

BACK TO LIFE

Written by

P.J. Matta

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INT. ISABELLA'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

ISABELLA MARTINEZ, a do-it-yourself hispanic woman stares at an electronic safe with a fingerprint scanner. She dreads holding this box.

Her thumb presses the scanner. The lid unlocks and automatically lifts to reveal a pistol and police badge.

Isabella's pajamas - an oversized t-shirt that reads **Redstone Police Department**. She closes the safe. Carefully places the pistol and badge on top of the dresser near a window.

The early morning light transforms the gun into a mesmerizing sculpture. Sunlight highlights the grooves on the handle.

CUT TO:

INT. ISABELLA'S HOME - BATHROOM - MORNING

A bathroom filled with steam from a hot shower. In the shower Isabella. She hums the movie's MAIN TUNE:

ISABELLA (O.S.)
(humming movie's tune)

ON THE GUN and as we DOLLY to it Isabella hums. Sunlight sculpts the trigger guard, then the trigger, up to the ejection port. A sheen rolls along the gun's barrel to the muzzle.

INT. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - ROOM - MORNING

THREE OFFICERS stand in front of a room. Behind them on the wall is a city seal for Redstone. In the middle of the three cops is HUDSON WILHELM, a rookie, eager to put away the bad guys. He looks like an olympian receiving a gold medal.

MAYOR (O.S.)
Officer Hudson Wilhelm, welcome to
the Redstone Police Department.

He shakes hands with the Mayor. An audience of about a dozen applaud.

INT. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - RECEPTION - MORNING

A sheet of cake reads "Congratulations". A SERVER uses a long knife to cut a piece then put it on a plate. She hands it to Hudson with a plastic fork and napkin.

Just as he's about to take a bite of the cake a PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER interrupts him and motions for a family picture of Hudson with his wife BECKY and toddler EMMA. They squeeze together for their picture. Big smiles.

Becky, being meticulous about appearances, motions for another picture to be taken. She takes the plate from Hudson and places it offscreen and quickly snaps back into position. Then adjusts Hudson's hair. The Wilhelm family poses.

BRIGHT CAMERA FLASH TRANSITIONS TO:

CUT TO:

EXT. DONUT SHOP - ORDER WINDOW - MORNING

A.J., a fearless man struggling to be a good person, waits for his order at a walk-up window donut shop. DONUT WORKER hands him three glazed donuts in a box.

A.J. pays with cash. Receives his change then stuffs it into the tip jar. Donut Worker gives A.J. a thumbs up. A.J. winks then enters the shop through a side door.

INT. DONUT SHOP - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A.J. strolls behind the counter and past the Donut Worker...

INT. DONUT SHOP - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Enters a kitchen. Two COOKS deep fry donuts. A.J. weaves past them towards the back door of the donut shop.

EXT. ALLEY - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

The back door of the donut shop opens into an alley. A.J. fiercely walks up to two men waiting on him. WHITE MAN, a scrawny drug dealer wears a blue tank top; and MARCUS, another dealer have their backs to us. They're amateurs.

A.J. opens the box of glazed donuts. Takes a bite. Slowly chews it while standing face to face with both men.

He takes his time swallowing. Afterwards he offers MARCUS the box of donuts. White Man swats the box.

CUT TO:

BEGIN A 3-WAY SPLIT SCREEN (LEFT, MIDDLE, RIGHT)

Isabella, Hudson and A.J. are all seen simultaneously on the screen. Isabella is on the left. Hudson in the middle. And A.J. on the right.

The following sequence is choreographed to music.

INT./EXT. ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

LEFT SIDE OF SCREEN

Isabella in a police uniform stares down at her gun. Her hair is damp and uniform not fully buttoned. She hums the movie's main tune.

INT. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - MORNING

MIDDLE OF SCREEN

Hudson admires his police badge, then holds up a folded piece of paper. It looks aged. He unfolds it and reads it.

HUDSON POV: "Be a hero today. Love, Dad"

Hudson wants to live up to the expectations of the message.

He hums the movie's main tune.

INT. ALLEY - MORNING

RIGHT SIDE OF SCREEN

A.J. points his finger at White Man's face. Forms a gun. He smacks White Man's head, then sucker-punches him in the gut.

He hums the movie's main tune.

All 3 ON SCREEN

Isabella, Hudson and A.J. peer directly at the camera. Their timing is choreographed with the music. The main tune they hum now crescendos until singing begins:

ISABELLA
(singing)
Back.

HUDSON
(singing)
To.

A.J.
(singing)
Life.

The movie's title is once again sung by Isabella, Hudson and A.J., but this time in unison.

ISABELLA/HUDSON/A.J.
(singing)
Back. To. Life.

TITLE CARD (over 3-way split screen):

"Back to Life"

Isabella, Hudson and A.J. look directly into the camera while holding on a 3-way split screen. Their singing fades down to a silent and serious stare. One by one they step out of frame.

LEFT: Isabella steps out of frame.

MIDDLE: Hudson steps out of frame.

RIGHT: A.J. steps out of frame.

The 3-way split screen, now emptied of people, remains with the title card.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

Banging on a door!

FADE IN:

INT. ISABELLA'S HOME - HALLWAY - MORNING

Isabella firmly bangs on a bedroom door. Now fully dressed in her police uniform. Hair in a bun. Gun in its holster. She demands a response from her teenage son, MANUEL.

ISABELLA
Manuel! Manuel!

She presses her ear against the door. Listens a moment.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
Manuel!

She paces. Faces the door. Paces more. She then measures her leg to the doorknob. Takes a calculated step back and kicks open the door!

INT. MANUEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Manuel sits up startled in bed wearing Beats headphones. Music is heard blaring from his headphones. He's pissed.

MANUEL
What are you doing?

ISABELLA
Son, I thought you were...

MANUEL
You just kicked down my door!

ISABELLA
I thought you were injured.

He lifts his arms up to reveal gauzes on both wrists.

MANUEL
I'm not gonna try again.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She rushes down the hallway. Manuel follows her. He's not dressed - only wearing boxers and the gauzes on his wrists.

ISABELLA
You're late for school.

MANUEL
I ain't going.

ISABELLA
Oh, yes you are.

MANUEL
Not to that school.

ISABELLA
The doctors signed off on you.

Manuel now in front of her face. He shrugs.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
It's been two weeks. Time to get
out the house and back to school.
Get back to life.

MANUEL
What life?

Raises his wrists in front of her cheeks.

ISABELLA
I don't need reminding.

Manuel storms down the hallway. Struggles to get back in his
room because the broken door.

MANUEL
Now you don't have to worry anymore
at all if I'm dead. You can just
look into my room! Thanks a lot!

And on Isabella punching a nearby wall:

CUT TO:

INT. ALLEY - MORNING

OFFICER A.J. viciously punches WHITE MAN'S face. Basically
unleashing pent up rage. White Man is pinned down under A.J.

A.J. grabs him by the hair. Slams his head onto the ground.
It's the final exclamation point to a long beating.

A.J. breathes heavily. Exhausted. Wipes his bloody knuckles
on the man's blue tank top. As he's doing this, he casually
hums a tune, similar to the one heard earlier by Isabella.

A gold chain with a cross symbol hangs around the White Man's neck. It catches A.J.'s attention. He takes his time admiring it while still humming a tune. He roughly slips it off the man's neck. White Man moans.

A.J. plays with the gold cross between his fingers before putting the necklace around his own neck. A.J. searches White Man's pockets for more treasures and finds a wad of \$100 bills.

He pulls one \$100 bill from the thick wad and holds it above his head - as if calling for a taxi. He's getting the attention of MARCUS who's offscreen.

We don't see Marcus, but he's been craving that wad of cash.

MARCUS (O.S.)
He owes me all that!

A.J. pulls another \$100 bill. Also holds it above his head.

A.J.
This is all you get.

Two bills are snatched by Marcus. He mumbles underneath his breath. A.J. jumps up and points his gun offscreen at Marcus.

A.J. (CONT'D)
What'd you say?

MARCUS (O.S.)
Nothin man!

A.J.
This is a lesson. Stay off the streets, Marcus!

MARCUS
You crazy A.J.!

On the sounds of Marcus running away A.J. retires his gun back into its holster. He pockets the cash. Now he's satisfied with a day's work.

INT. HUDSON'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Hudson rushes to leave his house. Today is his first day on the job. He heads to the front door and whistles a tune similar to the one hummed by Isabella and A.J.

INT. HUDSON'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

He stops in front of a mirror. His uniform wrinkle-free and brand new. He adjusts his collar and admires himself.

INT. HUDSON'S HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two silhouettes. Becky and Emma run after him down a dimly lit hallway and through a living room. We never clearly see their faces. Hudson briskly walks outside. Pulls the door close. Becky stops the door from shutting on her and Emma.

BECKY

Wait! Hudson.

HUDSON

Yes.

BECKY

Are you really taking off without saying bye?

HUDSON

Babe, today is important. I get to be a hero today.

BECKY

And we want to be part of it.

Emma starts crying. Hudson is agitated.

HUDSON

The fewer distractions the better. There isn't time for lovey-dovey stuff.

BECKY

There never is with you.

Hudson forcefully kneels down in front of Emma.

HUDSON

Good-bye sweet one.

BECKY

Really. You're acting like an action hero who just rescued a little girl.

HUDSON

I'm wrinkling my pants right now. That should mean something to you.

Becky picks up Emma and slams the door on Hudson.

INT. PATROL CAR - MORNING

Isabella wipes tears from her face while driving a patrol car. She calms herself and calls in her location.

She rounds a street corner. Turns on the radio. An original musical score starts to play. It morphs into an accompaniment for the following song:

Isabella breaks into SONG.

SONG #1 STARTS

[TRACK 1: TODAY IS TOMORROW]

This song emphasizes the feelings Isabella wants to share with her son. She wants only for him to live his life to the fullest capacity. The lyrics are words she hasn't been able to express to MANUEL. Part of the song is sung in Spanish.

START SONG MONTAGE

EXT. POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Still singing, she pulls into a parking space.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Isabella enters a hallway in the police station. No one notices her sing. She passes colleagues busy with work: they grab documents, and hauling drunks in handcuffs. She looks up at a wall clock. Stares into an office window.

INT. POLICE STATION - MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isabella sits in a briefing with other officers. Assignments are being distributed for the day. They are listening to SGT. BEKKA, a woman admired for her sternness, wisdom, and leadership. She supervises the meeting from a podium.

Isabella is handed a file folder. She doesn't want it. Maybe there was a mistake. She tries to give it back just as the meeting breaks up. Officers disperse from the room.

Isabella remains seated. Her last note rings out as the room empties.

SONG #1 ENDS

END SONG MONTAGE

INT. POLICE STATION - MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She opens the folder to find a picture of Officer Hudson and some papers. She glances at the accompanying documents and quickly shuts the folder to catch Sgt. Bekka.

ISABELLA
Sergeant Bekka, good morning.

SGT. BEKKA
Good morning, Officer Martinez.

ISABELLA
No one warned me I'd be training a new recruit.

SGT. BEKKA
Isabella, did you read the report?

ISABELLA
I glanced at it.

SGT. BEKKA
First, no need to use the word "warn". Second, Hudson Wilhelm is not a new recruit. He's an officer of the law. And as of today, he's your partner. Let me know if you need anything else.

They start to walk away from each other.

SGT. BEKKA (CONT'D)
Actually, Officer Martinez. Come to my office.

INT. SGT. BEKKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

It's a rather typical stale office found in police stations. File cabinet, etc., except for the picture of Mother Theresa.

SGT. BEKKA
Please sit.

Sgt. Bekka shuts the door. Sits at her desk.

SGT. BEKKA (CONT'D)
I want to check in on you.

ISABELLA

Ok.

SGT. BEKKA

Isabella, it's going on a year since the shooting. Are you ok?

ISABELLA

Well. No.

SGT. BEKKA

What's going on?

ISABELLA

You mean besides the fact that I'm reminded every day of taking that boy's life.

SGT. BEKKA

That boy was Shaquon West. You still won't speak his name, huh?

ISABELLA

I've tried. Do we need to talk about this now?

SGT. BEKKA

Yes because I need to know if you're still thinking about retiring. Most officers in your situation would have quit the force by now. You told me to give you a year. Time's almost up.

ISABELLA

Is that why I'm training Hudson? Teach him everything I know.

SGT. BEKKA

Listen. Keep me in the loop of what you decide to do. That's all.

Isabella gets up to leave and opens the office door.

SGT. BEKKA (CONT'D)

Isabella, I really care about you.

ISABELLA

I know. Thank you.

SGT. BEKKA

One more thing.

Sgt. Bekka gets up. Sits at the end of her desk.

SGT. BEKKA (CONT'D)
How's Manuel?

ISABELLA
He's coming along.

SGT. BEKKA
Has he said why he did it?

Isabella shrugs. She doesn't know.

ISABELLA
I have hope for him.

SGT. BEKKA
That's good. But does he?

ISABELLA
Yep. He just doesn't know it.

SGT. BEKKA
I'll keep him in prayer.

A.J. stands leaning on the door frame near Isabella.

A.J.
Who are you keeping in prayer?

SGT. BEKKA
I didn't see you there Officer A.J.
We're talking about Isabella's son.

A.J.
Didn't he slice his wrists?

SGT. BEKKA
Officer A.J.!

A.J.
Well didn't he?

Isabella leaves hurriedly down the hallway.

A.J. leans calmly on the door frame.

SGT. BEKKA
Mind your manners.

A.J.
Blame the graveyard shift sergeant.
It just leaves me crude.

A.J.'s knuckle starts to bleed.

SGT. BEKKA
Rough night?

A.J.
The usual. You have time to talk?

SGT. BEKKA
I'm free later this afternoon.

A.J.
I'll be sleeping. Never mind.

SGT. BEKKA
You owe Isabella an apology.

A.J.
No problem. I'll apologize.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY

A.J. strolls down the hallway and breaks into SONG.

SONG #2 STARTS

[TRACK 2: ALWAYS APOLOGIZING]

This song emphasizes his frustration working for the "man". He feels powerless and constantly controlled and finds himself always apologizing for just being himself.

He justifies his actions for breaking the law. In his opinion, he's forced to bend the rules to survive under the oppression of others.

START SONG MONTAGE

INT. POLICE STATION - LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

A.J. sings as he folds his uniform and changes clothes.

INT. A.J.'S - APARTMENT - SHOWER - MORNING

A.J. stares at his knuckles in the shower while singing.

INT. A.J.'S APARTMENT - DINING AREA - MORNING

A.J. pulls the blinds up on a window.

Sits down to eat.

Holds up his knife to the sunlight.

INT. A.J.'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

A.J. stashes the wad of cash in a small safe.

Closes it.

He stares at the gold necklace and cross.

Puts it on.

INT. A.J.'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

He settles into bed and closes his eyes on his final note.

SONG #2 ENDS

END SONG MONTAGE

INT. PATROL CAR - MORNING

Isabella on the driver's side. Hudson with her. Both are quiet and stare straight ahead at the street.

ISABELLA
You like coffee?

They park in front of a coffee shop before he can answer.

HUDSON
This place?

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

The coffee shop is a modern brick-and-chrome building. A few tables and chairs line the front of the shop.

HIPSTERS sip on coffee at a table. They're on their phones and laptops.

INT. PATROL CAR - MORNING

This is not the place Hudson wants to be seen.

ISABELLA
What's wrong with here?

HUDSON

Hipsters. What about Cowboy Coffee House? Just a half-mile up Market Street.

ISABELLA

No thanks. How about we set a rule? Driver gets to choose.

HUDSON

That's not fair. I never had the option to drive.

ISABELLA

How about I go here. You go there.

HUDSON

Deal. But you're the designated driver.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Sign reads: "To Go". A coffee placed near the sign by BARISTA. Isabella grabs it. Walks past a line of HIPSTERS. She laughs to herself.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Isabella walks through the entrance and up to Hudson who is now out of the patrol car and leaning on the hood.

ISABELLA

(lifting cup)

My day just got a whole lot better.

HUDSON

What was it like?

ISABELLA

Well the hipsters didn't attack me.

HUDSON

Not inside. I mean having to draw your weapon. You know, kill someone?

ISABELLA

Skipping the simple introductions?

HUDSON

We're partners now.

ISABELLA
Let's keep it that way.

HUDSON
I'd of done the same.

ISABELLA
Would you?

Three ALERT TONES from the dispatch center resound through walkie-talkies attached to their shoulders. They listen intently to the tones.

DISPATCHER talks:

RADIO DISPATCH
10-44. Female hiding in a closet.
Says her husband is being violent.
Location of caller is at 56 Meadow
Hill Lane.

HUDSON
(to Isabella)
That's close.

Isabella speaks into her shoulder-walkie.

ISABELLA
Dispatch, this is one-seven-six.
We're headed to the address.

RADIO DISPATCH
Copy one-seven-six. Approach with
caution. Female caller now saying
suspect may be armed.

Hearing that excites Hudson.

HUDSON
Change of plans. I'm now driving.

They rush inside the car.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

This is Meadow Hill. A nice neighborhood with big homes. No siren on the patrol car as it sneaks up to the curb in front of a two-story house.

INT. PATROL CAR - MORNING

HUDSON
You know this place?

ISABELLA
I've never been here.

INT. SUSPECT'S HOME - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

WHITE-COLLAR SUSPECT'S P.O.V. - hand opens the blinds for a view of outside. Isabella and Hudson are getting out of the patrol car. They cautiously approach the home.

Inside, we hear an INJURED WOMAN...

INJURED WOMAN (O.S.)
Help!

The blinds close.

EXT. SUSPECT'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Isabella and Hudson rush to the front door. They stand on each side of it for safety reasons. A muffled scream is heard from inside. Isabella bangs on the door.

ISABELLA
This is the police! Answer the door! Now!

No response.

The muffled screaming now getting louder.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
Is everything alright in there?

The muffled screaming stops. Silence. A faint response. Sounds like an argument happening inside. It's unclear what's being said. A thump on the door from inside. The White-Collar Suspect now on the other side of the door.

WHITE-COLLAR SUSPECT (O.S.)
Everything is fine! Go away! We're ok!

HUDSON
Who's we?

SUSPECT (O.S.)
Come in and find out.

Hudson puts his hear to the door. Isabella knows that's a bad idea. She waves him off and motions for him to take a defensive position. He does.

ISABELLA

Dispatch - this is one-seven-six.
Suspect is hostile. Refusing to
cooperate. Victim not visible.
Request to call back the victim...

BOOM!

A shot fired through the middle of the door. Isabella and Hudson scatter in opposite directions. Isabella hides behind bushes. She's still on the radio with Dispatch. Her gun is in its holster.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Shots fired! I repeat shots fired!

Hudson has his gun drawn and is squatted under a window. He's yelling into this shoulder-radio.

HUDSON

We need backup! Immediate backup!

Isabella gestures for Hudson to come to her. He refuses.

Another solution: she points to the patrol car.

Hudson disagrees with this plan. He wants to be the hero today, so he scurries to the front of the house.

While running there, he breaks into SONG.

SONG #3 STARTS

[TRACK 3: HERO TODAY]

This song emphasizes Hudson's eagerness to be the super cop. He's got to show his worth on his first day. He needs to send a message to the police department and the city that they made the best choice by hiring him.

In the song, Hudson mentions an eagerness to fire his gun but not kill anyone. Nothing comes easy in life, he sings.

Hudson wants to prove that he is a real-life hero. More so, he feels like a hero because he can brandish a gun.

EXT. SUSPECT'S HOME - FRONTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Hudson ducks under the frontside of the home. He remains crouched under a window with his pistol drawn.

He scoots several feet, then stands. Looks both ways. Squats again to pass beneath another window. Stands up again. Rounds the corner to the side of the house.

EXT. SUSPECT'S HOME - SIDE - CONTINUOUS

He's at the entrance to the backyard wooden fence. It's a road block along his heroic journey. He crouches down to peek through the wooden slats.

Dog barks!

A vicious dog on the other side. Hudson's song is briefly interrupted. But he picks up singing where he left off. Now he notices an open window above his shoulders.

INT. SUSPECT'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Curtains sway from a breeze and split to reveal Hudson surveying the living room with his gun. He raises the window just enough to crawl through it.

SONG #3 ENDS

INT. SUSPECT'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - - MORNING

