

Prelude to Pain

by Doug Shiloh

a graphic novel prequel

by

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1. A FAMILY riding in a car on a rainy night. GRAYSON WARREN, 40 year old cop, his wife JUDY and their kids BILLY (age 11) and LEXI (age 9).
2. LEXI: Daddy, you're coming to my recital tomorrow morning, right?
3. Warren: Yes, honey. I wouldn't miss it.
4. BILLY: Don't forget, Dad. My ball game got postponed. It's also tomorrow morning!
5. WARREN: How are we gonna manage that? We need clones!
6. JUDY: We'll work it out.
7. LEXI: How come you don't have to work this weekend, Daddy?
8. JUDY: Well, the police get weekends off, too. WARREN: Sometimes.
9. A rooftop view of a dark, wet parking lot with cars and people exiting and entering a suburban movie theater. A neon-lit sign that reads CINEPLEX 8.
10. JUDY: Look, kids. We're here!
11. BOTH KIDS: Yay!
12. JUDY: Say, if we're getting cloned, I hope mine has an umbrella!
13. The family dashes into the theater. Lexi is last, twirling across the parking lot in rain.
14. The lobby is a-buzz with people buying tickets, concessions and those leaving.
15. WARREN pays for tickets.

16. KIDS rush happily to concession stand. BOTH: Popcorn!
Candy!
17. WARREN: Some date night.
18. JUDY: I'll take it.
19. WARREN: Did you try all of the babysitters?
20. JUDY: No one was available. Teenagers aren't always reliable. But don't get grouchy. You know, after the movie is over, the date's not over.
21. The family walks in the hall past playbills of various movies.
22. They settle into seats up front.
23. WARREN: We should sit in back. You can see the whole screen.
24. JUDY: The kids want to sit in front, **Officer**. Relax. Have fun. You're off duty and you're all mine.
25. WARREN: Ours.
26. The lights dim. The crowd is silhouetted.
27. The movie begins, bathing bright light on the Warren family's faces.
28. 2-panel of kids eating and drinking. and Judy leans on Warren's shoulder.
29. SCREEN SHOT of animated action movie.
30. WARREN looks bored.
31. WARREN (holding cup up): Who wants a refill?
32. Family raises cups.
33. WARREN: I mean who wants to go with me to **get** refills?
34. AUDIENCE: Shh!
35. WARREN: Let me know what happens.
36. JUDY: (Kisses Warren). Thank you honey. I love you.
37. WARREN: Uh-huh.
38. JUDY (smiling and whispering): Remember, Tiger, the date continues later.
39. Holding four cups and a popcorn tub pressed close to his body, Warren walks past various theater doors, sounds DRIFT LIKE SMOKY GHOSTS from the current movies.

40. As WARREN passes the restroom, a man with a backpack, wearing a dark raincoat exits.
41. WARREN goes to the concession stand. A concession worker tends to the refills.
42. A man leaving the theater calls out to Warren. JIM: Hey, Warren!
43. WARREN: How's it go, Jim?
44. JIM: Whoa! You eating all **that** by yourself?
45. WARREN: Family night.
46. JIM. Ah. I had a couple of hours free so I thought I'd see a flick. It was pretty good —
47. WARREN: Don't tell me about it, I hate spoilers. I like to be surprised.
48. WARREN gets a text. He reaches into his pocket. His gun holster can be seen.
49. The text on his cell phone shows it's from Judy and reads HELP!
50. Warren looks at it quizzically.
51. WARREN (picking up refills): I guess I better move. She gets thirsty.
52. JIM: (Laughing) Jump boy, jump! She's got you on a leash.
53. WARREN: Yeah. But I like how she holds the leash.
54. JIM: You're a lucky man, Warren. If Judy gets tired of you — and I don't know why she's **not** tired yet — tell her to give me a call.
55. WARREN walks away, talking over his shoulder. You wish.
56. JIM: See you, Monday.
57. WARREN walks down theater hall and when he gets to the theater door, he realizes he cannot open the door with his hands full.
58. Muffled, angry shouts can be heard from inside the theater. Warren listens by leaning in to the door. There are screams.
59. THOUGHT BUBBLE: I'm missing the good part.
60. He sets down the popcorn, and slips the tip of his shoe inside and sways the door open, bending down to grab the popcorn bucket.
61. He walks up the half-darkened ramp; the movie is playing.
62. He sees two gunmen down front by the stage apron.

63. A third gunman is in the far back corner.
64. A fourth perpetrator is in the far back right corner behind Warren videotaping the event.
65. Warren spies his wife and kids, terrorized.
66. Warren drops the drinks and popcorn; they slowly tumble and splash across the floor.
67. GUNMAN 1: Shut up! This is a protest! A very **active** protest, against suburban life. You're all a bunch of consumer sheep!
68. GUNMAN 2: BAAA! B-A-A-AAA!
69. GUNMAN 1 : Hey, Jimmy! Is the camera rolling?
70. CAMERAMAN: Yeah! It's going!
71. WARREN, crouched by a short wall, reaches inside his coat and takes out his .45.
72. GUNMAN 1: Now, nobody relax — because the **real** movie's about to begin!
73. A younger couple runs for the SIDE EXIT and are gunned down.
74. Gunman 1: Anyone else want to go in a blaze of glory?
75. WARREN: Police! Put your weapons down and your hands up!
76. GUNMAN 2: It's a cop! Get him!
77. The three gunmen aim at Warren in a crossfire pattern.
78. Warren ducks bullets ZINGING from 3 directions.
79. Splinters of chair fragments explode around him.
80. People scream, ducking in seats.
81. Squad cars and firetrucks ROARING arrive in theater parking lot.
82. The fire and policemen listen as a manager points inside to theater.
83. Patrons exit the lobby in a panic.
84. A determined Warren aims. Against wall behind him are bullet holes. Warren yells: "Surrender your weapons! Hands up!"
85. Gunman 3 fires at Warren.
86. Warren fires at Gunman 3 and fatally wounds him.
87. Gunman 2 (laughing): It's time for a **real** blaze of glory!

88. Gunman 2 reaches into his backpack AND lights a Molotov cocktail.
89. Laughing, he throws the bottle.
90. The bottle lands in the middle of the theater and ignites in a fiery burst.
91. Warren fires his weapon .
92. Gunman 2 is hit, flailing back.
93. LEXI: Daddy!
94. Judy shields Lexi.
95. BILLY: Dad! Watch out!
96. Gunman 1 (grabbing LEXI): Daddy, huh?
97. WARREN: Leave my kids alone! What do you want?
98. Gunman 1: I want them to die!
99. A close-up of a weapon firing.
100. WARREN (rushing): No!
101. Gunman 1 fires twice at Warren.
102. The bullets hit Warren in the hip and leg,
blood and flesh fly.
103. Warren collapses on his back.
104. Gunman 1 (towering over Warren): This is for
my brother!
105. (foot at Warren's head) Kick!
106. And this is for Johnny!
107. Kick!
108. The police rush in.
109. A view behind the Cameraman as he continues
videotaping: the theater is in flames.
110. GUNMAN 1 takes ahold of JUDY.
111. His gun fires.
112. WARREN's vision blurs.
113. Police draw weapons as Gunman 1 yells, "We
surrender!"
114. Fade to black.
115. OVERHEAD VIEW: Hospital OR. Warren on an
operating table.

116. TV news anchor: 4 gunmen terrorized a suburban movie theater, killing 14 people and wounding 49 others, as well as setting the Cineplex ablaze...two perpetrators died while two surrendered and are in custody...

117. LAWYER: My clients plead not guilty.

118. Warren, BEAT UP AND BANDAGED, lying in hospital room with tubes and machines keeping him alive.

119. NARRATION: They were on a path to ease and comfort and humane treatment...

120. Cemetery: Warren is in a wheelchair: ... while I grieved over 3 caskets.

121. The rehab was long and painful...I had to learn to walk again.

122. But why? My world was shattered. I wanted to die.

123. Warren in half-shadow in a living room watching TV. 18 months passed. A diet of CSI and Numb3rs reruns...and a single thought: **what can I do?**

124. On TV I saw politicians who were more interested in photo-ops at ground-breaking ceremonies, happy to be on the gridlocked highway called D.C.

125. Meanwhile, my blood boiled.

126. I had nightmares...visions of that theater. I was helpless.

127. Warren places flowers at gravesite.

128. Sees ghosts of daughter dancing.

129. Ghost of son playing ball.

130. I was finally 'all better' but I repeatedly saw killers getting off light. Wrist-slapped, really. Too many candlelight vigils. It sickened me.

131. I couldn't bring back my family, but I could do something about it. I made a call, met some people...

132. Election signs, crowds. ...And ran for U.S. Senator. Bring **true change** to our broken country. I didn't care

about budgets and other mundane problems. I ran on just **one** platform. Change the Justice system.

133. It wasn't even close. I won by a landslide.
But... it didn't feel like a victory.

134. Two years later. A press conference, a room filled with reporters.

135. FEMALE REPORTER: Senator Warren, isn't this plan inhumane?

136. SENATOR WARREN (at podium. His face is worn and hair grayer): What about the victims or their families? Wasn't their being raped or killed inhumane? We have convicted criminals locked away in *country clubs* while families are destroyed.

137. REPORTER: Don't you think your plan is playing God?

138. SENATOR: During the 20th century alone, there were 1 million murders in the U.S. Now tell me — when those crimes happened, **who** was playing God?

139. TVs at a mega-box store, all tuned in to Warren on TV.

140. SENATOR: Violence is spiking again. I'm here today to tell everybody ...justice will now be served.

(ANGRY: 3-PANEL zoom — bust, head, forehead/mouth/eyes): I have a plan.

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