

RETURNED

Written by

Maggie Vetter

Log-line: Two exhausted WASP parents interview a frat guy to
kidnap their annoying son.

FADE IN:

EXT. HOME - DAY

DREW (22) the frattiest of frat bros in his Sigma Alpha Epsilon sweatshirt, is on the phone walking up to a cookie-cutter suburban home.

DREW
(into phone)
I'm walking into this interview.
Wish me luck or no Cabo for me.

Drew hangs up and rings the DOORBELL. It chimes a cheery jingle. The door opens revealing two smiling, almost-terrifyingly, just as cookie-cutter as their house, suburban parents, VERA (47) and ADAM (50). Vera is obviously in charge.

VERA
Are you Andrew?

DREW
Just Drew, yeah.

VERA
I'm Vera, this is Adam. So excited
to meet you. Come in, come in.

Drew makes his way into the home.

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

The entryway is covered with mud.

VERA
Sorry about the mess, Jacob brought
a little critter in this morning.

DREW
Critter?

VERA
A squirrel, he loves to bring in
little pals.

DREW
Oh wow.

Drew's face turns to dread. He starts into the living room.

VERA

Would you mind taking off your shoes, we're actually a no-shoe household. The carpet, you know.

DREW

Oh yeah, sorry.

Drew takes his shoes off. The three of them drag mud from the entryway onto the living room carpet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vera sits on the couch, Drew on the chair across from her.

ADAM

Can I grab you a mead, I brew it myself, right in the basement.

DREW

I'm good, thanks though.

Adam sits next to Vera.

VERA

Drew, honey, we'd be so excited to have you. Adam and I can't wait to get out--go to medieval trivia night at the club, the renaissance faire.

ADAM

Ugh, I miss the faire. You a history buff?

DREW

Not really.

ADAM

What are you studying?

DREW

Business.

VERA

Oooh an entrepreneur!

Drew laughs awkwardly. Then, a loud THUD from upstairs.

VERA (CONT'D)

Jacob. Probably playing one of his little games again.

Drew looks around the room, photos of Vera and Adam but none with their son, marker scribbles all across one wall.

DREW

I'm a little worried, this might be too much for me. He seems like a handful.

VERA

Oh no no. Not at all. Just... adventurous, very fun.

Drew makes a face.

VERA (CONT'D)

We just need some time to ourselves, that's all. Right honey?

ADAM

Yes, get back to things we love. I'm a bit of a puzzler myself.

DREW

That's great.

VERA

Would you be able to do it today?

DREW

I have a chapter meeting at 5. I'm president of SAE, so I can't be late.

VERA

You'd absolutely be done by then. What do you say?

Drew hesitates, avoiding eye-contact with the still-smiling couple.

DREW

What are you thinking for pay?

VERA

Oh of course. We were thinking 10 if that works for you.

Drew looks shocked, but tries to play it cool.

DREW

That works, yeah...10 is good.

VERA

Perfect. How do you go about it?

ADAM
(quieting his voice)
We've got to keep it a little
quiet, he's upstairs.

Drew leans in.

DREW
Well, it depends. If I'm going to a
house, I show up as a contractor or
something and then once I know
they're alone for sure that's when
I do the abduction.

VERA
Do you need a weapon or anything. I
have a bunch of Valium upstairs, we
could dose his dinner and knock him
out. Adam has a 16th century
cricket bat in the basement.

ADAM
It's an antique, mahogany. Really
beautiful.

DREW
No, no, don't need any of that.
Thanks for offering...

VERA
Okay, we're happy to help with
whatever you need. Adam, go get the
cash.

Adam scurries out of the room and heads up the stairs.

VERA (CONT'D)
So how'd you get into this
business.

DREW
I guess I really am just an
entrepreneur.

He snickers at his own joke, but Vera howls with laughter,
way over-the-top. Then she waits for him to continue.

DREW (CONT'D)
Um...I woke up one morning after a
party and met some guys - like Tony
Soprano kind of guys - and they
asked if I wanted a job, and then I
just drop the people off with the
guys and they do whatever they do.

VERA
 (completely sincere)
 Wow, you are a storyteller. That
 was amazing.

DREW
 Thanks?

VERA
 And so you'll drop Jacob off with
 the "guys."

DREW
 Yeah--

Adam sprints down the stairs, a large wad of cash in hand.

ADAM
 He's coming!

VERA
 Quick, quick, what do we do? Adam
 make sure the doors are locked.

ADAM
 But he can unlock the doors!

VERA
 Oh God, oh God, I can't live with
 him anymore!

DREW
 Everyone just relax! Sit back down
 and play it cool.

Adam makes his way to the couch throwing the money at Drew
 who shakes his head and picks it up.

CREEK, CREEK, CREEK. Everyone waits with baited breath, eyes
 locked on the staircase. JACOB (25) body of a linebacker,
 expression completely blank, walks down the stairs. His eyes
 glued to his phone.

DREW (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Who's that?

Vera makes a face like that's the most stupid question that
 could ever be asked.

VERA
 (whispering)
 Jacob.

Drew's eyes go wide.

DREW
(whispering)
I think I misunderstood. I don't
think I can-

JACOB
What the fuck is going on?

VERA
Come sit, honey.

JACOB
No.

ADAM
Listen to your mother.

JACOB
Absolutely not. Who is this?

Adam and Vera exchange panicked glances and then stare at Drew who shrugs.

DREW
I was just-

VERA
Coming to discuss-

ADAM
Cricket.

VERA
He's a brit.

ADAM
Pro cricket player.

DREW
(terrible British accent)
Yeah, mate.

Drew shakes his head at himself. Why is he going along with this?

JACOB
And I need to sit with the cricket
player, why?

VERA
(to Drew)
Oh God, just do it!

JACOB

Do what?

Vera, Drew, and Adam look at each other for a beat. Drew and Adam sprint toward Jacob who squeals, trying to retreat to the stairs. Vera stands on the other side of the room - we stay with her.

VERA

Adam, get his legs!

JACOB (O.S.)

Get off of me! What is going on?

The pitter-patter of Adam running and Jacob squealing as Vera runs over to the side table and picks up a roll of duck tape.

VERA

Here take this!

She tosses it and we hear the sound of TAPE being torn and then Jacob's squeals become muffled.

VERA (CONT'D)

The car's in the driveway! I'll get the trunk!

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Vera slams the trunk shut.

VERA

Drew, sweetie. It was a pleasure meeting you. Maybe you can come over for dinner sometime - you can try Adam's mead!

Vera gives Drew a hug. He gets in the car and drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE. NIGHT.

CHYRON: 1 DAY LATER.

Vera and Adam are dressed in full renaissance garb on their way inside. They open the door. On the couch sits Jacob. Vera and Adam's faces drop. The wad of cash sits on the entryway table with a note that says: "He was too awful. No one would take him." Vera drops to her knees and wails.

NOOOO!!!
VERA

FADE OUT.