

Damon's Inquiry

by

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FADE IN:

INT. GLOVER KITCHEN - NIGHT

A family of four sits around the dinner table: ELIAS, the father, a tall balding man in his fifties with a huge muscular frame and a huge belly to boot; EMILY, a slender short suburbanite mother with graying hair; GREGORY, mid-twenties, built like a cage fighter; and DAMON, college-aged, much smaller than Gregory in height and frame, but wiry.

They eat quietly.

DAMON

(to Elias)

Hey, Dad, did you know the universe could be only one of an infinite number of-

ELIAS

What?

DAMON

The universe, it-

ELIAS

This just popped in your head while eating your mother's casserole?

DAMON

What this, I haven't finished. Scientists say there could be multiple universes.

GREGORY

Movies. You're getting this from movies.

DAMON

I'm not, it's a real theory.

ELIAS

They got any proof?

DAMON

Well, not yet, but-

GREGORY

Ah, ya blew it, Damon.

EMILY

Damon, it's all right, honey.

GREGORY  
Dad needs proof, Damon.

DAMON  
It would explain-

ELIAS  
No proof, no explanation.

DAMON  
But like they say, if you eliminate every impossible option, whatever is left must be the truth.

Elias smirks at Gregory, Gregory smiles and shrugs.

ELIAS  
Not "they" say, guy that wrote Sherlock Holmes said it. Did he say there were alternative universes?

DAMON  
I don't know.

ELIAS  
Case closed.

EMILY  
Time for my gentlemen to eat, now.

Damon looks briefly around, gives up, continues eating.

DAMON (V.O.)  
Every conversation with my dad went the same way, but it was comforting in its reliability. Simply let it be said that rock is not always rock, and sand is not always sand.

INT. PADDY'S JOINT BAR - NIGHT

It's a lower-class joint. "ACE" D'ONOFRIO (33) occupies his barstool like a pro. The BARTENDER moseys on over to him.

BARTENDER  
Ace...what'll ya have?

ACE  
Um...Long Island.

BARTENDER  
Can I check?

ACE

Yeah...

He pulls out his wallet, flashes the cash.

BARTENDER

Don't take it wrong, Ace. Grapevine says you got fired again...

ACE

Yeah. Shit never changes.

INT. BAR BATHROOM

Ace enters to take a piss.

From the next stall: TWO-GUYS-FUCKING SOUNDS. Ace notices briefly, focuses on shaking and zipping up. He pauses.

Ace washes his hands. One of them ORGASMS.

Ace walks towards the exit.

ALAN (O.S.)

(amused)

Did you enjoy listening?

Both men in the stall break out into hysterical LAUGHTER.

Ace grimaces, angrily.

INT. PADDY'S JOINT BAR. NIGHT

Ace is back at his stool.

ALAN and Gregory exit the bathroom and go to their booth.

Gregory and Ace lock eyes. Gregory smiles. Ace doesn't.

The bartender looks wary to put a finger on the situation.

ACE

Fucking hell...

BARTENDER

(sliding Ace's drink over)

Ace, I really don't think...

ACE

I didn't ask for the show.

BARTENDER

Ace...

ACE

(just below the boiling  
point)

I come here to get away.

(turns to Gregory and  
Alan)

You fuckers got a problem?

GREGORY

Not at all my friend. Cheers.

BARTENDER

(to Gregory and Alan)

Look, you guys, you're disturbing  
my customers.

ALAN

Sir, we apologize, it will never  
happen again.

GREGORY

(to Ace)

Sorry, man, no harm meant.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE BAR - NIGHT

Gregory and Alan walk out the door of the bar and head  
towards their car.

ALAN

Hey, can I run back in and piss  
real quick?

Gregory plants a kiss on Alan's lips.

GREGORY

(cheerfully)

Hey, sure!

As Alan approaches the door, Ace stumbles out the front,  
knocking him down so hard Alan's head bounces off the  
concrete and he falls unconscious.

ACE

Fuck outta my way.

GREGORY

(shocked)

Alan!

(MORE)

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
(turns to Ace, angry)  
Jesus, what was that?!?!

ACE  
(drunk and angry)  
Fuck off.

Ace stumbles onwards.

Gregory rises, walks towards Ace.

GREGORY  
(under breath)  
Gonna fuck you up, asshole.

Ace stops walking and turns around.

Gregory goes into conditioned fighter mode and attacks.

Gregory's strong, smart attacks barely budge Ace. Ace grabs Gregory by the neck, lifts him six inches off the ground. Gregory helplessly claws at Ace's hands.

ACE  
Why're you fuckers laughing at me  
for anyway?

GREGORY  
(gasping)  
Thought we were laughing with you,  
but at this point, fuck you anyway.

Gregory sinks his thumbs into Ace's eyes.

Ace's face explodes with rage. He shakes his head free of Gregory's hands, eyes closed, and shoves Gregory into the brick wall storefront.

The bricks explode with the force. Gregory dies instantly.

Ace's other hand tears Gregory's torso apart.

Ace stops. Everything is silent. He looks. Nobody is around. Ace looks at the mutilated Gregory and the unconscious Alan.

Ace sees a picture that has fallen from Gregory's wallet. A picture of him and Damon smiling, arms on shoulders.

Ace picks up the picture and looks at it.

ACE  
You shoulda left me alone.

He stuffs the picture in his pocket and stumbles away.

EXT. CITY RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Ace wraps his bloody clothes around a heavy rock and heaves the rock into the river. He wades in and washes the blood off his skin in the moonlight.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ace pulls clothes out of trash bags in the trunk of his car.

EXT. CITY FOUNTAIN - SUNRISE

Ace sits at the bench watching the fountain as the sunrise refracts through it. His eyes droop, he catches his head nodding.

A jogger passes by. Ace looks and sees people filling the nearby sidewalks as the day begins.

Ace leaves.

EXT. GLOVER FRONT YARD - DAY

DETECTIVE JOHN DEREK, a towering but tired-looking man with a sympathetic face, gets out of his unmarked police vehicle and surveys the scene.

The Glovers live in a modest two-story white house in a small rural town with the city in the distant horizon. It has a plentiful front lawn and a porch in front a swinging seat. The nearest house is over a block away.

Another detective, SCHILLER, appears at his side, smoking a cigarette.

SCHILLER

Do you want me to tell'em?

DEREK

(sighing)

Here, give me that cigarette...I'll do it.

He takes the cigarette from Schiller and puffs it.

SCHILLER

What are you going to say?

DEREK

They'll want answers. So I'll have  
to bullshit somewhat.

Schiller flips through the forensic report.

SCHILLER

Not a car accident?

DEREK

No. Hands.

SCHILLER

Get the fuck outta here. Nobody  
can do that with their bare hands.  
(handing report back)  
They don't need to know these  
details.

DEREK

But they'll want to.

Derek reaches inside the car for a pop can and puts the  
cigarette out in it. He beckons Schiller. They move forward  
to the front door of the suburban house. They ring the bell.  
Elias Glover answers the door. He registers surprise.

ELIAS

Yes, officers? What's the problem?

DEREK

Mr. Glover...we need to talk to you  
about your son-

ELIAS

Damon?

DEREK

No, Gregory...

ELIAS

(surprised)  
Gregory?

DEREK

May we come inside?

ELIAS

Come in...this, ah...well, here,  
come into the house...

INT. GLOVER BASEMENT - DAY

Damon stands in casual clothes, in the basement of the house, looks at a punching bag hanging in front of him.

He steps forward, touching it with his fists; then bursts with a left jab and a right hook.

On a shelf: a picture of him and his brother, Gregory, posing with their fists cocked.

FLASHBACK

We see Damon and Gregory, wearing kempo gloves and headgear, sparring.

DAMON

Come on you big queer!

GREGORY

This faggot is going to crack your skull, motherfucker!

Damon rushes forward, feinting with a punch then lashing out with a side kick.

Gregory scoops the kick, punches Damon in the head, and uses the leg to bring Damon down on his belly. Damon yelps in laughter.

Gregory whaps Damon with a playful punch to the back of the head.

DAMON

You're filth! Your technique is hollow!

GREGORY

Nobody's bashing my ass, buddy. You're poor practice though. Rednecks come bigger and smarter than you.

Gregory releases Damon, stands up.

DAMON

Smarter? Oh, you cunt...I hope Alan bites it off tonight!

GREGORY

Only if I'm lucky.

BACK TO PRESENT

Damon hugs the punching bag, alone, his eyes wet.

DAMON (V.O.)  
I was able to cry. I had always  
known who Gregory was.

INT. GLOVER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Elias sits on his couch, Detective Derek and the officer  
across from him. Elias' expression remains stoic.

ELIAS  
Alan survived?

DEREK  
Yes...the attacker knocked him out.  
He didn't see anything. But he  
told us enough for us to think that  
this mighta been a hate-motivated  
attack.

ELIAS  
Hate? How could it possibly be a  
hate-crime?

DEREK  
(regretting his misstep)  
He stated...that he was your son's  
partner for the past two years.

ELIAS  
Perhaps you misunderstood...you  
said Alan was confused...  
(shakes head)  
Do you know who did this?

Derek flashes a photo of Ace.

DEREK  
Witnesses report that your son and  
Alan McPherson were seen speaking  
confrontationally to this man  
inside the Paddy's Joint Bar last  
night. He left the establishment  
shortly after they did.  
(scratches his chin)  
There is a slight problem,  
however...  
(waits for a prompt, gets  
none, continues)  
The manner of your son's death is  
rather unusual.  
(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

It's going to be hard to pin it on anybody, at least until the coroner has a better idea of how it was done...

ELIAS

How do you think it was done?

Derek and the officer look at each other.

DEREK

Well, the autopsy is still pending, but initial investigation seems to suggest he was slammed into a wall, where he, uh, suffered some rib damage. He was incapacitated after that. Then the attacker...mutilated him with his bare hands.

ELIAS

That ain't right...Gregory competed at heavyweight, weighed two-forty-five, solid as a rock. This just doesn't fit. First you tell me he's...

(pauses, covers his mouth)

...that he was thrown like a rag doll.

DEREK

Sir, we have fingerprint identification, his driver's license, dental records...it was your son. We-

ELIAS

(covering eyes)

Jesus H. Christ...

DEREK

There are a lot of details we have to look into sir. We can provide you with more details later...but can you help us?

(holds out a picture of Ace)

Do you recognize this man???

ELIAS

I've never seen the miserable bastard before. Are you arresting him?

DEREK  
We'll do our best.

LATER

Elias stands in the doorway, watching the police leave. Damon comes up behind him from the basement stairs.

DAMON  
Dad, what's up? What did the police want?

ELIAS  
I have to call your mother.  
It's...complicated. I'll tell you later.

DAMON  
(resigned)  
Um, alright.

Elias, lost in thought, closes the door.

DAMON (CONT'D)  
Talk to you later then...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emily quietly tends a pot of soup on the oven. Damon sets the table.

Elias walks in with a drink in hand, his face tight.

DAMON (V.O.)  
Looking back, it is amazing to think of my father, and how he carried the news of my brother's death with him for at least four hours. I try to look in his mind sometimes, to figure out why he does such things. Minds like his get straight to the point. In those four hours, my father had been through miles of thought, all in a straight line.

Elias goes to the a cabinet and refills his drink. He then moves to the fridge to get ice. In doing so, he drops an ice cube on the linoleum floor.

He closes the fridge, then leans up against it and looks at his wife.

EMILY

Are you going to call Hank back tonight? He won't be in town much longer. He said he was taking the guns you two got last week for appraisal.

ELIAS

Appraisal?

EMILY

Yep.

ELIAS

Jesus Christ, why the hell is he doing that? I already told him what the guns were worth!

EMILY

I don't know, dear, I don't get into these things. And you can look forward to thirty more years of marriage to me without me getting into them.

ELIAS

Hank had better have them back by Saturday, there's a gun show to go to. I was going to do some trading. Can't bargain on a gun that I don't have in my hands.

EMILY

Yes, dear. Just remember I don't work to pay for your guns. You said there'd be a profit soon.

ELIAS

I haven't touched a penny that I didn't put in that account.

EMILY

(smiles)

I know dear. Just warning you.

Damon finishes setting the table and sits, pondering a fork.

ELIAS

(to Damon)

Well?

DAMON

Grades tomorrow.

ELIAS  
Are you going to get an A?

DAMON  
Of course.

Elias shifts away from the fridge, takes a step and slips on the ice cube. His heavy frame and stiff legs make him hit the floor hard. He lets out a loud yell of pain and anguish.

EMILY  
Elias!

DAMON  
Dad!

Elias' yell diminishes into a moan of despair.

ELIAS  
Oh, Lord!

Damon stands up and moves over to his father, offers him a hand.

Elias does not reach out, but rather stubbornly forces himself to sit up. He grunts and gets to his knees. He looks down at the floor, placing his hands down on it, as if in prayer.

DAMON (V.O.)  
It was kneeling in that position-

Elias moves his mouth, but we do not hear the words.

DAMON (V.O.)  
-that my father told us of  
Gregory's death.

Emily staggers and falls to Elias, clutching him.

Damon stares, horrified.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. DAY

Ace sits across a table from Derek and Schiller.

DEREK  
Lemme guess.

ACE  
Didn't see a thing.

DEREK  
Figured as much. Officers who  
brought you in were polite?

ACE  
Sure.

DEREK  
Lucky for them, right?

ACE  
Dunno what the fuck you're talking  
about.

Derek slides a photo over to Ace. Ace looks. His eyes  
widen, then he regains control.

DEREK  
How do you feel about that?

ACE  
Too bad for him. He get hit by a  
car?

DEREK  
No.

ACE  
Nobody could do that.

SCHILLER  
Is that who you are? Nobody?

ACE  
Pretty much. Is that all you got?

DEREK  
For now.

ACE  
Can I go?

INT. PADDY'S JOINT BAR - NIGHT

Ace studies the photograph of Gregory and Damon, holding it  
tight, out of view from others.

Bartender drops a lemon in Ace's drink. Ace shoves the  
picture in his pocket.

BARTENDER  
Mourning somebody, Ace?

ACE

I don't know what that question means.

BARTENDER

I had a cousin, he drowned last week. Been pretty hard on the family.

ACE

(playing along)  
Oh, really?

BARTENDER

Stupid kid was a lifeguard. Girl was committing suicide. She took him with her.

ACE

Suicide...

BARTENDER

Like I said, damn shame.

ACE

(pretending)  
Yeah, damn shame.

BARTENDER

Are you fucking with me?

Ace looks at the bartender earnestly, then hangs his head.

ACE

No...no, I'm not.

BARTENDER

Alright, sorry...It's hard telling what the fuck you mean sometimes.

ACE

Why did your cousin let her kill him?

BARTENDER

(offput again)  
Well, like I said...he was trying to rescue her.

ACE

Oh, yeah.

BARTENDER

What?

ACE

I don't understand...why somebody does that.

BARTENDER

Honestly, I don't blame her. She was drowning, panicking...they were out too far.

ACE

I wasn't talking about her.

The bartender eyes Ace for any impropriety, sees none.

BARTENDER

So, uh...have the police contacted you?

ACE

The police? Why?

BARTENDER

About that thing that went on here.

ACE

You think I did it?

BARTENDER

Actually, from what I heard, it sounded like a polar bear did it.

At the end of the bar sits MAGNUS, smiling like an evil jester.

MAGNUS

Ah, but a polar bear DID do it!!!

The bartender and Ace look over at Magnus.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

One without a roar. A polar bear hunched in the shadows!

He eyes the bartender.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

Watch him-

(points at Ace)

-or he'll maul you too!

BARTENDER

Yeah, okay pal.

ACE  
 (to Magnus)  
 What the fuck are you talking  
 about?

MAGNUS  
 Are you a HUMBLE man? You should  
 grow some balls, humble one, or  
 I'll make you my servant.

ACE  
 Fuck off.

MAGNUS  
 Name's Magnus.

ACE  
 Fuck off, Magnus. Who the hell are  
 you?

MAGNUS  
 Someone like you.

ACE  
 What the fuck are you talking  
 about?

MAGNUS  
 (sees bartender listening)  
 Actually I think we were in the  
 Army together.

The bartender walks away, now figuring he has a hold on the  
 situation.

ACE  
 (mutters)  
 I was never in the Army.

MAGNUS  
 How did you end up here???

ACE  
 Where?

MAGNUS  
 Why are you fucking with me?

ACE  
 Buddy, back the fuck off alright.  
 Not in the mood.

He lights a cigarette and throws the match at Magnus. It  
 lands in Magnus' open palm, which he closes.

MAGNUS

Fess up, Ace, what's your gig?

Ace turns to Magnus with a hot and pissed look.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

Now watch it! Answering questions  
is the safer choice!

ACE

Wrong guy, you don't know me.

MAGNUS

(shouting)

I think YOU don't know you!

(over-the-top)

How do you do? Do you KNOW how you  
do? Don't you know how you DID it?

He stands up from his bar stool. Ace doesn't budge.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

Some miscast dream must lie in your  
head for you to look so confused!  
Wake up! Wake up you stupid beast!

Magnus yells and lunges at Ace with a beer bottle. He crashes  
it over Ace's head and gouges Ace in the neck with the broken  
end. Ace crumples to the ground, clutching his throat.

Bartender startles, but Magnus turns to him and punches a  
section of the bar off. The bartender stands still.

ACE

Fucker!

He coughs, chokes.

MAGNUS

Oh, quit playing already. I've only  
ruined your shirt.

LATER

Ace wipes himself off with a towel, snorts back phlegm.  
Magnus sits relaxed against the bar, bemused.

The bartender lies on the floor behind the bar, his head  
caved in.

ACE

What the hell was that all about?