

A BOSTON STORY

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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An antique double-barrelled shotgun is displayed over a fireplace. White, well-manicured hands take it down. They load two shells. Christmas lights twinkle off the shiny barrels.

EXT. O'HEARN FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

A brick colonial. Christmas lights. Fresh snowfall.

A WOMAN (28) comes outside with the shotgun. Barefoot in a thin nightgown, she's oblivious to the cold. She pulls up a garage door. A shiny Mercedes.

She aims the gun and takes two steps back.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM JOHN

KENNEDY O'HEARN, just 5 here, studies a tower of building blocks. We hear him at 25, jaded and indifferent.

JOHN (V.O.)

When I was five years old my mother went out to the garage with Dad's prized 1912 A.H. Fox double-barreled shotgun...

EXT. GARAGE Mrs.

O'Hearn aims at the car.

JOHN (V.O.)

...and blasted a shell through the grill of his new 560 SEC.

She FIRES. The kick sprawls her to the snowy driveway.

INT. BEDROOM

The BLAST startles the boy.

EXT. GARAGE

She goes into the garage. The car's front end is splattered.

INT. BEDROOM

He chooses another block.

JOHN (V.O.)  
With the second shell...

INT. GARAGE

His mom slides into the driver's seat.

INT. BEDROOM

He delicately places the block atop his tower.

JOHN (V.O.)  
...she put her head through the  
back window.

SHOTGUN BLAST!

He flinches, and his tower collapses.

EXT. O'HEARN FAMILY HOME - LATER

Sirens! John rubs the frost off his window and peers out.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, BOY'S POV

A swirl of lights from emergency vehicles. Paramedics load her body into an ambulance. The Mercedes is towed from the garage, now a gaping hole in the rear windshield.

We notice a tall, broad-chested man in a well-cut suit.

MR. CHARLES O'HEARN, 30 here, proffers handshakes to everyone. He follows with waves as they quickly disperse.

JOHN (V.O.)  
That left just Dad and me.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Mr. O'Hearn stands alone, his back to his son at the window.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A long funeral procession winds through the wintry cemetery.

JOHN (V.O.)  
On the way to the cemetery he  
explained things.

INT. LIMOUSINE

John and Mr. O'Hearn sit across from each other.

MR. O'HEARN

John. Life is a lot like those little building blocks you play with. Everyone gets blocks, and it's how you fit yours together that determines what kind of man you are.

He searches for his words, barely concealing a deep anger.

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)

But sometimes life gives you a block that won't fit with what you want to build. No matter how hard you try, it just doesn't fit.

(he points at him)

And John, you throw those blocks away. You forget those blocks.

JOHN - sitting alone on the big seat in his little boy suit.

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)

And then you take the rest of your blocks, and you build whatever you goddamn like.

The man stares out the window. John looks down at his shoes.

EXT. GRAVESIDE

The crowd watches the casket lowered to the ground.

INT. LIMO

Young John looks out the half opened window.

EXT. GRAVESIDE

MR. O'HEARN, JOHN'S POV - shaking hands and patting backs.

JOHN (V.O.)

As it turned out, Dad fit his blocks together to make him the District Attorney of Suffolk County, Massachusetts. That means Boston.

EXT. BOSTON - NIGHT

The mighty buildings and historic landmarks of Beacon Hill. But, we quickly find a less prestigious neighborhood.

EXT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

A fat black man endures on a stool outside.

JOHN (V.O.)

As for me?

JOHN - steps out, beer in hand. At 25, he's mildly handsome in a distorted and rumpled east coast preppy sort of way.

He's drunk now, and he'll be more or less heavily under the influence of something or other from here on out.

JOHN (V.O.)

Let's just say, I'm still playing with my blocks.

He deactivates the alarm on a new Escalade SUV parked next to a fire hydrant. He tosses the parking ticket and gets in.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He opens the glove box. A bottle of pills and a small gun. He downs a few pills with a sip of beer.

EXT. ROTARY - NIGHT

The SUV plunges in but just drives around it in circles.

JOHN (V.O.)

I could go just about anywhere.

INT. JOHN'S CAR

He leans with the turn of the car, lost in a daze.

Police lights and a siren blast. He pulls over. Two cops approach. Harvard Law School on the rear window.

OFFICER THOMAS, a black man, comes to John's open window.

OFFICER THOMAS

Good evening, sir.

JOHN

If you say so.

John holds out his license but the cop doesn't take it. He shines the light on the bottle in John's lap.

OFFICER THOMAS  
You had a few drinks tonight?

JOHN  
No, sir.

The cop backs away. Nods to his PARTNER.

OFFICER THOMAS  
You wanna step out of the car?

JOHN  
Can we just get to the license and registration bit?

OFFICER THOMAS  
Just get outta the car.

John gets out. Sets his beer on the roof.

JOHN  
Listen pal, it's too late for you guys to be wasting time out here and I'm too drunk to try walking any lines.

He holds the cards out again and the cop takes them.

OFFICER THOMAS  
This your get outta jail free card?

JOHN  
Just run the check.

He shines his light into John's face, then pulls the keys.

OFFICER THOMAS  
Give me your arm.

John does and he handcuffs it to the steering wheel.

OFFICER THOMAS (CONT'D)  
(indicating the car)  
You got anything in there I should know about?

JOHN  
Lots of drugs and a gun.

Officer Thomas considers, not sure what to make of him.

INT. POLICE CAR

The cops wait at their radio. Outside, John sips his beer.

OFFICER THOMAS

I don't know what we're waiting on here. Somehow I don't see anything stickin' to this kid.

PARTNER

He's got the ultimate get out of jail free card.

EXT. JOHN'S CAR

The cops return, shining their flashlights into John's face.

OFFICER THOMAS

Daddy's little boy, huh?

He unlocks the cuff from the steering wheel.

JOHN

I told ya' you were wasting time.

OFFICER THOMAS

Yeah, well.

He slams him into the car and cuffs both arms together.

OFFICER THOMAS (CONT'D)

Looks like we ain't quite done yet.

INT. JAIL CELL

A holding cell. John on a bench, head on his knees.

Two men come in - Detective TERRY MARKS (40s) and John's father. At 50 here, Mr. O'Hearn is still imposing. Fit and handsome, his strong jaw presently clenches a large cigar.

A TOUGH BLACK GUY steps in front of Marks.

TOUGH BLACK GUY

Yo motherfucker, I wants to git a call wit my attorney.

Marks gets right in his face, completely unintimidated.

MARKS

(thick Boston accent)

Yeah? Well I'd like a blow job and

(MORE)

MARKS (CONT'D)  
 a donut. Wanna make a deal?  
 (he looks to John)  
 Johnny-boy! You about seen enough?

John jumps up. Marks hands Mr. O'Hearn a key.

MARKS (CONT'D)  
 Second on the right, Charlie.

Mr. O'Hearn leads John down the hall as Marks locks the cell.

MARKS (CONT'D)  
 Whatsay we give yo' attorney the  
 night off and you just kick back  
 here with the rest of yo' brothers?

INT. CLOSED CELL

John pulls a cigarette. No light. His dad doesn't offer one.

MR. O'HEARN  
 John, I've given you plenty more  
 opportunities to make something of  
 yourself than you've ever deserved.  
 You haven't done much with them,  
 but, well, you can only lead a  
 horse to water. We're not all go-  
 getters.

JOHN  
 I don't know where you're going  
 with your little pep talk here,  
 (starts to stand)  
 But I'm not really up for-

Mr. O'Hearn shoves him back to the bench.

MR. O'HEARN  
 I'm not finished.

John just stares. He doesn't seem angry, humiliated or even  
 defensive. It's not even clear if he's hearing any of this.

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
 I don't ask much of you, John. Not  
 to be smart, not to be ambitious.  
 Maybe I should have been harder on  
 you, but there really just wasn't  
 the time. If you want to waste your  
 life, that's your business now. But  
 the fact is your actions reflect on  
 me and I can't have you making  
 headlines.

JOHN

You wanna leave me in here,  
go ahead.

MR. O'HEARN

Unfortunately, I need you  
tonight. If I didn't, you wouldn't  
be going anywhere this time.

JOHN

I didn't ask for your help.

MR. O'HEARN

No, but you'll take it, won't you?

Mr. O'Hearn opens the door. John hesitates, for a second.

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Just like always.

As John passes, his father grabs him.

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Let's just be clear on one thing.  
If you want to fuck up your life,  
go right ahead. But don't you dare  
fuck with mine.

John just heads down the hallway.

JOHN

I'm glad we talked, Dad. I know I  
feel better.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Boston's power elite, all decked out in formal attire. John  
is seated with KELLY EGAN (22) a pretty blonde society girl.

CHIEF WALSH, a red-faced white man in full police uniform  
sits next to his homely wife. Also, CEDRICK BENNETT, mid 30s,  
a skinny black man with an intellectual air about him.

Mr. O'Hearn speaks at podium, charming, modest and sincere.

MR. O'HEARN

I look out here tonight and see the  
heart and soul of Boston. I see the  
people that have fostered its proud  
tradition and the folks that carry  
that tradition forth today.

(gazing about proudly)

(MORE)

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)

I see my son John sitting down here  
in front. The boy makes me proud.

(he winks at John)

John was born right here at Boston  
General, the son of an ambitious  
young lawyer.

JOHN - a dull, distant stare, fading by the second.

MR. O'HEARN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He grew up privileged and he grew  
up safe. Every child should be so  
fortunate.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

We see a young black man enter the lobby from outside.

MR. O'HEARN (O.S.)

But we all know, not every child is  
lucky enough to grow up privileged,  
and there's only so much we can do  
about that. Such is our world.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET ROOM

Mr. O'Hearn continues from the podium.

MR. O'HEARN

But every child deserves to  
grow up safe and there's everything  
we can do about that. Such is our  
city. Five years ago you elected me  
your District Attorney, giving me  
the responsibility of ensuring that  
safety. For our children. For  
everyone.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

The lobby is all uniforms. Bell-hops and waiters, policemen  
and tuxedos. The black man's uniform belongs to the street.

MR. O'HEARN (O.S.)

You elected me because we share a  
common expectation of how this city  
should be and a common vision of  
what this city could be.

(MORE)

MR. O'HEARN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I've spent that time taking every action possible, and all actions necessary, to realize the results that this city deserves.

He strides through and doesn't go unnoticed, especially by the cops. He doesn't belong here.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET ROOM

Mr. O'Hearn continues.

MR. O'HEARN

My friends, the streets of Boston are the safest they've been in fifty years.

The crowd dutifully applauds each declaration.

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Violent crime is down by fifty percent. Juvenile crime by nearly thirty. Our prosecution record against drug offenders is the best in the nation. Ladies and gentlemen of Boston, your children are safe.

The crowd cheers their support but Mr. O'Hearn silences them.

MR. O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Thank you. It all comes from your support. Thank you.

A loud voice from the rear of the huge room interrupts him.

VOICE

How 'bout we hear all the statistics?

Mr. O'Hearn tenses, but maintains a steady tone.

MR. O'HEARN

Well, I was just pointing out a few of my favorites.

Cameras flash. A confused murmur sweeps the crowd. The black man moves into view. AARON TAYLOR is not a friendly face.

VOICE/AARON

Then surely you'll include your record of prosecuting more black men than any District Attorney in the history of Massachusetts.