

TWO FLASHES

Written by

Claude Hurd

7:00AM

SHRILL beeps from a digital clock.

JOE(30s) soft around the edges, looks like he'll make a great uncle someday, rolls over, flops a hand onto the SNOOZE button.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

He showers.

BEDROOM

Buttons a crisp OXFORD. Loops a TIE.

LIVING ROOM

Inserts AIRPODS. A SOOTHING WOMAN'S voice whispers into his ear.

SOOTHING WOMAN (V.O.)
Lets ease into our morning with a
few breathing exercises.

Joe faces a window with a view of an adjacent WALK-UP.

His apartment's tidy, but not spotless. There's an empty pizza box from the night before.

SOOTHING WOMAN (V.O.)
Close your eyes. Deep breaths.

Joe CLOSES HIS EYES.

LADY IN BLACK(30s) African American, dressed in a black jumpsuit, holding the posture of a cobra about to strike, appears in a window opposite Joe's window.

She's with a SWEATY MAN(50s) hairy, tank top, pleading with her.

SOOTHING WOMAN (V.O.)
Breathe in. Breathe out. Feel the
stress leaving your body.

She screws a silencer to the barrel of a 9mm. Sweaty Man BEGS. Lady in Black points it at his face.

SOOTHING WOMAN (V.O.)
And on the count of three, open
your eyes. One, two, three--

HE OPENS THEM.

TWO BRIGHT FLASHES catch his eye.

BLACK

INT. SWEATY GUY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Lady in Black shoves the GUN in her waistband. Sweaty Guy's
dead as a doornail.

In her periphery she spots Joe gawking at her from his
apartment.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

He sees her see him. Neither budes for what feels like an
ETERNITY.

In a burst of adrenaline Joe SCRAMBLES for his phone. LADY IN
BLACK dashes out of view.

INT. SWEATY GUY'S APARTMENT - STAIRWELL

Lady In Black sprints down the stairs, into the lobby,
outside, and to Joe's building.

She slips in past a BRO leaving to walk his dog.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JOE
(to phone)
I just witnessed a murder-- across
from my apartment.

INT. HALLWAY

Lady In Black barrels around a corner, hears a PANICKED VOICE
behind door #309.

JOE (O.S.)
I don't know who the victim was. An
older guy, maybe Armenian--

INT. LIVING ROOM

JOE
It was a woman-- shot him point
blank.

Joe hears the floor CREAK by his door. Gets quiet.

Edges towards the door, leans up to the PEEP HOLE. Peers
through.

A TRIGGER'S PULLED. HE DUCKS!

PSHEWW

Narrowly escapes a BULLET through the eye. Scrambles for his
PHONE.

JOE (CONT'D)
(to phone)
They're here! The killer's at my
apartment!

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.)
(calm)
Hang up the phone.

JOE
She's at my door right now!

INT. HALLWAY

LADY IN BLACK
Hang. Up. The phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM

JOE
My address is 678 Winona--

INT. HALL

LADY IN BLACK
I got into our dead friend's
apartment, you think I can't get
into yours?

INT. LIVING ROOM

He thinks hard and fast.

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.)
Tell the police this was a prank
call.

Joe hears a GUN cock.

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
TELL THEM.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Joe weighs his options.

JOE
(to phone)
Sorry officer. This was a prank--

INT. HALLWAY

JOE (O.S.)
That's right. All just a joke. A
friend dared me to do it--
(beat)
Sorry for wasting your time.

Hangs up.

LADY IN BLACK
Slide the phone under the door to
me.

INT. HALLWAY

He does. She grabs it.

LADY IN BLACK
Now open the door.

JOE (O.S.)
(near tears)
Please don't kill me. I don't want
to die.

LADY IN BLACK
Open the door.

JOE (O.S.)
I won't tell anyone what I saw! I
promise!

LADY IN BLACK
I want you to calm. Down.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Joe takes a moment.

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.)
Are you calm?

JOE
Uh-huh.

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.)
Listen...

JOE
Joe.

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.)
Joe, you're going to let me in, and
we're going to talk. Nothing more
nothing less.

JOE
You some kinda hitman?

INT. HALLWAY

LADY IN BLACK
Something like that. Now open the
door.

Beat.

JOE (O.S.)
What kind of hitman forgets to
close the blinds during a hit!?

LADY IN BLACK
Fair question. I should've closed
the blinds. I made a mistake.

JOE (O.S.)
Definitely should've closed the
blinds.

LADY IN BLACK
I'm sorry I have to do this but I
can't leave loose ends.

INT. LIVING ROOM

JOE
Fuck! Fuck Fuck! I never did
anything to anyone. Why is this
happening to me?

INT. HALLWAY

Her anger swells.

LADY IN BLACK
Open this fucking door!

A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN hobbles by. Lady In Black laughs it off.

LADY IN BLACK (CONT'D)
(to Woman)
Boyfriend trouble...

The Woman nods, hurries past. Once she's out of view Lady In Black slips her hand into a pocket, retrieves a LOCKPICK.

Gets to work on the DOOR.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Joe hears the knob jiggle.

JOE
What are you doing?

INT. HALLWAY

She fiddles with it. CLICK. Pushes the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

A BOLT LOCK stops it from opening.

JOE
You're not getting in.

INT. HALLWAY

LADY IN BLACK
(to herself)
Shit!
(to Joe)
(MORE)

LADY IN BLACK (CONT'D)
You have to come out some time. I
can wait as long as you can.

She settles in for the long haul.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Lady In Black's sleep against the door. A baby cries in an
apartment, wakes her up. Takes a moment to get her bearings.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Joe's leaned against the couch staring at the door, gripping
a CLAW HAMMER.

INT. HALLWAY

Her belly GROWLS.

JOE (O.S.)
That you?

No reply. After a moment she hears the floor shift as he gets
up, steps away.

Joe returns, shoves a GRANOLA BAR under the door.

She snatches it, rips the wrapping open, chews on the granola
bar, barely swallowing before she speaks.

LADY IN BLACK
...appreciate it.

JOE (O.S.)
Enough to let me live?

No.

JOE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'd ask if you want a drink, but
don't think that'll fit under the
door.

She finishes the granola.

JOE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Can I ask you something?

LADY IN BLACK
...what?

JOE (O.S.)

Is it hard?

LADY IN BLACK
Just a little stale.

JOE (O.S.)
No, I mean... pulling the trigger.

LADY IN BLACK
It's easy when you don't know the person.

JOE (O.S.)
Do you enjoy it?

LADY IN BLACK
Get to see the world, problem solve...
(beat)
What do you do?

INT. LIVING ROOM

JOE
Loan officer.

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.)
You like it?

JOE
Hate it. My dream was photography.
But dreams don't pay the rent.

LADY IN BLACK
My dad was a photographer. Shot in Iraq.

JOE
Shot? Or... shot.

LADY IN BLACK
(chuckles)
Photos.

They share a laugh.

INT. HALLWAY

Joe's phone RINGS.

LADY IN BLACK
Someone named Sandra's calling you.

JOE
(remembers)
My mom. Today's her birthday.

INT. LIVING ROOM

She slides the phone under the door.

LADY IN BLACK (O.S.)
Answer it.

He does.

JOE
Hey Mom. Happy birthday.
(beat)
You get my flowers? I'm glad you
liked 'em. I know those are your
favorites

INT. HALLWAY

She listens, guilt gnawing at her insides.

JOE (O.S.)
I'm at work so I can't talk long
but it's good to hear your voice.
(beat)
Have a wonderful birthday. Love
you.

Hangs up.

LADY IN BLACK
Flowers huh?

No reply. She feels bad. Hears him stir. CLICK. SHEWK.
The door BOLT LOCK slides open. She rouses to her foot.
Grips the cold knob, scared to twist it.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The door creaks open, Lady In Black steps inside.
Joe's opposite her, tears streaming down his face.

JOE
Just get it over with.

She closes the door. Raises the BARREL to Joe's head.
He braces himself. She tightens her trigger finger--

LADY IN BLACK
Shit!

JOE
What?

LADY IN BLACK
I can't do it now. It's your mom
fucking birthday.

She lowers the gun.

JOE
You're not gonna kill me.

She plops down on the couch.

LADY IN BLACK
Fuck! Why didn't I close the
fucking blinds?!

JOE
Well... what do we do now?

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

They laugh over TEA at a dining table near the window.

JOE
I almost pissed myself.

LADY IN BLACK
Can you imagine? I open the door
and see a huge piss stain?

JOE
I would've wanted to die from
embarrassment alone.
(laughs)
More tea?

She hands him her mug. Goes to the kitchen.

JOE (CONT'D)
I wonder if we would've been
friends in another life.

LADY IN BLACK
Anything's possible.

JOE
What's your name by the way. Or is
it against "protocol" to say?

She smirks.

LADY IN BLACK
It's Sandra.

JOE
Wow. What a coinkydink.

Hands her a refill of tea.

LADY IN BLACK
Can I get some honey?

JOE
Of course.

He turns to leave--

PSHEW PSHEW

Two BULLETS to the back. He collapses to the ground.

LADY IN BLACK
I'm sorry Joe... really.

Looms over, finishes him off with one in the head.

Wipes a tear, gun still drawn.

From the corner of her eye she catches a face. SWEATY GUY'S
WIFE peering at her from the window across the way.

LADY IN BLACK (CONT'D)
Fucking blinds!

She sprints out at full speed.

Joe's body bleeds out onto the floor.