

RIPPER

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EXT. CITYSCAPE. NIGHT

Birds eye view of a metropolis at night. Lights dot the darkness like stars in a vast, cloudless night sky.

On a busy brightly lit road, a clean sedan is parked by the curb.

INT. SEDAN. NIGHT

The engine is running. The windows foggy because the AC is on high blast. The sounds of traffic somewhat muted.

Jack(mid 30's, handsome, business suit) grips the steering wheel like his life depends on it. He is sobbing hysterically.

He reaches into the pocket of his expensive suit, retrieving a sachet containing white powder. He pours some on his thumb nail and sniffs it, eyes slowly closing in relish, his sobs subsiding.

When he opens his eyes, they are clear and intense. He glances at the rear mirror, his eyes stare back, fever bright, His face expressionless.

Methodically, he uses a paper towel from the pack on the dash to wipe his face.

He casts around, looking for something, reaches into the glove compartment...

And draws out a wicked looking knife.

He stares at the blade, testing its edge with his thumb. It nicks him, blood beading on his finger. He doesn't flinch.

Satisfied, he retrieves a suitcase from the back seat and places the knife inside, beside a pair of handcuffs, a camcorder, a gun and some passports.

He glances at his gold wristwatch; it's illuminated hands show it's some minutes past 10.

Jack takes another sniff of the white powder and turns on the stereo, classical music pouring out of the speakers. Glancing at his side mirror, he rejoins traffic.

EXT. RED DISTRICT. NIGHT

Loud music blares out of a nearby beer parlor. The neighborhood is a seedy one.

Prostitutes litter the street, lounging by the roadside and lurking in the shadows cast by semi-functional streetlights.

Jack sits in his car a ways down the street, watching as a car slows to a halt and a matronly looking prostitute saunters up to the window. After a brief exchange, she turns and gestures to a shadowy corner and two young prostitutes walk quickly to the car and get in.

As the car zooms off, Jack starts his car and drives forward, rolling to a stop in the same spot the other car just vacated. He winds down the passenger window, the picture of affability.

JACK
(Smiling) Good evening.

The prostitute regards him warily, decides he is okay and walks up to his window.

PROSTITUTE
Wetin be your spec?

Jack casts a critical eye at a small group of girls huddled together under the neon lights of the bar sign. He carefully scrutinizes two older looking hookers lounging beside the road sharing a cigarette. They won't do either.

The prostitute is getting impatient.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)
Abi na Shantel you dey find?

She turns towards the prostitutes standing under the bar sign.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)
Call Shante...

JACK
No!

The prostitute turns, to find Jack staring at a lone figure standing slightly apart from the crowd.

PROSTITUTE
(frowning) That one? No be my girls
be that.

Jack glances at her, raising an inquisitive eyebrow, the prostitute sighs in resignation.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

Heyys! You! Come, customer dey call you.

The girl starts, surprised, then walks hurriedly towards the car. As she passes beneath a streetlight, we see she is a pretty, frail looking thing in a skimpy black dress. Her features drawn in discomfort she masks with a shaky smile.

The smile is back on Jack's face in all it's brilliance.

The prostitute steps back and watches in annoyance as the Young girl gets into the car and Jack drives off. Murmuring under her breath, her attention is immediately drawn to another vehicle slowing to a stop.

INT. SEDAN IN MOTION. NIGHT

Jack drives in silence, occasionally stealing sidelong glances at his passenger. He turns on the radio, flipping through stations.

He stops fiddling with the radio and catches the tail end of a news report.

NEWS REPORTER

...these murders which the police have termed the 'ripper' murders, have raised speculation nationwide, with several calls being made for the redoubling of efforts on the part of law enforcement to apprehend the culprits. The question however remains... with over 5 similar murders in five different states, could this be the work of a serial kill...

Jack abruptly switches off the radio, an apologetic smile on his face.

JACK

So glum. The news these days.

The girl just smiles shyly, staring everywhere but at Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

You know, I didn't catch your name. I'm Jackson.

ALISHA

Alisha.

JACK
Alisha. Interesting name.

ALISHA
Thanks.

They drive on in silence for a minute.

JACK
You... you haven't done this before
have you?

Alisha glances at him, her face guarded. Jack chuckles, he is beginning to sweat. He uses his sleeve to wipe his forehead.

JACK (CONT'D)
I can usually tell. It's in the
shoulders... and the eyes.

Alisha subconsciously tries to adjust, eliciting another chuckle from Jack.

ALISHA
You have done this before, I
presume?

JACK
What? Picking up whores? Once or
twice.

Uncomfortable silence.

JACK (CONT'D)
(abruptly) Why are you doing this?

ALISHA
Does it matter?

JACK
No. But I'm curious. You girls
usually have a pretty good reason.
For most it's money... but then
once in a while, you meet someone
motivated by something else...

Alisha stares at him curiously.

ALISHA
And what is your motivation?

JACK
For what?

ALISHA
For picking up whores.

Jack ignores the question and turns up the stereo, humming along to the song that comes on. Alisha looks away.

ALISHA (CONT'D)
I don't have anybody. Not anymore.
Not for a long time.

Jack glances at her speculatively.

JACK
Just how old are you exactly? I mean... no offense but you don't look above 16.

ALISHA
I'm old enough.

JACK
I don't mean...

ALISHA
I thought you said it didn't matter? What's with all the questions?

JACK
(Chuckles) So evasive. Don't worry, before the night is over, there'll be no secrets between us. Oh, we're here.

Jack takes the next turn into the parking lot of an average roadside motel. He kills the engine, leans back and groans. He is pouring sweat now. He shoots a shaky grin at Alisha who is beginning to look nauseous.

Jack grabs the bag in the back seat.

JACK (CONT'D)
Shall we?

INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

It's a small hotel room with sufficient lighting and no frills or extravagant trappings. From next door, loud music can be heard thumping through the walls.

Jack enters, holding the door open for Alisha and ushering her in with an extravagant bow and smile.

He shuts the door and turns the key in the lock, his hands are shaking. Slipping the key into his pocket, he goes to drop his bag on a bedside table.

He turns to regard Alisha with a puzzled smile. She is standing in the middle of the room, looking around. Vulnerable.

JACK

(sighs) I forget you haven't done this before. Just... the bathroom is that way. Go, wash up so we can get down to business.

Alisha takes one more long look at the room and then heads meekly towards the bathroom. Jack waits till the door shuts, then he reaches for the white powder in his pocket like a drowning man reaching for a lifeline, taking a healthy sniff of the stuff.

He throws his head back, eyes shut, muscles locked as the drug hits his bloodstream. Then he relaxes with a sigh. He opens his eyes, all expression gone from his face.

He raises his hands to his face and examines them. They are steady.

Methodically, like he has done this before, he zips open the bag, taking furtive glances at the still closed bathroom door.

He pulls out the camcorder, switches it on and then places it on the small fridge in the corner, checking to see if the angle is just right.

He retrieves the gun from the bag, slips it under the pillow and then picks up the knife more slowly, almost reverently.

He puts the knife down and then goes to hit the record button on the camcorder. A red light appears on the device.

And suddenly, we are now viewing the scene from the camcorders POV.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hey, did you fall asleep in there?

Jack steps back and begins to undress in full view of the camera. His movements almost ritualistic. First the suit goes. Then the tie. Then the shirt underneath. We see he's upper torso is heavily muscled but scarred. Faint purple bruises that look like claw marks.

There is no response from Alisha. Jack frowns in annoyance.

He goes to knock on the bathroom door.

JACK (CONT'D)
Hey! Are we doing this or not?

There is some movement behind the door.

ALISHA
(faintly) I'm sorry. I... I don't
think I can do this.

A look of pure rage clouds Jack's face but he restrains himself visibly.

JACK
Of course you can.

ALISHA
I'm sorry.

JACK
Look, it's just sex. You close your
eyes and it is over. I give you
your money and we are done.

There is silence from the other side of the door. Jack is beginning to slip again.

JACK (CONT'D)
Alisha come on. You already made it
this far. It's going to be fine. I
promise.

Alisha begins to cry softly. Jack is beginning to sweat again.

ALISHA
I'm sor...

Jack suddenly rams the door, abandoning all niceties. He rams it over and over but it doesn't give.

JACK
Open this door.

ALISHA
Please, what... are you doing?!

JACK
Open. The. Fucking. Door!

Alisha whimpers gets louder as Jack rams the door again and again.

JACK (CONT'D)
You bitch. You stupid bitch!!!

Jack grabs the knife from the table. He is slowly becoming unhinged. He rifles through his discarded clothes, pawing through his suit pockets for the white powder.

He groans when he sees the amount that's remaining. It's barely enough for one hit. He takes it anyway.

Jack moves back to the bathroom door.

JACK (CONT'D)
Alisha. Alisha please open the door. I need you, Alisha. Please.

There is no response from behind the door. Jack slams his fist into the door.

JACK (CONT'D)
Open the door!!!

ALISHA
Please. I don't want this. Don't make me do this again...

JACK
I'm going to make you pay! Once i get my hands on you whore! I will make you pay. You deserve to bleed. Just like my wife bled. You all deserve to bleed!

ALISHA
Please. I need to leave. I don't want this...

Jack screams. Going into a frenzy and attacking the door with the knife. He reels in frustration, his eyes manic, muttering to himself.

JACK
Make you bleed... Make all whores bleed.

ALISHA
What are you doing? Please stop. Pleassee...

Jack cuts himself, groaning in ecstasy. A fine line across his chest that bleeds thinly. He makes another cut, slowly this time.

ALISHA (CONT'D)
Stop please... Stop...

Jack rams the door again and Alisha falls silent. Jack rams the door a couple more times, screaming obscenities.

JACK
Come out whore! Come out and face
Judgement.

ALISHA
(Quietly) You are bleeding.

JACK
What? What did you say Whore!?

The door clicks open and Jack steps back in surprise. Slowly, the door swings open. We don't see what he sees as he stares into the open bathroom, the light from inside playing over his features like that of a magic portal.

ALISHA
(quietly) I can smell your blood.

Jack seems to shake out of his reverie. Rage once more suffusing his face. He rushes into the bathroom with his knife raised.

JACK
Die Whore!

There are sounds of struggle from the bathroom then a long scream of agony as we hear the unmistakable sound of bone breaking.

Only the screams aren't female, they are Jack's.

Suddenly a figure lunges out of the bathroom. It's Jack, all bloodied and frantic. We see the rage that suffused his face is now turned to terror bordering on insanity.

He tries to crawl out of the bathroom, using the knife to pull himself along.

JACK (CONT'D)
(sputtering) no, nooo... please.
Please.

Jack gives up trying to crawl away and turns over on his back, staring up at something or someone that has cast a shadow over his prone body. He holds the knife up in one shaky bloodied hand.

JACK (CONT'D)
What... What are... you?

With a scream, Jack is pulled into the bathroom and the door is slammed shut. The screams stop shortly after. The only sound is the thumping music coming from next door.

FADE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS. NIGHT

Birds eye view of a metropolis at night. Lights dot the darkness like stars in a vast, cloudless night sky.

A bus grinds to a stop at a bus stop. Two young guys get out, chatting noisily. They turn to another young guy in the bus.

GUY 1
How far? e go be na.

GUY 3
No wahala. I go buzz you when i reach house. Tell your sister say make she call me.

GUY 1
(laughing) God go punish your papa.

The bus starts moving, leaving the bus stop and the two young men in its wake. The young man in the bus settles back with a sigh.

He gets out his phone and clicks on a news app. We catch a reporter just as she delivers grim news.

REPORTER
... police confirm the deceased, one Mr Jackson Okolo, was a victim of the Serial Killer now known as "the Ripper" on social media channels. This will make it the 6th such murder in the space of 6 months and the IG of police in his press statement today vowed to dedicate all resources in his power to apprehending this vicious killer.

GUY 3
Damn...

REPORTER

However, the police are optimistic that the killer will be apprehended sooner rather than later as evidence was found at the scene of the crime that could be the deal breaker, according to police spokes person, Detective Ishaku Mustapha. Mr Jackson Okolo, a young and enterprising business mogul, who lost his wife to a vicious attack by hoodlums late last ye....

Guy 3 hisses and exits the app, the news obviously not to his liking. He plugs his headphones in and hits the music app, cool jazz floating out of his headphones.

He glances at his wristwatch and then casts a weary eye at the other passengers, his gaze coming to rest on a petite figure sitting 2 rows in front of him.

He stares at her curiously, his eyes taking in her profile. She is pretty.

As if sensing his perusal, she turns and looks right at him. Her gaze uncanny, intent. Then she smiles shyly and turns to face forward.

The girl is Alisha!

THE END