Yes.

ELLIE
Where?

GEORGE
(reluctant to say)
High Park.

Ellie tightens, doesn't comment. George takes his coffee
with him to the banquette, sits.

ANDY
I can't make it tonight, Tata. Mr.
Hayes is letting us use the auditorium
to audition a new bass player.

GEORGE
One night you can't make time for
your old man?

ANDY
Sorry. Last-minute.

ELLIE

Maybe Mark can hang with John tonight,
and you can come downstairs with me.
I heard they put out quite a spread.

GEORGE

Mark and I can still paint the town
red. Two handsome bachelors, right?

MARK

Sure, Tata.

ANDY

(rising)
I'm outta here.

ELLIE

What time will you be home?

ANDY

Should be home before midnight. Hayes
gave us the key to lock up.

GEORGE

Before ten. Andrzej?

Reluctant nod from Andy. As he exits --

WOMAN (O.S.)

Hello, Turkowskis!

BARBARA NOWAK (40s), heavy-set, blonde, enters. She too has
a Polish accent -- warns Andy:

BARBARA

Watch the sidewalk. Very slippery.

This early in the morning, Barbara's burst of energy is a
bit much. She's over to Mark, kissing his cheeks.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

How is my young prince this morning?

MARK

Average.

BARBARA

Well, my morning's been a real treat.

ELLIE

Coffee?

BARBARA

Please.

Ellie looks for a clean mug.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Mrs. Klein flooded her bathroom again;
God knows what that's going to cost.
Ray Malone in five-ten thought the
oven would be a clever way to dry
his running shoes. But instead of
turning on the oven -- Cream?

Dash of cream, Ellie hands Barbara the cup.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Ray turned on the broiler. The entire
kitchen will need to be repainted.
(calming sip of coffee)
Stefan had to replace the chain on
the sign again. I swear if I catch
the hooligan who keeps cutting --
(regarding party food)
Is this all for tonight?

ELLIE

I know. I overdid it.

Barbara peeks under Tupperware lids.

BARBARA

Perogies. Kopytka. George, your
wife is officially more Polish than
we are. Pickled herring?

Ellie nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

What did Tata use to say when Babcha
served herring?

GEORGE

"Where's the Vodka? A fish has to
swim."

BARBARA

A fish has to swim. Yes.

A bittersweet memory shared between siblings. Barbara's
quickly on to a new subject.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I had the most vivid dream about the
ballerina last night. Did I ever
tell you about the first time she
came through?

George's chair slides back; cue to leave.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

It was a year after Joe had passed,
on what would have been our twentieth
wedding anniversary.

Over to the sink, George rinses his coffee cup.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

We were nearing the end of the evening
when Bridget became very still. The
air in the room...

(tone change;
otherworldly)

... the air went cold; definite drop
in temperature. Lights flickered.
Some went dark. And then, right
before our eyes... Bridget seemed to
transform. Her body elongated, her
posture -- impeccable. Her feet
turned out ever so slightly.

George goes to the refrigerator, rummages through.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

When Bridget finally spoke, she said
her name was Elena, and as a young
girl, she had been painted by a very
famous Parisian artist. Members of
the group offered their guesses as
to who had come through. "Royalty?"
"Socialite?" "Actress?"

GEORGE

Ellie, my lunch?

ELLIE

Bottom shelf.

BARBARA

But I knew. "Ballerina." Like the
Degas print Joe and I had in our
bedroom. The one we had bought on
our honeymoon. Joe had sent her as
an anniversary gift. Elena came
through for me.

MARK

Was she in a costume?

BARBARA

What's that, darling?

MARK

The ballerina. How was she dressed?

BARBARA

We can't actually see the person
being channeled. That's not how it --

Refrigerator door shuts, George done with topic.

GEORGE

Mark, let's go. We don't want to be
late.

MARK

How do you know that Bridget isn't
just pretending?

GEORGE

Mark. Now.

INT. TUROWSKI APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

George and Mark put on winter coats. Ellie comes out of the
kitchen with a thermos of coffee for George.

MARK

(out the front door)
I'll go push the button.

GEORGE

The office is having a little going-
away party for Dan. I should be
home about six.

ELLIE

I'd love to cook Dan dinner before
he goes. Would you extend the invite?

George looks toward the kitchen, lowers his voice:

GEORGE

I love my sister, but --

ELLIE

I know.

GEORGE

Living in the same building...

ELLIE

We should just be grateful she was
here with this apartment.

Ellie immediately regrets saying that. George sees that.
They kiss. Aside from the tension, there's love here.

INT. THE GREYSON - 7TH FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

Mark leans against the elevator door, holding it open. George arrives, the two step on.

INT. THE GREYSON - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Now inside, one can see a long crack running through the smoked glass. George presses 'L.' JOLT. Elevator starts down. Indicator light: 7... 6...

MARK

I like living here.

GEORGE

You don't miss having your own room?

ELECTRICAL HUM. LIGHTS in the ceiling FLICKER.

MARK

I guess. But this place is central to everything. Makes more sense.

George smiles at his son, heart-warmed. ZAP! Elevator goes dark, except for the indicator light.

GEORGE (IN DARK)

I'd like it better if things worked in this building.

Elevator door opens -- morning light floods in from the lobby. George sees Mark's face -- visibly scared.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What is it?

MARK

Maybe that was the ballerina?

George wraps an arm around Mark as the two step out:

GEORGE

There is no ballerina. Your aunt just has a vivid imagination.