

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS
Episode One

by

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EXT. AMPHITHEATER LAWN - DUSK

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A beautiful summer evening -- ideal for an outdoor concert. Under ebullient crowd noises lilt distant, discordant sounds of ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENTS TUNING AND WARMING UP.

The civic arena is only half filled. Hundreds of arriving concertgoers, dressed in shorts and t-shirts, unhurriedly find their seats.

On the expansive green lawn behind the rows of fixed seating, audience members erect folding chairs and spread blankets.

POV - CONCERTGOER strolling on the lawn toward the stage.

We are strolling a few paces behind DAWN BERENGER, 40s. Under one arm, she holds a folded quilt. A wicker picnic basket dangles from the other.

Dawn stops, turns, hands the basket to our concertgoer.

DAWN

How's this?

CONCERTGOER (O.S.)

(a male voice)

Perfect.

She shakes out the quilt and lays it on the grass.

The concertgoer's POV scans the lawn, taking in the crowd.

DAWN

Earth to Paulie. We gonna eat?

Focus pans to Dawn, seated and staring up at our concertgoer.

CONCERTGOER (O.S.)

Oh, uh, yeah. Sorry about that.

He takes a seat, placing the picnic basket in the center of the quilt. He opens the hinged lid of the basket and we

MATCH CUT TO:

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EXT. AMPHITHEATER BACKSTAGE - DUSK [CONTINUOUS]

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POV - CLARINETIST opening the hinged lid of a musical instrument case, revealing a disassembled clarinet.

Now in close proximity to the TUNING ORCHESTRA, the instruments are LOUDER, mixed with the CHATTER OF MUSICIANS milling about in the stage wings.

Our clarinetist removes from the instrument case one segment of the clarinet and the swab to clean it, closing the case. They start cleaning.

A VIOLINIST passes and addresses our clarinetist.

VIOLINIST
Don't forget Baxter's afterward.
You coming?

CLARINETIST (O.S.)
(the same male voice)
Save me a seat.

VIOLINIST
You got it.

The violinist walks to the stage as the clarinetist's gaze shifts to the now-clean segment. He reaches to open his case.

MATCH CUT TO:

3 EXT. AMPHITHEATER LIGHTING GRID - DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 3

POV - GUNMAN opening a weapon case revealing the disassembled pieces of a semiautomatic rifle.

The gunman is perched above the orchestra that continues its DISCORDANT TUNING AND WARMUP.

The gunman removes weapon pieces from the case and sets them aside. He opens a duffel bag revealing ammunition cartridges.

Tilting up from the open duffel bag, we now see the face of the gunman. It is PAULIE BERENGER, 40s, laser focused on the task at hand, methodical and practiced in his movements.

Paulie grabs two pieces of the rifle and fits them together.

MATCH CUT TO:

4 EXT. AMPHITHEATER BACKSTAGE - DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 4

Two pieces of the clarinet being assembled. Tilting up, we see the face of the clarinetist -- it is also the face of Paulie Berenger, but a less sinister version.

Clarinetist Paulie picks up the swab and drops it through the clarinet and starts rubbing the inside of the tube.

MATCH CUT TO:

5 EXT. AMPHITHEATER LAWN - DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 5

A fork being polished with a cloth napkin.

An elaborate spread surrounds our concertgoer and Dawn on the quilt: strawberries, wine, cheeses, fancy crackers and dips.

Tilting up from the fork and napkin, we see the face of the concertgoer -- it is also the face of Paulie Berenger. Very much at ease, this Paulie is here to have a good time.

Concertgoer Paulie and Dawn exchange smiles. Dawn picks up a strawberry and holds it to Paulie's mouth. He opens it.

6 EXT. AMPHITHEATER BACKSTAGE - DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 6

Clarinetist Paulie opens his mouth and places a clarinet reed in it. He sucks on it as he continues to clean the clarinet. He holds it up and peers through the tube.

7 EXT. AMPHITHEATER LIGHTING GRID - DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 7

Gunman Paulie peers through the scope which he then attaches to his rifle, securing it into place.

He looks down and sees clarinetist Paulie walk onto the stage and take his seat. Gunman Paulie lifts his rifle and brings clarinetist Paulie into the crosshairs of the scope.

8 EXT. AMPHITHEATER STAGE - DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 8

Clarinetist Paulie adjusts the music on his music stand and starts warming up, adding to the other TUNING INSTRUMENTS, which have gotten LOUDER.

While he plays, his eyes wander upward and he sees gunman Paulie peering down, the rifle aimed right at him.

Everything freezes -- his lips around the reed, his fingers on the holes. The only thing that doesn't stop cold is his breathing, which quickens. His eyes are frozen to the gun.

13 INT. PAULIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 13

Paulie lies in bed. His eyes snap open and he exhales the breath he's been holding. He presses his fists into his eye sockets.

Finding his equilibrium, he turns to see Dawn next to him, sleeping soundly. He turns back and stares at the ceiling.