

PURE MOTIVES

by

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FADE IN:

INT. LOG CABIN - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

ED and EARL, two burly men, sprawl in rickety wooden chairs at a table. Dirty plates before them.

GRETCHEN RICHARDS (31), a classy looking despite the halter and short skirt tiptoes closer to the men on obscenely high heels. Studies them.

Spit dribbles from the corner of Earl's mouth and pools on his raggedy plaid flannel shirt.

Gretchen wrinkles her nose in distaste. Creeps away.

INT. LOG CABIN - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

FREDDIE, a dirt streaked toddler, huddles pathetically in the middle of a filthy cot.

Gretchen slides inside the room and puts a finger to her lips.

GRETCHEN
Wanna play a game with me?

FREDDIE
Want my mama.

He sniffs pitifully.

Gretchen masks her breaking heart with a smile.

GRETCHEN
We're gonna play Find Mama!

She reaches for him. He shies away. She gives him a sad look.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
You don't wanna play?

Freddie studies her. After a long moment, he finally reaches up. She swings him up in her arms with a grateful sigh.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
We have to be very quiet. We lose
if she hears us coming. 'kay?

She waits for his nod before slipping from the room.

EXT. LOG CABIN - CLEARING - DAWN

Gretchen silently closes the door behind her. She gives Freddie an encouraging smile even as her eyes dart about.

Seeing no movement, Gretchen hurries off the small porch and into a thick growth of brush and trees.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Gretchen stops beneath a tree and grabs a child harness hidden under a couple branches. She straps it on and settles Freddie on her back.

GRETCHEN

Are we having fun, yet?

He nods at her, not convinced. She winks at him over her shoulder. Takes off through the thick vegetation.

A SCREAM pierces the silence behind them.

Freddie looks behind them. Whimpers.

Gretchen speeds up.

INT. LOG CABIN - FRONT ROOM - DAWN

MAE BELL, a haggard stump of a woman, screams furiously. She grabs a pot of water and douses Ed and Earl.

They jump up in shock.

ED

Whassamatta?

MAE BELL

That no good tramp of a hussy took my baby!

She launches herself at Earl. He tries to duck her flying fists. Ends up sprawled on the floor.

MAE BELL (cont'd)

You! I tol' you not ta bring your whores 'round here! My baby's gone--

Ed grabs Mae Bell's flying fists. Hugs her to his chest as she sobs. He glares at Earl over the top of her head.

EARL
She couldn'ta got far.

He grabs a shotgun and scurries out the door.

Ed dries Mae Bell's tears. Grabs another shotgun.

ED
We'll get her.

EXT. LOG CABIN - CLEARING - DAWN

Earl studies the broken branches Gretchen left behind. He motions Ed over. They plunge after her.

EXT. CREEK - DAWN

Gretchen stops to listen.

Branches SNAPPING and POUNDING footfalls snag her attention.

GRETCHEN
Hang on tight, sweetie.

Freddie nods and tightens his grip on her neck.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
Maybe not that tight.

She pries his arms loose and holds his hands with hers. Lurches across the creek in ankle-deep water.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Earl and Ed stop to look around.

EARL
She's headed for the road. I'll go
'round this-a-way. Cut her off.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAWN

Gretchen bursts from the woods. She pulls a set of keys from inside her halter and presses a button.

Headlights flash from under a pile of branches.

Gretchen yanks the limbs free. She opens the back door and swings Freddie inside. Straps him in the waiting car seat.

She runs around to the driver's side.

A shotgun RACHET stops her dead in her tracks.

She turns around slowly.

Earl levels his shotgun at her. He smiles revealing a couple missing teeth.

EARL

Where you goin' with the boy?

Gretchen affects a ditzy look.

GRETCHEN

Oh, Earl. You're alright. I tried to wake you and Ed, but...and he was screaming his little head off...Mae Bell wasn't around. I had to try to find somebody and...

She trails away into near hysterics.

Earl studies her warily. The shotgun wavers a bit.

Gretchen carefully approaches him.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)

I didn't know what to do. I was so...scared.

She breaks down on Earl's shoulder. He awkwardly pats her back.

Gretchen grabs the shotgun. Whirls and knocks him in the head with it.

Earl falls to the ground, unconscious.

Gretchen sprints back to the SUV.

INT. COMPANY SUV - DAWN

Gretchen floors the accelerator. The powerful vehicle springs onto the road. Gretchen steadies it then picks up the mic from the equipment laden console.

GRETCHEN

I've got the boy. You're on, Jase.

JASON (V.O.)

You got it, boss.

INT. THE WALKER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

FREDRICK WALKER (45), a bespectacled man paces. Steps in sync with the ticking Grandfather clock.

VIOLET PRICE (56), an efficient looking woman, sets a serving tray on the coffee table with a reassuring smile.

NANCY WALKER (36), a mousy little thing, tries to smile her thanks to Violet. She wrings her shaky hands instead.

Fredrick looks at Nancy. His expression softens. He sits next to her. Kisses her temple then wraps her in his arms.

FREDRICK
Shouldn't we have heard something?

VIOLET
We will. Very soon, I'm sure.

Violet pours three cups of coffee. Fredrick waves his away. Nancy doesn't move.

The doorbell RINGS. Shattering the silence.

Nancy leaps to her feet and races towards the door.

EXT. THE WALKER'S HOUSE - PORCH - MORNING

Gretchen bounces a sleepy Freddie on her hip.

GRETCHEN
The game's almost over. You can't
find mama with your eyes closed.

Freddie raises his head to look at her.

The door flies open. Nancy gasps; tears of joy stream down her face.

Gretchen smiles.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
Look. We found her.

Freddie looks at Nancy and smiles. He reaches for her. Hands trembling, she takes him from Gretchen and holds him close.

NANCY
Thank you. Thank you so much.

Fredrick appears behind Nancy. Tears well in his eyes when he sees Freddie. He hugs both his wife and son protectively.

Gretchen smiles to fight her own tears. Violet joins them with her own satisfied smile.

GRETCHEN

He slept most of the way back, but
he's got to be exhausted.

She shakes Fredrick's hand and walks away. Violet follows.

Gretchen and Violet climb in the SUV and drive away.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - BALCONY - DAY

The CONGREGATION fills both levels to capacity. They all stand with right hands raised and heads bowed.

Now wearing a tailored suit jacket over the halter, Gretchen sneaks in to stand next to RACHEL RICHARDS (31). She raises her hand and bows her head as if she's been there all along.

Rachel glances up at her with one eye and shakes her head in amusement.

BISHOP SAM ALDEN (78), a tall lanky gentlemen wearing a robe, prays from the pulpit.

BISHOP ALDEN

To Him be glory and dominion
forever and ever. Amen.

The ORGANIST plays along as the congregation sings:

CONGREGATION

Aaaaamennn.

BISHOP ALDEN

Have a blessed week.

Quiet chatter erupts as people gather their things to exit en masse. They hug and greet others around them.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

MATT PRESCOTT (32), a tall, guilelessly handsome church Elder, smiles fondly as he receives hugs and kisses from a group of elderly LADIES in sharp suits and large elaborate hats.

CARLETON JAMES (34), also a church Elder, greets PEOPLE half-heartedly as he makes his way towards Bishop. Once by Bishop's side, his smile warms as he shakes hands.

HOLLY ALDEN (74), Bishop's elegant wife, keeps her smile in place, but watches Carleton from the corner of her eye. She hands an envelope to prim, proper BIANCA JAMES (33).

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - BALCONY - DAY

Gretchen and Rachael head for the stairs en masse.

RACHAEL

If you're that late, why come at all?

GRETCHEN

And miss benediction? No way. I'm getting my blessing.

RACHAEL

Speaking of getting. Did you?

Gretchen eyes sparkle with pride and excitement. Rachael shoots her a worried look.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Matt joins Bishop and Carleton in the thinning crowd. Bishop welcomes him with a hearty clap on the back.

MATT

You really preached, Bishop. I can only pray that someday I'll be a fraction as good.

BISHOP ALDEN

You're not but a couple sermons away.

Bianca strategically greets people. Each one moves her a closer to Bishop and her husband. She gives Bishop a big smile.

BIANCA

You had the spirit moving today, Bishop.

BISHOP ALDEN

Have you spoken to my wife, yet? She has some invitations for you.

BIANCA

Just a moment ago. Matt, she asked
me to give this to you.

Bianca fumbles the invitations a little and gives Matt the
one that reads, "Elder and Mrs. Carleton James."

MATT

I think...

BIANCA

So sorry. Elder Matt Prescott and
Guest. Here you are.

She hands him the right invitation.

Matt stares at his name linked with the "and Guest" on the
envelope. He musters up a smile.

MATT

Thanks.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - DAY

Gretchen and Rachael step outside still among the crowd.
Rachael's pagers BEEPS. She checks the display.

RACHAEL

Have you talked to your brother
about your plans?

GRETCHEN

Why? He has nothing to do with my
decision to expand my business.
Besides, I'm taking it slow.

RACHAEL

A kidnapping is not all that slow.

GRETCHEN

You've been married too long.
You're starting to sound like him.

FLASHBACK

EXT. RICHARDS' FAMILY HOME - PATIO - DAY

RACHAEL (9) colors diligently at a kid-sized round table.

TONY (14), scrawny, but tall, steps out on the patio. Looks
around nonchalantly.

TONY
Hey! You bratty little runt.
Where's Gretchen?

Rachael slowly lifts irritated eyes in his direction.

RACHAEL
Let me check my back pocket. Oh
wait, this dress doesn't have
pockets.

TONY
Cut it out, runt. Tell me where she
is.

RACHAEL
No.

TONY
I don't have time for these
childish games, Miss Priss. Mom and
Dad want her.

RACHAEL
Oh. Well in that case...no.

Tony glares at her. She glares back.

TONY
You are such a spoiled little brat!

RACHAEL
I know you are, but what am I?

TONY
I hate you. Why are you always here
anyway? No one wants you around.

Tony turns and stomps away.

Rachael tries not to cry.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - DAY

Rachael tucks her pager away and looks at Gretchen.

RACHAEL
We just...agree. That's all.

GRETCHEN

So this case came up a little quickly. We handled it. Well. I might add. You have to go?

Rachael shakes her head and studies Gretchen for a long moment. She sighs.

RACHAEL

Tell me something good. How's the pottery studio coming?

GRETCHEN

I just did. Tell you something...

Rachael slides her eyes in Gretchen's direction.

RACHAEL

Something I can tell my husband without him hitting the ceiling, I mean.

GRETCHEN

(smiles)

The first class is this week.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

TONY RICHARDS (36), self-assured in his tall, solid build, strides through double glass doors with RICHARDS' SECURITY & INVESTIGATIONS blazoned in gold letters on them.

INT. RSI OFFICES - DAY

The office bustles with activity. Unsmiling, Tony strides down the corridor.

INT. GRETCHEN'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Gretchen examines a huge pile of photos on her desk. Types notes on her laptop. Her phone BUZZES.

GRETCHEN

Yes?

ALICE (O.S.)

(nervously)

There's an Agent Richards of the FBI here to see you.

Gretchen looks at the door and rolls her eyes. She quickly stows the photos in a drawer.

GRETCHEN
Send him in.

Tony strides in her office.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
You just love it when I have a temp
don't you?

A wicked grin shatters his stern expression.

TONY
Maybe a little.

She rolls her eyes and gets up to give him a hug.

GRETCHEN
Why are you here scaring my temps
anyway?

TONY
Can't I stop by to check on my
little sister?

GRETCHEN
Of course you can. You just never
do.

He shrugs. Flops down on her couch and stares her down.

She sits in an armchair across from him; expression guileless.

TONY
Jason stopped by yesterday. He
brought three interesting
characters with him.

GRETCHEN
It was a favor. The Walker Group is
one of my biggest clients.

TONY
So naturally, when the CEO's son is
kidnapped, you take the case.

GRETCHEN
I just wanted to help.

TONY

What if you couldn't? You didn't even bother to let us know until after the fact.

GRETCHEN

It all worked out...

TONY

Not the point. You're not trained for...

GRETCHEN

How do you know?

TONY

You deal with white collar criminals. That does not translate into...

GRETCHEN

I'm not a child! I can handle myself. Pretty well, I might add.

Tony raises an amused eyebrow at her petulant expression then stands.

TONY

Fletcher, Johnson, Wilson, Keller.

He strides to the door. She jumps up to hurry after him.

GRETCHEN

Wait a minute. What?

INT. GRETCHEN'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

ALICE, a tiny woman, looks up startled. Tony flings the door open and steps from Gretchen's office. She chases him.

TONY

Thompson, Sheldon, Marks, Gellar, Stiles.

At the second door, he gives Alice a wave. Gretchen catches up with him. He kisses her cheek.

GRETCHEN

What are you talking about?

TONY

You've got it all figured out. Add that to your list.

He winks as he leaves. Gretchen grits her teeth and glares after him. She straightens her spine and smiles wickedly.

INT. LIBRARY - EVENING

Gretchen tiredly scrolls through microfiche articles. Glances at her watch. Her eyes widen. She gathers up her things and hurries for the door.

INT. YOUTH CENTER - MATT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Matt shoves a stack of files in his desk drawer. His invitation slides to the floor on the other side of the desk.

CARLETON (O.S.)

Dropped something?

Matt looks up as Carleton comes in and picks up the envelope. He drops in the chair across from Matt.

MATT

Thanks.

CARLETON

What do you think this is all about?

MATT

Haven't thought much about it. We've always had an open invitation to dinner.

CARLETON

This isn't open. And all of us at once?

MATT

We'll find out soon enough.

Carleton nods. He studies Matt's invitation.

CARLETON

And guest. Breaking out your extensive little black book to fill that requirement?

MATT

Yeah. Soon as you give it back.

Carleton chuckles and tosses the invitation on the desk.

CARLETON

Seriously. Who're you bringing?

MATT

Just me, myself and I.

CARLETON

And make the head count uneven? I have it on good authority, Bianca's anyway, that an uneven head count is a bad thing.

MATT

I'll bring my mother. I don't know.

Carleton stands and looks out the door as two BOYS barrel down the hallway.

CARLETON

Lacy was a long time ago. You gotta get back out there.
(to the boys)
Hey! Cool it.

Carleton hurries out after them.

Matt picks up the invitation to stare at it. He shakes his head and drops it on the desk. Unsettled, he leaves the office.

INT. YOUTH CENTER - POTTERY STUDIO - NIGHT

KIDS of all ages fill the studio. Squeals of delight and laughter echo throughout as they build clay projects.

Gretchen looks around the messy studio in satisfaction. She keeps her amusement to herself as she slyly watches IAN (14).

He works hard at keeping his sullen expression under the obvious adoration of PATTY (15) and SARAH (14) who admire his pottery.

KYLE, a pre-teen, sits at a wheel and tries to shape a huge wedge of clay with the wheel going top speed. Gretchen puts a hand on his shoulder.

GRETCHEN

Slow it down. Learn to control it first. And how about we start with less clay? Work our way up.

She cuts off half the wedge with a wire tool and leaves him on his own. She sits with another group of young GIRLS.

INT. YOUTH CENTER - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Matt walks along the corridor. LAUGHTER spills out of one of the doorways. Matt smiles a little; follows the sound.

INT. YOUTH CENTER - POTTERY STUDIO - NIGHT

Ian presses leaves into a pot. The girls cut slabs of clay.

Matt comes to the door and peeks in.

Gretchen gives him a welcoming smile.

GRETCHEN

Enter at your own risk.

MATT

I see. You must be Gretchen Richards. I wanted to come by to introduce myself. Matt Prescott.

He holds out his hand to shake hers. She regrettably holds up both of hers. Globbs of clay slide down her arms.

GRETCHEN

Rain check?

MATT

(laughs)
Of course.

Gretchen smiles at him at a loss for words. She can't tear her gaze away.

Until a large glob of slip smacks her in the face. Some of the mud slides off her cheek. Splats on the floor.

She blinks in utter disbelief.

Everything in the room goes still.

GRETCHEN

Excuse me.

She goes back to Kyle. He stares up at her in anxious horror. Gretchen squats next to him.

All eyes are glued to them.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
What did I tell you about the
wheel?

KYLE
That it...it was go-going too fast.

GRETCHEN
See what happens when it goes too
fast?

He nods. She gives him a long stern look then swipes some of the clay from her face. She holds it up ominously then smears it on his nose.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
No more fast wheels.

She winks at him. He finally breathes again. She stands and goes back to Matt who tries desperately to contain his laughter.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
I'm sorry. Where were we?

MATT
Uh...you'd just given me a rain
check.

GRETCHEN
The rain check.

MATT
It looks as though you have your
hands full here.

Gretchen watches Kyle toiling on a slower wheel. She smiles.

GRETCHEN
Yeah. I guess I do.

This time, it's Matt who stares transfixed. After a moment, he shakes himself out of it.

MATT
I'll...uh...leave you to it then. I
look forward to seeing you around.