

The Remains That Lie

Written by

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A sci-fi crime-drama set in the near future where technology can be used to possess the dead, opening the doors for good (and malicious) applications. A chase ensues after a failed robbery as criminals and police use the tech to outsmart each other in a battle of wits.

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EXT. JEWELLERS ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON, NEAR FUTURE (A PLOT)

A cold wind carries the sound of a deafening alarm.

Parked outside the jewellers, the camera focuses on three bodies sitting upright in a car: VINCENT in the driver seat, TONY in the passenger seat, and CLAIRE in the back. None of them are breathing.

Three unmasked robbers, CADAVERS T, V, and C sprint out with heavy duffle bags and make for the car.

Cadaver V stays close to Cadaver C, tending a swollen bruise on her forehead. Cadaver T throws his bags to the other robbers (Who will henceforth be referred to by their letters for brevity) who then throw them in the back on Claire's lap.

A radio on V's belt chimes, it's DR RAMSAY.

RAMSAY (O.S.)

Tony, TONY!

T snatches the radio while V inspects the bruise on C's forehead.

T

The car's loaded, but we're gonna get cooked if you don't transfer us back!

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED CREMATORIUM HIDEOUT - SAME

Dr Ramsay types with mechanical speed. She's surrounded by a blast furnace, loose technology, and rows of fridges made for corpses. Some fridges are open and have their metal trays sticking out with fresh bodies laid on top.

RAMSAY

Copy that, brace for return synapse transfer in three... two...

BACK TO:

EXT. JEWELLERS ENTRANCE - SAME

RAMSAY (O.S.)

...One...

Tony clips the radio to his belt.

V

Wait, wait, wait!-

T

(to V)

When we're in the car, I need you-

RAMSAY (O.S.)

CLEAR!

Like an electric shock, they all collapse to the ground lifeless. At the same time, the bodies in the car reawaken.

INT. GETAWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Everyone reawakens in their original bodies, all gasping as if they almost drowned.

Tony wastes no time.

TONY
(continued from old
body)
-to step on it!

With that Vincent twists the ignition (the keys were left in) and makes the car roar forward.

In the back seat Claire reaches to cradle her head, but the bruise she had in her old body and it's pain have vanished. She lets out a shaken smile, lost for words. The transfer worked.

V -> Vincent, C -> Claire, T -> Tony.

Once at speed, Vincent starts rolling down the window. Claire notices that he's as pale as snow.

CLAIRE
No, No, No!-

Claire empties the contents of a rucksack (tissues, tampons, a flask, a lighter, bandages, a penknife, cash, plastic shopping bag) and quickly gives Vincent the plastic bag to puke in. He heaves as Claire keeps the wheel steady.

Tony shows no pity. He reaches for his radio on his belt but then remembers that was in his old body. He goes to the glove compartment for a new radio.

TONY
(into a new radio)
Ramsay, did our originals hold?

RAMSAY (O.S.)
(on the radio)
You were quicker than expected and thanks to that... no permanent damage as far as I can see.

TONY
(into radio)
Yeah well... Let's speak for Vincent later.

Tony gives Vincent a deathly look as silences the radio.

TONY (cont'd)
What the fuck was that!

Vincent does another dry heave.

CLAIRE
You expect him to know? We got
unlucky-

TONY
Unlucky? How'd we go from doing a job
with cult like precision to shitting
the bed so hard it drips down to the
flat below! Hope you're happy you've
fucked us.

CLAIRE
Nobody shat the bed.

TONY
Look, I know you people can afford to
take the high ground. But the rest of
us ain't doing this recreationally.

VINCENT
You don't think I need this too!? I'm
sorry... but I couldn't let you-

TONY
-Let me do what?

Vincent squirms as he tries to hide his bubbling anger.

TONY (cont'd)
What? You didn't like it when I
pounded the pretty clerk's face in?
It's not like I killed her! Besides,
she was a bitch and we needed a
convincing act.

VINCENT
You told us we were going to be
careful...

TONY
I didn't say we were going to watch
our step for daffodils! Do you
realise what you've done?

CLAIRE
It's over now so-

TONY
(sarcastic)
Oh... It's so easy to not care...

CLAIRE
You care so much? Suppose that would
make sense for someone who has
nothing else.

TONY
Be very careful honey.

CLAIRE
You're just pathetic and you need the
buzz just to feel something-

Claire is deep under the skin.

TONY
Very. Careful.

CLAIRE
-it's a shame that today gave you a
shit sandwich with a side of blue
balls.

TONY
Shut your mouth slag!

Tony is overtaken. He grabs Claire in the backseat and
begins to squeeze.

TONY (cont'd)
You're as worth while as a gutted
horse!

Claire is gasping for consciousness. Fighting for each
breath, tries to reach for her penknife for defence. Vincent
tries to save Claire while driving.

VINCENT
Don't lay a finger on her!

Claire grabs the knife and manages to flick the it open.
But...

CLAIRE
(Gasping)
Vince! Lo-

Too late. The world throws itself forward and the edges of
space crumple inwards. Shattered glass flows around the
tumbling car which comes to a sudden stop.

INT. CRASHED GETAWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Everyone except Claire is unconscious. She shakes with
adrenaline. Claire looks around and checks herself for
damage. She finds her penknife lodged in her thigh. Shit.

She gingerly reaches forward. Stifling her pain, she tries
to shake Vincent awake.

CLAIRE
Vince, Vince!

Nothing comes from him. On his opposite side Tony begins to
stir. Fear consumes her. It's now or never.

She pushes the car door open, but before she escapes she embraces Vincent. A final goodbye.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
I'll find you.

And she kisses Vincent on the neck.

EXT. STREET, CAR CRASH INCIDENT - CONTINUOUS

Claire limps out of the car and covers her wound with her long coat. She leaves the cash and her partners behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEWELLERS ENTRANCE - COLD AFTERNOON (B PLOT)

It's the scene of crime, only now police cars have swarmed the jeweller that was robbed. Blue swirling lights fight the grey sun.

Two detectives, KIM and ARIA, duck under tape and enter the scene. Kim gingerly steps over careful not to touch anything while clutching his notepad, for Aria it's just another Tuesday. She speaks for them to a uniformed OFFICER.

ARIA
What have we got?

OFFICER
Theft. Made with cash and jewels. No civilian casualties...

ARIA
Anyone recognise the suspects?

OFFICER
Yes.

ARIA
These morons make it too easy-

OFFICER
Everyone did when we found them dead on the opposite side of the street. But I reckon those people are probably innocent.

Aria's interest is perked.

ARIA
How so?

CUT TO:

The Officer shows them the security footage from outside the jewellers. They all see the criminals fall lifeless to the ground (They are watching the opening scene).

OFFICER

We identified the bodies, nothing special about them as far as we can tell. Except the fact that they all already died within few days, death certificates and all...

Kim finally speaks up, confused.

KIM

You're saying were looking for zombies?

ARIA

(Ignoring Kim)

Wait, don't tell me... they all suffered from brain death, or coma, or something.

OFFICER

Two comas and one head trauma. How did you know?

ARIA

Oh... that's good... I mean, credit where it's due.

KIM

What's happening?

ARIA

Undamaged bodies with intact organs... They've hijacked revival tech, they're going to be training the police and paramedics on it soon but it keeps getting pushed back. Ethical red taped bullshit if you ask me.

KIM

What's that- sorry how does that help?

ARIA

It's a new medical technique that allows you to control a corpse... for a short while at least.

KIM

No, no, no, that doesn't make sense why would they do that here...

ARIA

(Ignoring Kim again)

It would have taken a lot of planning. The corpse is only stable for a few minutes at a time and you have to be close by to transfer back.

OFFICER
Explains why they parked themselves
right outside.

Kim finally begins to connect the dots, but he doesn't want
to believe it.

KIM
(disgusted)
Oh my god...

ARIA
So they swipe a quarter of a dozen
cadavers from their local Tesco,
control them to steal the jewels, and
then they leave without a trace.

KIM
It's...

ARIA
It's a pain in the arse.
(To the officer)
Tell your team to throw away DNA,
fingerprints, and face ID they've
collected.

KIM
It's disgusting.

ARIA
Maybe for angels like yourself--
personally I wonder if the men asked
for a women to go into, y'know, to
have a little fun on the way out.

Kim squirms.

ARIA (cont'd)
(back on track)
So we're looking for three thugs,
plus at least one doctor. They
probably have someone prepping the
corpses.

OFFICER
One of the suspects in the footage
could be the doctor.

ARIA
No. The people who did this are smart
and are probably planning on doing it
again. They can't afford to loose the
brains during a job...
(Beat while in
thought)
We need more angles. Get a hold of
more cameras and track that car.

OFFICER

Yes sir.

Kim is still shocked by the explanation. He doesn't register the instruction.

ARIA

What? You waiting for a postmarked letter? Find them!

CUT TO:

INT. CRASHED GETAWAY CAR - COLD AFTERNOON (A PLOT)

Vincent is awakened. He hears the sound of Ramsay coming through the radio and the clicking of the hazard lights. Tony is awake but is struggling to gather himself.

RAMSAY (O.S.)

Tony! Tony! What going on out there?

Vincent checks himself, he seems to have gotten lucky with only a few cuts and a large seatbelt bruise. He looks behind him. She's gone.

VINCENT

Claire...

Vincent taken by sadness, but also joy. She got out. But he knows he has to crush those feelings down for now.

RAMSAY

Tony! TONY!

Vincent goes for the radio.

VINCENT

Hello Dr Ramsay- We've had an... incident... how's part two coming along?

RAMSAY

Jesus Christ, does everything you do have to crash and burn?

VINCENT

Part two!

RAMSAY

These things take a while. You came out early and the police are on you... I don't know if I can get it all ready in time.

Tony has finally collected himself and speaks.

TONY

Yeah well, Claire ditched us. Does that help?

RAMSAY

That makes it... doable... just get here as fast as you can. Stick together.

Vincent doesn't like it but understands. He's the next to get out of the car.

EXT. STREET, CAR CRASH INCIDENT - CONTINUOUS

He prompts Tony to get up, but finds he can't walk. Vincent lifts Tony out of the car and becomes his crutch. He eyes the stolen loot and tries to carry both it and Tony, but realises he can't do both. Sirens wail in the background.

Beat.

Vincent crushes his greed and decides to lift Tony. They sneak through the back streets as the sirens begin to close in. Tony doesn't thank him.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIC PARK FAR AWAY - COLD AFTERNOON (C PLOT)

The public go about their day: businessmen, a silent disco, several friends with coffee, none of them notice as Claire limps past. The crimson fluid seeps passed her tight fingers as she tries to hide spillage with her coat.

CUT TO:

INT. PARK PUBLIC BATHROOM STALL

Claire locks the door of a disabled stall and inspects her wound, it's not bleeding too much but the pen knife is deep in her leg.

She takes out the bandages, lighter, and flask from her bag. She pours the alcohol from the flask over her wound to sterilise it, then, she gingerly flicks open the smaller opposite end of the penknife while it is still in her leg.

She holds her lighter to the smaller blade until it's glistening hot. Claire's hands shake, but she forces them calm as she makes a tight grip around the knife. She takes a deep breath. And counts up...

KIM

One... Two... Th-

She yanks it out a second early. She is unable to smother her pain as she screams out. Blood pours out like a fountain before she flips the knife to the hot end and cauterises the wound. Fresh pain doesn't give her peace.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, CAR CRASH INCIDENT - COLD AFTERNOON (B PLOT)

The blue swirling lights have found a new target. Aria is brushing over the scene. She notices something on the dashboard.

ARIA
(smiling)
Someone forgot to turn on their hazards.

KIM
Do we start swabbing the vehicle for finger prints? Or DNA-

Aria holds up a finger for silence. A pauses to assess.

ARIA
I spy... CCTV cameras, 1 and 6 o'clock. And...

Aria indicates to the cameras up high before she drops down to inspect the floor.

ARIA (cont'd)
A- No, two separate trails of blood... that's interesting... looks like someone's bailed.

She indicates to the pavement, where Kim registers a few specks of red.

ARIA (cont'd)
Send a team to check the CCTV, then we'll each follow a trail. Anything else will give them hours to get out of dodge.

KIM
Yes sir.

(Note: People refer to Aria as "Sir" even though she's female. In this future "Sir" is a gender neutral title.)

Kim rushes to do as he's told. A twisted smiles creeps up Aria's face as her eyes trace the crimson drips on the pavement.

ARIA
(sotto)
Run little piggies, run fast...

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK STREET - COLD EVENING (A PLOT)

The pair hobble their way into their safe house with sirens in the background. Tony is leaning heavily on Vincent.

TONY
This is all your fault you know.

VINCENT
I know. I know...

TONY
This is all on you... you think
you're going to be let off- They're
going to kill you... either way this
goes you're going to die... you're...
you're...

Vincent crushes his fear and continues to help Tony. The pain is lowering a few of Tony's filters as delusion kicks in. We see the true monster that lies at the core of the man.

TONY (cont'd)
You couldn't keep it in your pants
and drive... you're a...a fucking
whore... You're a fucking whore.

EXT. ABANDONED CREMATORIUM - COLD EVENING, CONTINUOUS

Focus on Vincent. As Tony continues to rant Vincent notices that Tony is clutching his arm in pain, it looks loose. He props Tony up as he fights the temptation to leave him behind.

TONY
You're... you're too weak to survive
on your own... you're a... only a
leech on the rest of us...

Vincent drops him on the ground. He takes off his jumper, ties it in a knot and reaches out to grab him.

TONY (cont'd)
Don't... don't you fucking touch me!
No... NO!

And he places the loop around his neck and arm to fashion a sling.

TONY (cont'd)
No no... no...

He then lifts Tony and, without another word, hobbles him into the crematorium as Tony continues to mutter hate.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED CREMATORIUM HIDEOUT

A heavy door unlocks with a buzz as the two limp into the room lined with fridges. Ramsay looks horrified at the state of the pair.

RAMSAY

What the hell happened to you two?

VINCENT

Just take him for God's sake.

Ramsay and Vincent lift Tony to one of the metal trays and lie him flat. Ramsay injects him with a strong painkiller before feeling his shoulder. It's dislocated.

RAMSAY

Hold his torso steady while I lift his arm.

Ramsay slowly pushes his arm further and further up, the pain increasing with distance. Tony fights Vincent's grip holding him down. The struggle continues until the final crunch of the bone being lodged in the socket is heard.

Tony yelps in pain, but this final spike gives Tony the strength to break free and punch Vincent clean in the face with his good arm. Beat. Vincent holds his face. Tony's mind has been cleared by the painkiller.

TONY

That's for crashing the car.

RAMSAY

You crashed the car?

TONY

No time. What do we do now?

RAMSAY

Yes, well, didn't want to tell you before in case you got caught. I ordered a couple of spare fresher corpses.

Indicates to trays off to the side with new bodies.

RAMSAY (cont'd)

You've almost certainly been tracked but nobody has seen either of your real faces, yes?

Tony shoots Vincent a dirty look.

TONY

I bloody well hope not.

RAMSAY

A hail Mary then. We control these spares, come out and pretend to surrender, stage some kind of fight where we get shot and "killed" and we get the hell away while they think they've pinned the real deal.

Ramsay begins to prepare the new corpses for another transfer.

VINCENT
Will being killed be painful for us?

Beat.

RAMSAY
I haven't the foggiest.

And Ramsay continues, not bothered that she has to die to escape.

TONY
Well make it quick.

RAMSAY
Like I said, I wasn't given as much time as planned. But there's only three to prep so we should be good.

TONY
Just step on it. I have the feeling they're not gonna give us time to tie our shoelaces.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED CREMATORIUM - COLD EVENING (B PLOT)

Aria leads the blue lights to their final target, armed with a small swat team. Aria speeds to meet the swat captain.

ARIA
Talk to me Captain.

CAPTAIN
We tracked the suspects to this crematorium.

ARIA
Oh that's clever! Fridge the bodies and burn the evidence. Two for one! It's been too long since having something this good... Any arms? Explosive traps? Hostages?

CAPTAIN
We don't know, that's why we can't go in... they might be willing to negotiate.

ARIA
These thugs stole multiple dead bodies and dragged them across town without anyone noticing. They're going to have a plan.

CAPTAIN
What do you suggest?

ARIA
They've always been ahead, so we need
to overtake them... How...

But Aria's thought process is interrupted by Kim. He is very puffed having sprinted to get here.

KIM
(out of breath)
Sir. Good news and bad news. I was
tracking the second trail, like you
asked, and I believe I found the
suspect that bailed from the car
crash.

ARIA
Is she with us? We might be able to
use her.

KIM
That's the bad news-

Long shot of the officers through the boarded up windows of the crematorium. While they converse they can't be heard but Aria's jolt of excitement is undeniable.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED CREMATORIUM HIDEOUT (A PLOT)

Ramsay finishes typing her final adjustments. Tony and Vincent are lying on trays next to their new corpses. Ramsay does the same and begins the final countdown. She lifts her computer mouse and stays her hand over the left click.

RAMSAY
Ready?

Tony and Vincent acknowledge.

RAMSAY (cont'd)
Preparing for synapse pattern
transfer in...three...two...one-

But just in time the door is heard: Knock...Knock-Knock... Knock. Ramsay's computer opens a window automatically. It shows security footage of the entrance and Vincent can't believe it.

VINCENT
It's Claire!

Vincent runs up to door.

TONY
DON'T OPEN IT!

Too late. Vincent throws the door open without a second thought, and reveals Claire clutching the stemmed bleeding in her leg. Vincent reaches out and gives her the greatest hug, Claire pushes through the induced pain in her bandaged leg to return the embrace.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry.

VINCENT

You have nothing to be sorry for.

CLAIRE

Do we have anything to defend ourselves with?

RAMSAY

Only another set of fresh corpses- you're welcome by the way.

VINCENT

How long with it take to prepare the third cadaver?

RAMSAY

It's gonna take another cycle.

VINCENT

Do it!

But Ramsay stays put on the tray and shakes her head. It's not going to happen. Someone has to be sacrificed.

TONY

We can't risk that much time. She likes leaving so much she can leave right now to put herself in prison.

VINCENT

She's not getting left!

TONY

What do you think we just did tonight? When we took the cash I didn't see you leave flowers and a card. You act mighty but you're just as low as the rest of us.

Vincent snaps, it's too much.

VINCENT

If you're so low maybe you should get what's coming, maybe you should get left behind.

TONY

You try that on me I'll beat your head to the floor 'til there's nothing left but strawberry puddin'

VINCENT
I... Just give me...

CLAIRE
It's okay....

A long beat from Vincent. He can't find a way out of this, except...

VINCENT
(sotto)
Listen Claire. Lie on that tray, take my cadaver, but promise me you'll stay out of this. I will see you again... but I never want to see you here. Please. Get out.

Vincent reaches out and leaves Claire a tender kiss. They both give a tearful smile as they tightly hold each other's hands. Peace. Then Claire fades.

Claire leans forward before collapsing on the floor. Vincent cries out, unsure of what's happening as he continues to hold her body. He checks her pulse. Nothing. Vincent doesn't notice the swat team that comes in.

CAPTAIN
Armed Police!

Tony and Ramsay slowly put their hands on their heads.

CAPTAIN (cont'd)
All clear!

Aria enters the room to perform the arrests. She talks loudly into a radio so that the criminals know exactly what happened.

ARIA
(calling out)
They didn't leave any pieces of you in the thug did they Kim?

Kim doesn't reply, all we hear is vomiting from around the corner.

ARIA (cont'd)
Well, a confession is a confession.

Vincent doesn't listen. Aria lifts him to be cuffed but he fights back so that he can hold Claire. His struggle causes his face to be struck by a rifle stock before his head pressed to the floor. His face is inches from Claire's.

ARIA (cont'd)
Good thing we found her fresh, a few painkillers and blood transfusions later and she was ready to use.

The swat team begin pulling Tony and Ramsay out. Focus on Vincent who is shaken to his core. All is blurred and muffled.

ARIA (cont'd)

(Muffled)

You are under arrest for armed robbery. You do not have to say anything. But, it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. ABANDONED CREMATORIUM HIDEOUT - COLD EVENING (ABC PLOT)

Vincent is lowered into a police car while Aria watches from the sidelines. She then goes to check on Kim who has been given a blanket to put over his shoulders.

ARIA

How are you doing?

Kim stares at detective like she's not human.

KIM

We just weaponised and violated another human being.

ARIA

Yeah... just like they did.

Beat. Focus on Vincent as he is driven away in the police car.

CUT TO BLACK:

CREDITS.