

SUBURBAN STANDOFF

BY

MICHAEL GRANT

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CHARACTERS

HANK: (50-65) Retired military special forces commander. Married to Nancy. He is not enjoying his retirement

NANCY: (50-65) Retired military interrogator. He is fully embracing her retirement and new found freedom. She is married to Hank

TY: (20-35) Down on his luck, wrong side of the tracks type. He struggles to survive. He is dating Candy. He has never attempted to commit a crime before

CANDY: (20-35) Former stripper. She has as a heart of gold. She is dating Ty and is very nervous about his plan.

Suburban Standoff was first performed by the Elmira Theatre Company on February 5th 2016 with the follow cast.

Hank – Tom Bolton

Nancy – Chris Grose

Ty – Brandon Maxwell

Candy – Jamie Vandermolen

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ACT 1 SCENE 1

(As the lights rise, we see the living room of Hank and Nancy. It is an older home decorated to suit a retired middle class couple. Up stage right is the foyer leading to the main entrance. Up stage left is a staircase leading to the upper floor. Downstage is a living-room complete with an older TV, fireplace, sofa, chair and coffee table. Stage left contains an exit to the kitchen and a writing desk. As the lights rise, we see Hank sitting in 'his' chair reading the newspaper. After a moment, Nancy enters from the kitchen.)

Nancy: (Entering she breaks into a big show tune number over playing it. She carries a glass of water and numerous pills throughout. She covers the entire living-room with campy poses and over the top singing. She ends in a big flourish setting the water and pills on the coffee table in front of Hank. She waits for a reaction but Hank continues reading as if oblivious to what has just happened. She sighs in disappointment.) Well then, here you go Hon', dessert. Belly up. (No response.) Hank. (Nothing.) Hank, take your pills. (Nothing.) Hank! Oh for the love of Pete. (She pulls the newspaper out of Hank's hands.

Hank: What the....

Nancy: Your pills Hank.

Hank: What?

Nancy: Your pills!

Hank: Just a minute. (He adjusts the volume on his hearing aid) What are you saying?

Nancy: Your pills.

Hank: What about them?

Nancy: Take them!

Hank: Is it seven-o'clock already?

Nancy: Five after.

Hank: What time did we eat?

Nancy: We ate early. I told you, I have rehearsal with the Senior Stars. Our show opens in less than two weeks.

Hank: Oh yeah, the Stars. (Taking pills.) You kid's singing anything from this century yet?

Nancy: Don't start.

Hank: Seriously. Someone needs to get Doris a new songbook to play from. I mean it's the same damn songs year after year. Mix it up a bit.

Nancy: We do good work. People love the shows and we raise lots of money for a great cause.

Hank: I'll admit you do raise some money for howling like a bunch of tom-cats, good on ya.

Nancy: Why is it so impossible for you to simply tell someone that they did a good job?

Hank: Because good is simply that, good. Ok. Mediocre. Average. Very few great things ever happen.

Nancy: Great things happen in the world everyday!

Hank: Oh really?

Nancy: Yes.

Hank: Name one great thing that someone did today.

Nancy: Well I don't know....

Hank: Exactly. Great things are few and far between. (Indicating paper) And you don't have to look very far to see the other end of things. And these are only the things that they want us to see. They keep the really juicy stuff under wraps.

Nancy: Hank.

Hank: You know it's the truth, Nancy. You know as well as I do.

Nancy: I'm not getting into it with you now. I have to get ready for rehearsal. I don't have time to get into one of your debates about how the world is going to hell in a hand basket.

Hank: That's right Nanc', put the blinders on and hope it goes away. I'll tell you, (She stands behind him mouthing along with his speech.) It's not like it was when we were younger. There was order back then. Everyone knew their place. There was respect in the world. That's what's missing now days, respect, plain and simple.

Nancy: Yes, you're right, dear. Now I have to get ready. Do you have everything you need for the night?

Hank: I'm not a child Nanc'.

Nancy: I know dear. Do you have everything?

Hank: (Checking his seat cushion.) Remote? Check. Drink? Check. Paper? Check. Chips? Where the hell are the chips?

Nancy: They're in the pantry. I'll get them for you.

Hank: Never mind. I'll get them. You go do what you need to do.

Nancy: (Exiting up the stairs.) Thanks Hon, I think they're on the third shelf. Remember the low salt ones.

Hank: Yes, yes, the low salt ones. Third from the top or the bottom?

Nancy: (Off.) There are only three shelves. You'll figure it out. I have confidence in you.

Hank: Well that boosts my ego. Send me on a recky without a location for the target. Now you're behaving like the damn military in that rag.

Nancy: (Off.) Don't start on about the military. You know it gets you worked up and the doctor says that we need to avoid that sort of stuff until we know if those pills are working or not?

Hank: The doctor! Another reason to get my blood going.

Nancy: He's the best around. (Entering down the stairs.) Besides, you agreed he's good.

Hank: (Exiting to Kitchen.) Which is the same as mediocre!

Nancy: Have you seen my song book anywhere?

Hank: (Entering from kitchen with chip bag,) Have you thought anymore about a dog?

Nancy: What?

Hank: A dog. I want a dog.

Nancy: Well, I haven't really thought about it.

Hank: We need a dog.

Nancy: Why do we "need" a dog?

Hank: 'Cause you won't let a gun in the house.

Nancy: A dog? So I can spend my time feeding it? Taking it to the vet? Walking it? Cleaning up after it? You know they poop as much as us if not more.

Hank: I'd walk it.

Nancy: Oh well that would relieve the burden!

Hank: Just willing to do my part.

Nancy: Why do we need a dog? Really Hank, at our age? It's like having a kid and we didn't bother with those.

Hank: Hey, I said I'd walk it.

Nancy: But why?

Hank: Why?

Nancy: Yes, why.

Hank: Protection.

Nancy: Protection?

Hank: Yes, protection. Look at the world around us Nanc'. It's going to hell. Heck. Forget about that damn rag of a paper. Look at the local one. I've been watching the crime report. Did you know a woman was mugged two blocks over last week? Hell, it was only two years ago all the crime was in the south end but trust me, week over week I read that paper and week over week the crime moves one block north. Now it's here, in our neighbourhood. That could have been you.

Nancy: Oh Hank.

Hank: I want a dog. And not some fluffy dust mop I could kick across the street. I want a real dog. A man's dog. The kind of dog that says "Come on pal, make a move so I can take a chunk out of your ass", the kind of dog that makes people part like the Red Sea when we walk down the sidewalk.

Nancy: So you want Cujo?

Hank: Maybe not Cujo. More like Marmaduke with an attitude.

Nancy: I'll think about it.

Hank: Think fast. I'm going to the pound tomorrow.

Nancy: You are not. Now where is my song book?

Hank: Haven't seen it.

Nancy: Really? I left it on the table right there before supper.

Hank: Nope. What colour is it.

Nancy: Blue. As always.

Hank: Haven't seen it.

Nancy: (Suspicious.) Really?

Hank: Nope.

Nancy: Hank?

Hank: What?

Nancy: Hank?

Hank: Can I get a dog?

Nancy: Oh Hank, don't do this. I have to pick up Ruth and Doris and I don't want to be late. Where's my book?

Hank: Where's my dog?

Nancy: Fine, we'll go to the pound and take a look tomorrow.

Hank: Fine.

Nancy: Just a look.

Hank: (Pulling the book out from underneath his seat cushion.) Oh, look what I found!

Nancy: No promises, just a look.

Hank: That's a start Nanc'. I'm just concerned about your safety.

Nancy: Why the sudden concern?

Hank: Well, look at the papers.

Nancy: Yeah but you've always been my protector. Why all of a sudden the need for back-up?

Hank: I don't know. I guess I'm not the bad ass protector I used to be.

Nancy: You're all I need.

Hank: I don't know.

Nancy: (Kissing him on the top of the head.) You're all I need. (Pause.) You Ok?

Hank: (Deflated.) Yeah.

Nancy: What is it Hank? What's bothering you?

Hank: Nothing.

Nancy: Hank, we're fine. But if you want a dog, we'll take a look. Not that I think we need one, but if you want one as a pet, we'll consider it. Deal?

Hank: Deal.

Nancy: Is there a game on tonight?

Hank: Just the two worse teams in the league

Nancy: Oh.

Hank: It'll be as exciting as doing our taxes.

Nancy: Well then why don't you walk over to the community centre? I heard the local boys are playing in the seventh game of the championship. It could be fun.

Hank: Fun? IT's the old timer's division. How exciting could that be?

Nancy: Then check out the senior's centre.

Hank: (Mock excitement) Maybe it's bingo night! Pass. That place is full of old people.

Nancy: News flash Hank, we're old.

Hank: Well maybe I don't want to be.

Nancy: I don't think you have a choice in the matter.

Hank: And that stinks.

Nancy: Hank, you're only as old...

Hank: Don't say it Nanc'.

Nancy: All I'm saying is just because we're past our prime is no reason to sit around waiting for death to knock at the door.

Hank: I don't think he knocks.

Nancy: What?

Hank: Death. I don't think he knocks. I think he just barges in. It's not like he gives you the option of answering the door. That's not his game. It's not like he's trick or treating. When he shows up, he'll waltz right in like he owns the place.

Nancy: Well I don't think he'll be knocking or waltzing around here anytime soon.

Hank: Maybe not, but believe me, we'll be on his paper route eventually.

Nancy: Well then why not delay his arrival. Get up and get out. Get out of the house. Get some fresh air.

Hank: That air ain't fresh.

Nancy: A nice walk on a spring evening would be good exercise.

Hank: Why do I need to walk, I don't have anywhere to go? I'll walk when I have a dog. Besides, it's raining out.

Nancy: It is? Have you seen my umbrella?

Hank: Yeah, it's in the car.

Nancy: Well, it's not going to do me any good out there.

Hank: No, I guess not.

Nancy: (Pause.) Can you get it for me?

Hank: It's raining out! Why do I have to get it? I'm not going anywhere. Besides, don't you have one of those clear plastic things to put over your head?

Nancy: No, I don't.

Hank: Your mother always had one.

Nancy: I'm not my mother!

Hank: Thank God for that!

Nancy: I beg your pardon.

Hank: I know you're not, Dear. (Rising.) I guess I'll weather the storm, outside.

Nancy: Never mind. I'll be fine.

Hank: Are you sure? I got nothing else to do. (Pause.) Really, not a thing.

Nancy: Then why don't you come with me? You could even join in. We're always in need of men.

Hank: Bingo!

Nancy: Really! You'll come along?

Hank: Hell no. I mean I'd rather go to Bingo. At least those old people are quiet.

Nancy: Ok, enough. Do you want to tell me what's bothering you or not.

Hank: Not.

Nancy: Hank?

Hank: Don't you miss the old days Nanc'? Remember what it used to be like? We travelled the world, always in the thick of it. Hell, there was never a dull moment. We were always there getting things done. For what, so that we could be put out to pasture like a couple of inbred donkeys.

Nancy: Did you just call me an inbred donkey?

Hank: Ok, maybe not inbred.

Nancy: Hee haw.

Hank: Sorry, you know what I mean.

Nancy: Those were exciting times. We did what we needed to do but now it's time to let the younger ones do it. We've earned the R and R.

Hank: But I don't want this R and R. I still want to be in the thick of it. It's just this damn body won't keep up with my mind anymore.

Nancy: I know.

Hank: I guess what I'm saying is that I can't believe we did everything we did so at the end of the race we'd have this, sitting around watching TV, eating low salt chips and going to Senior Stars' Concerts.

Nancy: What did you expect?

Hank: I don't know. I guess I just miss the excitement.

Nancy: We both do Hank, but those days are done.

Hank: You make it sound so final. Why did you have to say "done"?

Nancy: Because that's what they are, face it.

Hank: I can't face it. I can't face that it's "done". Is that all we have to look forward to, more things being done? Eventually we'll run out of things to be "done". And you know what that will mean?

Nancy: What?

Hank: We'll be done.

Nancy: I think you're being a little dramatic, Hank.

Hank: Maybe I am Nanc'. It's just that I gave my life to my job. Hell, it was my life. And now I don't have that. I don't have anything I knew. I don't have my life.

Nancy: You have your life. You're just in a new chapter.

Hank: I've been in this chapter for 3 years now and it's the same damn boring story day after day. Did you know it was 3 years ago tonight that we retired together.

Nancy: Oh Lord! I completely forgot. We should have gone out and celebrated.

Hank: I don't think it's a reason to celebrate.

Nancy: So that's what's bothering you. You've been pining for the old days.

Hank: Humph!

Nancy: Tell you what, this Saturday let's go out and explore what's out there for us old retired folks.

Hank: Not interested.

Nancy: Who knows, maybe we'll take a dog along with us. (Hank looks hopeful.) Maybe.

Hank: OK.

Nancy: Now I got to go, I'm late.

Hank: Go ahead Honey, (Getting comfortable in 'his' chair.) I'm going to finish reading this rag in silence until the game starts.

Nancy: All right, enjoy your night. (She kisses him on the cheek.)

(There is a knock at the front door.)

Hank: There's Death now. So much for the dog.

Nancy: Oh hush, I'll get it.

Hank: Are you sure? He's probably here for me.

Nancy: Knock it off.

Hank: (Turning down his hearing aid.) Don't leave me a widower, Nancy.

(Nancy exits USR to answer door. There is a pause before she slowly re-enters walking backwards. After a moment, Ty enters followed by Candy. They are a younger couple. Ty is pointing a gun at Nancy. Candy is dressed rather provocatively complete with high heels. She looks very nervous)

Ty: No sudden moves and no one gets hurt.

Nancy: Is that thing loaded?

Ty: You bet!

Candy: (Looking behind her and staying close to Ty. Whispering) The door's still open.

Ty: What?

Candy: (Quietly.) The door is still open.

Ty: That was your job, Babe.

Candy: Oh yeah. Sorry, I forgot. (Pause.) Should I do it now?

Ty: That would be a good idea.

Candy: Oh, OK. Sorry, I'm just so nervous. (She exits to close the door and immediately returns to Ty's side.)

Ty: There's no need for anyone to be nervous.

Nancy: Or do anything stupid.

Ty: Don't call me stupid.

Nancy: I didn't.

Candy: She meant that we shouldn't "DO" anything stupid.

Ty: I know what she meant. I'm not stupid.

Candy: I know Hon'.

Ty: OK. Is there anyone else in the house?

(Nancy nods her head at Hank who sits oblivious with his hearing aid turned down and face buried in his newspaper.)

Ty: All right then. (He approaches Hank slowly with the gun directed at him.) OK buddy, put the paper down slowly and put your hands in the air. (No response.) Hey buddy, I'm talking to you. (Nothing.) Come on Gramps, I'm not horsing around here.

Nancy: Please don't call him, Gramps, he's a little sensitive about his age today.

Ty: Oh well, I wouldn't want to hurt his feelings.

Candy: Don't be like that. (To Nancy.) What's his name?

Nancy: Hank.

Ty: Alright Grampa Hank, grab some sky.

Candy: Don't be an idiot.

Ty: Don't call me an idiot! I'm not an idiot!

Candy: Just try to be polite, OK?

Nancy: He's got his hearing aid turned down.

Ty: (Ripping the paper from Hank's hands.) Surprise!

Hank: What the...!?

Ty: Good evening Hank.

Candy: That's much better.

Hank: (Turning up his hearing aid.) What the hell is all this? (Indicating Ty.)

Ty: What do you think it is?

Hank: Nancy?

Ty: It's a home invasion.

Hank: I'm not talking about that. What is all this. (Indicating Ty again.)

Candy: What?

Hank: This! He's holding the damn gun all wrong. Nobody holds a damn gun like that except the dumb-ass' in the movies.

Ty: Hey, I'm not a dumb ass!

Candy: Nobody said you were, Baby.

Ty: 'Cause I'm not.

Hank: Well then hold the gun properly. No one holds a gun sideways except the punks in the movies. You're accuracy goes out the window! You can't hit the broad side of a mountain range holding a gun like that.

Ty: (Argumentative.) Really?

Hank: Yeah really! Hold it straight up and down. Two hands! (Ty does.) That's better. But for the love of Pete, don't stack your hands on it! It's not a baseball bat. We're not picking teams! You pull the trigger like that and the slide action's going to tag your hand right between the thumb and finger. Not only will it leave a mark, it'll sting like hell and spread your DNA all over the barrel. Get your left hand beneath for support. (He does.) Now stop squeezing so hard. You're going to pop it like a zit. Hold it like a lady. Soft and gentle, have you ever done that? And get your finger

off the trigger unless you intend to use it! Straighten your arms and for God sakes stop aiming down the barrel. It's the point and shoot type.

Ty: Hey, I know how to fire a gun.

Hank: No you don't. You've never fired that thing before.

Ty: I have so, lots of times.

Candy: Maybe we should just leave.

Ty: Nobody's going anywhere.

Hank: That's right. He can't walk out of here not knowing how to shoot the thing. He may hurt somebody or himself.

Ty: Hey Pal, I know what I'm doing.

Hank: Doubt it.

Ty: Want to find out?

Hank: Do you? Now bend your knees and for god sakes, move back. You're too close.

Candy: Too close?

Hank: Yes, I could easily disarm him at this distance.

(Ty and Candy both step back in unison. During all this Nancy has moved slowly across to the phone and picked it up.)

Nancy: Hank, the phone is dead.

Ty: That's right. We cut the wires.

Hank: Well hallelujah! There's something you did right. I guess all hope isn't lost.

Ty: You ain't dealing with an amateur here Hank, old buddy.

Hank: What are you then?

Ty: I'm a professional.

Hank: I've seen more professionals at the senior centre's karaoke night.

Candy: But you just said he did something right.

Hank: Yes the Ass Wart did do something right.

Ty: What did you call me?

Hank: Never mind, it's too many syllables for you.

Ty: What?

Hank: Stop interrupting me. Now, as I was saying, he cut the telephone wire and that was the right thing to do, provided....

Candy: Provided what?

Hank: Provided your man here did the proper recon and discovered whether we had an alarm system in the house or not.

(Pause.)

Candy: You did the proper recon, right?

Ty: Well, ah...

Nancy: You didn't. Did you?

Ty: Well ah...

Candy: You didn't check to see if they had an alarm!

Ty: I checked if they had an alarm sticker on the door.

Hank: A sticker? Not good enough. You never checked to see if we were armed. Major mistake! You entered enemy territory blind. However, this time you've gotten lucky and won the big stuffed purple gorilla prize.

Ty: Purple gorilla?

Hank: Stuffed purple gorilla. You're now a team of three with the brains of the operation being a stuffed toy primate.

Nancy: Careful Hank.

Ty: I get it! Very funny Gramps! Aren't you the smart one? But you're forgetting I hold all the cards. (Indicating the gun)

Hank: No, you don't. You simply hold the "Intimidator". That's a big difference from holding all the cards. We've just dealt tonight's cards. The game has just begun.

Ty: (Indicating his gun again.) I've got the ace of spades.

Hank: I'll give you that, but it's what else is in your hand that matters. An ace is no good if it stands alone. One card isn't enough. You need a complete hand.

Ty: I got all the cards I need to deal with you Gramps.

Hank: Gramps? That's witty! How about you fire up the second piston in that head of yours before we go any further?

Candy: Careful, Si doesn't like being called stupid.

Ty: Candy! I told you not to use our real names!

Candy: I didn't! I called you Si. Not Ty. Oh dang!

Ty: Candy, shut up!

Candy: (Distraught with her error.) I'm so sorry.

Nancy: (Comforting Candy.) Don't worry, Candy, it's OK.

Candy: Now they know my name too!

Hank: Ty didn't mean it.

Nancy: No, of course not.

Ty: Hell yeah I did.

Hank: No you didn't. Now apologise to the lady.

Ty: Apologise? Why?

Hank: Because I'll kick your ass otherwise.

Ty: Are you forgetting that I'm the one with the gun.

Hank: How can I? You keep reminding me every fifteen seconds. I'm old, not dumb. Now apologise!

Ty: Fine, whatever. Sorry Hon' I didn't mean it.

Nancy: It's OK Candy. I know it's a stressful situation you're in, emotions can run high. Ty's stressed too.

Ty: Stop calling me that.

Nancy: What?

Ty: That.

Nancy: What?

Ty: Ty!

Nancy: But that's your name, isn't it?

Ty: Never mind what my name is.

Nancy: Fine Ty.

Ty: Stop it!

Hank: Ty, do you really think it matters if we know your name? Hell, you came in here without a mask on. They don't usually wear name tags in a police lineup.

Ty: Police lineup?

Hank: "Hello, my name is Ty". Won't happen.

Candy: (Begins crying again.) He's right! We should have worn masks.

Nancy: It's OK Candy, there, there.

Ty: Relax.

Nancy: That's right, let's all relax. Take a couple of deep cleansing breaths. (She does.) Good, now are you feeling better?

Candy: A little.

Hank: (Shouting.) UP!

Ty: What!

Hank: Get the gun up. You're sagging.

Ty: Sagging?

Hank: Yes sagging, your arms are dropping. You're holding a Glock 9mm. It weighs 22 ounces empty. Doesn't sound like much but when you hold it straight armed like you are, it will slowly pull your arms down.

Ty: 22 ounces?

Hank: Yes, all the weight is in the mag. Pull it up and bend your knees. Aim for centre mass.

Ty: You want me to aim it at your chest?

Hank: Damn straight. Better than where it was pointing. I imagine that would hurt like hell.

Candy: You seem to know a lot about guns.

Hank: I read a lot.

Ty: Read?

Hank: Yeah, you should try it. You'd be amazed what you learn.

Ty: I read.

Hank: The menu board at Micky D's doesn't constitute reading.

Ty: Very funny.

Hank: I bet they put the pictures on the menu for guys like you.

Ty: You'd better be quiet.

Hank: I suspect you're more used to people reading to you.

Ty: Don't talk to me like I'm stupid.

Hank: Here's one you're probably familiar with. It starts like this, "You have the right to remain silent".

Ty: Never heard it.

Nancy: So you're a rookie at this?

Ty: Nope, I've done this before, many times.

Hank: Bull! You've made over fifteen mistakes already. There is no way you've ever done this before.

Candy: Fifteen! Oh God, we're going to jail, Ty.

Ty: Nobody's going anywhere.

Hank: I am. (Starts to exit to kitchen.)

Ty: Stop right there or I'll shoot.

Hank: (Not stopping.) No you won't. (Exiting.)

Ty: Where's he going?

Nancy: No idea.

Candy: Don't let him escape Ty. Stop him!

Ty: (Yelling.) Hey buddy, you better get your ass out here or I'll shoot your wife.

Hank: (Off.) No you won't.

Ty: The hell I won't. You got until I count to three before I pop her.

Hank: (Off.) If you're doing the counting, I suspect I'll have time for a nap.

Ty: ONE!