

"It is a wonderful tale told in the form of a screenplay, a sultry and lurid screenplay. Oozing character and atmosphere, harking back to the heyday of 80's horror. Gore, skin, sex, drugs and a broken hero you can root for, "Dead Aware" has it all."

Zakk Madness, The Eyes of Madness

DEAD AWARE

A HORROR TALE TOLD IN SCREENPLAY

by TERRY M. WEST

DEAD AWARE

A Horror Tale Told In Screenplay

TERRY M. WEST

Dead Aware: A Horror Tale told in Screenplay

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Author's Note: A Movie for Your Brain

I don't like reading screenplays. When *Dead Aware* was released in 2014, the typical review started that way. But those reviewers of the first edition had something in common. They rose above their reservations and enjoyed the hell out of my story.

A funny thing that I've discovered; most who claim they don't like reading screenplay format have never even *read* a screenplay. It's that knowing you hate spinach before you've even tried it mentality.

Dead Aware was written in 2004 as an original screenplay. I met an actor at an East Coast horror convention. Won't tell you who, but he was in a lead role on an HBO series at the time. We got chummy and he was looking for a starring vehicle.

Dead Aware had been brewing in my brain following a particularly dark period of my life. So I wrote it on spec. Which means for free, of course. Nothing came of it, so it sat in a drawer. Another dark secret that I would find in a storage box 10 years later.

In 2014 I decided to adapt it to a novel. But when I read it, I felt that it played very well in the format it was in. So I took a creative chance and sent it out into the world as its creator had intended.

Dunlavey, our tortured protagonist, sat exclusively within these pages for four years on Kindle and Audible formats. I still think the preferred method of injecting this tale into your brain is the [audio-production by Gene Blake](#).

Many readers asked for Dunlavey to return, and he almost did. But I didn't have a fitting storyline. Until *Gate 4*. Dunlavey is a main character in that series, so I decided it was time to dust off his introduction and put it out there again so that new readers can enjoy his birth.

So before you say that you don't enjoy reading screenplays-- realizing, of course, that I've heard it all before and had the last laugh-- just read a snippet of this review from *Zachary Walters at The Eyes of Madness*:

"It is a wonderful tale told in the form of a screenplay, a sultry and lurid screenplay. Oozing character and harking back to the heyday of 80's horror. Gore, skin, sex, drugs and a broken hero you can root for, Dead Aware has it all."

If that doesn't convince you, I don't think anything else will.

So for those who are *in* at this point, grab some popcorn and start that projector in your mind.

It's time to get dirty.

TMW
08/2018

SCENE ONE

EST SHOT.- INTERIOR- OFFICE- NIGHT

Fade in on a miserable son of a bitch sitting in a dark, messy office. The man is in his early forties but feels much older most of the time.

White candles burn everywhere. Files and debris litter the place.

A neon sign flickers against the wall, like a demonic signal.

The man takes a hungry drink of bourbon, then places the bottle aside.

He opens a drawer and pulls a revolver from it.

He loads one bullet... Slowly... Then spins the chamber back into place and places the barrel into his mouth. There is no hesitation or reluctance... He pulls the trigger and his cheeks reverberate against a loud click.

He regards the revolver for a second, and then he puts it away.

A phone rings.

He instinctively reaches under the filth on his desk, and pulls a grimy phone receiver to his ear.

DUNLAVEY
Dunlavey Investigations.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWO

EXTERIOR ALLEYWAY- NIGHT- CRIME SCENE

The NYPD are in an alley behind a commercial area in the heart of New York City. Three plain clothes detectives and a few pathologists pour over the area.

A throng of traffic fills the side street.

Onlookers stand behind the yellow police line, stretching their necks for free gore as a beleaguered uniformed officer monitors them, insisting that a few members of the onlookers turn off their phone cameras.

It is springtime in New York, but a chill still hangs stubbornly in the air.

Dunlavey emerges from a taxi on the corner, and walks swiftly toward the crime scene, digging his ID from his wallet to show to the officer who is turning away the onlookers.

Dunlavey fights his way to the front, and is at first dismissed by the uniformed officer.

A plain clothes detective, Ramis, sees Dunlavey. Ramis is a man in his mid-fifties. He has a demeanor that is tough as leather.

RAMIS

(calls to the officer stopping Dunlavey)

Let that asshole through.

The officer complies and Dunlavey walks under the yellow line.

He makes his way slowly toward the crime scene, his eyes fixed on a giant red eye spray painted on the dumpster in the alley.

RAMIS

Well, well, well. Look what the cat fucked in the ass and left for dead.

DUNLAVEY

Always a pleasure to see you too, Ramis. Now tell me why the hell I'm here. I thought the suits didn't want to see my face again. Especially after the last burning bag of shit you pricks dropped off on my doorstep.

RAMIS

Desperate times call for desperate measures.

Ramis motions to the dead body, sprawled out on the cold concrete. It is the form of a man, but the facial features have been rendered unrecognizable by a sick killer's handiwork.

The limbs of the corpse have been chopped off and precariously sewn back to the torso. The corpse looks like a doll ripped apart by a sadistic child, and then sewn back together. It is a gruesome jigsaw puzzle.

The eyes and mouth of the victim have been sewn up. The chest and abdomen shows a wound, tightly laced, running from the lower abdomen to just under the victim's Adam's

apple. The flesh of the corpse is clammy, blue and bloodless.

RAMIS
Thoughts?

DUNLAVEY
No blood. Looks like a pump and dump. Killed with something long and jagged, I would guess. A ceremonial blade of some kind. But still I ask, why is this my problem? I was basically told to go fuck myself by the mayor.

RAMIS
He sends his regards. You got shit you can't explain, you call Dunlavey. That's one of the first rules you learn. Your sorry ass is here to enlighten the unenlightened. Then you send in your voucher, drink, fuck or snort your pay. Same as it ever was.

DUNLAVEY
(sighing)
So give me the skinny before the bars close.

RAMIS
This is the third stiff we've found like this. Bodies are hollowed out, stuffed with straw, and then put back together. Every hole sewn shut. A bag lady found the corpse a few hours ago while shopping the dumpster.

Dunlavey surveys the corpse.

DUNLAVEY
I.D.?

RAMIS

Don't know. Probably homeless, though. We opened the other two up and got stuck with a John and Jane Doe couple. Something tells me this one is a member of the Doe family, as well.

DUNLAVEY

(sarcastically)

And the brass doesn't consider this a solution for the homeless situation. I'm shocked.

RAMIS

And you wonder why they only let you out of your cage on full moons.

DUNLAVEY

There's definitely something going on here. I'll need to hit some books. Can you have the reports and coroner's inquests sent to me ASAP?

RAMIS

Go back to your office. There's probably already a mountain of paper from the first two scarecrows on your desk.

CUT TO:

SCENE THREE

INTERIOR- BAR- NIGHT

Dunlavey is seated at a bar.

The place is nearly deserted, and the bartender puts a bourbon and coke in front of Dunlavey. The place is a sports bar. Sports memorabilia covers the wall behind the bar. The bartender eyes Dunlavey curiously.

BARTENDER

Don't see you around that often, these days.

DUNLAVEY

I don't like coming here during football season. Nothing personal. I hate sports.

BARTENDER

That's okay. If it wasn't for you, I don't think I'd get any off season business. So why come to a sports bar if you hate sports?

DUNLAVEY

Booze is booze. And I'm lazy. You're two blocks from my place.

BARTENDER

And here I thought it was the friendly service.

DUNLAVEY

As long as there's a drink in your hand, you could spit in my face, for all I care.

BARTENDER

There's something I've always wondered about you, Dunlavey. What exactly is your story? Are you a profiler or something?

DUNLAVEY

Yes and no. I'm a private investigator with a special passion. I get called when the mayor feels the hairs on his neck rise.

BARTENDER

So, what is it you do, if you don't mind me asking?

DUNLAVEY

Honestly, as little as possible.

BARTENDER

You were brought in on that case last summer. The... What the hell was it...

DUNLAVEY

The Medina cult. A heavy duty High Priestess brought holy vengeance to our little chilly Sodom here.

BARTENDER

Yeah, that was a fucking mess. I haven't seen hysteria like that since Sam. Only in New York.

DUNLAVEY

They also left a nasty shit pile in LA and Houston. Some vile stuff. End of the world crap. Y2K didn't get the job done, so they felt it was their duty to prod it along. Pretty impressive. 79 ritualistic kills. They had a real Manson mentality, you know. Tried to start a race war. They profiled prominent minority leaders in the communities of their targeted cities. But they forgot that the world doesn't really give a shit, anymore.

BARTENDER

You're an expert on that kind of stuff?

DUNLAVEY

I guess you could say that. I'm brought in to clarify situations. Tell the blue boys if they're dealing with serious cult activity or a deranged psycho who heard a message in a heavy metal song.

BARTENDER

Sounds... interesting.

DUNLAVEY

Well, it never gets dull, I guess.

BARTENDER

I can tell you about dull. Nothing exciting ever happens in this place.

Dunlavey glances to a booth in a far corner of the bar. Four men dressed like gangsters from an era long since gone sit in the booth, riddled with bullet wounds. The death scene slowly melts from Dunlavey's sight.

DUNLAVEY

Oh, I wouldn't say that.

CUT TO:

SCENE FOUR

EXT- CITY SIDEWALK- NIGHT

Dunlavey walks slowly down the street.

He glances to and fro, picking up demonic images along the way.

Red eyes glare at him from the darkness.

Corpses litter the street corners.

DUNLAVEY

(voice over)

People have asked me to try and describe my condition to them. My usual retort... You ever catch something out of

the corner of your eye and turn, only to discover that nothing's there? Now imagine for a second that every time you found yourself in that situation, that you came face to face with a vision of hell. A harsh piece of psychic residue that your brain seems to be a receptor for. I pick up violent impressions from tragedies that occurred yesterday. A year ago. Or maybe even a hundred years. I have to cleanse my apartment and office on a day to day basis just to function. White candles, circles of protection and visualizing white light. Hokum, I would have once thought. In my own space, I'm okay. But you can't cleanse all of New York City. You can wash the blood off of the streets, but something remains and festers.

Dunlavey stops at a pay phone and deposits money. A woman answers the phone.

ROXY
Hello?

DUNLAVEY
Hey, Roxy.

ROXY
Hey yourself.

DUNLAVEY
What are you doing?

ROXY
I was thinking about indulging. You want to join me?

DUNLAVEY
If you're in the mood for company.

ROXY
I'm always in the mood for you, Dunlavey.

DUNLAVEY

I'll catch a cab. Be there in a half or so. You need anything.

ROXY

A hard fucking.

DUNLAVEY

Besides that.

ROXY

No. Just you, baby.

DUNLAVEY

Can you do me a favor and light some candles?

CUT TO:

SCENE FIVE

EXT. -STREET CORNER- NIGHT

Dunlavey enters a gypsy cab.

DUNLAVEY

I'm going near the garden. Just do me a favor. I don't care how we get there, as long as we don't pass ground zero.

DRIVER

You got it.

Dunlavey glances out of the car window, catching ashen faces along the way.

He turns to the other side of the back seat.

A dead transvestite sits next to him, a trail of mascara on his cheeks and wig askew. A needle dangles from the vein in his arm.

Dunlavey sighs, and rubs his brow.

Voice over as the cab cruises the street.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I had a doctor come up with a theory that my condition is caused by a runaway chemical release in my brain. It's the same kind that occurs near death, if the body is suffering huge trauma. It's what causes patients who have died and been resuscitated to have what they think is an afterlife experience. But I sure as hell don't see a white tunnel and Grandma standing there with an apple pie on the edge of heaven.

CUT TO:

SCENE SIX

INT- APARTMENT HALLWAY- NIGHT

Dunlavey makes his way slowly down the dark corridor.

Ashen faces lapse in and out of shadow, popping up at him like ghostly jack in the boxes.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

Roxy lived in a building of history. A lot of life and death had been burned into these walls. This was the

worst part of the trip. Once I got inside, good old Roxy would carve a piece of tranquility in the darkness.

Dunlavey knocks on Roxy's door. Pulsing techno music plays in the apartment.

Roxy answers, holding a huge white candle. Roxy has pale skin, dyed black hair and dark nail polish. She is in her late twenties and she is surrounded by a dark air of mischief. Her figure is ample but toned.

ROXY
(smiling)

Abandon hope all ye who enter here... Of a good night's rest...

CUT TO:

SCENE SEVEN

INT.-BEDROOM-NIGHT

Roxy and Dunlavey make passionate love on Roxy's bed. Her room resembles a torture dungeon.

White candles burn near them.

When it is over, Dunlavey relaxes on his back. He regards a deep scratch on his chest.

DUNLAVEY
Damn it, Roxy. Why does it always have to be so rough?

ROXY
That's how I like it; primal and dirty.

DUNLAVEY

Yeah, but Christ, you know. Maybe I just wanted to be held...

ROXY

(laughing)

You sound like a woman. You just made a major conquest. You triumphed over Roxy.

DUNLAVEY

I may have won the battle, but I'm losing the war. Seriously, can we tone it down next time?

ROXY

(leaning in for a kiss)

Sure.

Roxy bites Dunlavey's lower lip. He pulls away.

DUNLAVEY

Ow, shit, Roxy.

ROXY

Oh, stop it. This will kill the pain.

Roxy pulls out a baggie of cocaine from behind her pillow.

DUNLAVEY

Well, it's a start, I guess.

Roxy pulls a small mirror and razorblade from her nightstand and pours and arranges the cocaine.

ROXY

So, are you on a new case?

DUNLAVEY

Oh, yeah; a real nasty one, too.

ROXY

(her eyes widen)
Spare no details.

DUNLAVEY

Next time, okay. I'm not in the mood for shop talk.

ROXY

Are you playing, again?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah. I played before the call came in from the NYPD.
It's getting easier all of the time.

ROXY

You can always put two bullets in the chamber.

DUNLAVEY

A two in six chance. Shitty
odds.

ROXY

Depends on how you're looking at it.

Dunlavey and Roxy do a line, and then they settle into
the mattress.

DUNLAVEY

That's the good stuff.

ROXY

You gonna sleep here?

DUNLAVEY

If that's okay...

ROXY

I have a client tomorrow at nine. I'll have to rouse you at dawn.

DUNLAVEY

What's his story?

ROXY

Same as all of us; he just needs a little attention without the details and judgment. That reminds me. I gotta grab some adult diapers tomorrow.

DUNLAVEY

Mistress Roxy... queen of the adult diaper.

ROXY

Beats frying burgers.

There is a silence between them. Roxy turns toward Dunlavey.

ROXY

I wish I could see things through your eyes. It's got to be incredible.

DUNLAVEY

What? Living with one huge bad acid trip that won't go away?

ROXY

Yeah. At least you see beyond the veil, you know? It has to be some comfort. Knowing there is something else out there.

DUNLAVEY

I'd pray for oblivion if I was you, honey. Cause what I see isn't comforting.

ROXY

It's a gift, man. A blessing.

DUNLAVEY

Not exactly...

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE EIGHT

DAY-INTERIOR-A MOTEL ROOM IN NEW ORLEANS

FLASHBACK

Dunlavey sits with Myra, a voodoo priestess, on a flimsy mattress.

Myra is a light-skinned African American woman. She has long wavy hair and is petite, but carries an air of authority. She wears a white, virginal dress.

Dunlavey is younger, more vital and he has eyes hungry for forbidden knowledge.

Dunlavey wears dress slacks and a sweaty tank top.

The sound of Mardi Gras reverberates through the room.

Myra is older than Dunlavey by a decade, but they still seem perfect for each other. There is an undeniable connection between them. Myra smiles softly and hands Dunlavey a pouch.

MYRA

This is a gris-gris bag, Dunlavey. It will serve as protection for you.

Myra puts it around Dunlavey's neck. He admires it, and then he smiles at her.

DUNLAVEY

You've taught me so much, Myra. I don't know how I can ever repay you.

MYRA

There is one lesson left to learn, my student. Something special that I want you to see. With this eye.

Myra presses an index finger to Dunlavey's forehead.

He takes her hand and kisses it, softly.

DUNLAVEY

And I know there is only one way for you to show me. And as much as I want that... What about Falcon? I know he doesn't like the time we've spent together.

MYRA

Do not worry over my husband. He is away. This would trouble him deeply. But you and I have a bond that he could never understand. There is no magic in his blood. But you and I, Dunlavey...

Myra leans in and kisses Dunlavey hungrily.

TIME ELAPSE

Dunlavey and Myra rock in sweaty ecstasy on a bed.

Night has fallen outside the window as Mardi Gras rages on.

Myra pulls away from Dunlavey. She reaches under the bed and pulls a ratty purse onto her naked lap.

Dunlavey watches silently as Myra pulls a chicken claw from the bag.

She reaches toward Dunlavey and scrawls a sigil (a magical symbol) into his forehead. It is of an open eye.

Dunlavey winces as Myra cuts into the flesh of his forehead.

Myra settles back and crosses her legs. She closes her eyes and begins to concentrate.

Dunlavey watches curiously, resisting the urge to touch his forehead.

Myra begins to chant.

The wound on Dunlavey's forehead begins to pulsate and bleed. A torrent of blood cascades down his face.

Dunlavey falls back from the pain and his eyes are blurred with blood.

Myra's voice reaches a fever pitch as she continues to chant, imploring an invisible god or goddess to aid in her ritual.

Suddenly, the magic symbol Myra had cut into Dunlavey's forehead glows and disappears.

Myra ceases to chant, and stares at Dunlavey with a warm, knowing smile.

Dunlavey rubs his forehead and stares at his hand. The wound and blood are gone.

Dunlavey stares at the room, as a white light begins to grow from the corners of the room.

Dunlavey watches in awe as beautiful spirits materialize in the room and begin to float around him.

Myra smiles approvingly as Dunlavey is entranced by the peaceful spirits.

Myra motions to white candles on the floor that surround the bed.

MYRA

You are encircled by the white light. You are safe here. Your third eye has been opened by our sex magic. Enjoy the beauty.

Dunlavey watches as the beautiful forms caress him.

DUNLAVEY

Beautiful. They are so beautiful. I love you, Myra.

Myra smiles and opens her mouth to murmur back at Dunlavey. Suddenly, Myra's head explodes as a gunshot rings through the room.

Dunlavey is splattered with gore.

The wraiths begin to take on a sinister appearance.

They dive at him with evil intent.

Dunlavey falls off the bed and looks up at muddy boots.

Dunlavey's eyes travel upward to see the grim face of Myra's husband.

Falcon is a tall, muscular African American man. He wears dirty hunting pants and mud streaked boots. He is shirtless. He clutches a shotgun to his chest.

DUNLAVEY
(whispers)
Falcon...

Falcon points an index finger and pinky from his left hand down toward Dunlavey.

FALCON
You fuck my woman for the secret, and now you know it. That eye is gonna stay open. You never gonna shut it off. This will follow you, Dunlavey. This will follow you until the life begs to leave your body. You are never gonna be free from it.

Falcon tilts the shotgun at Dunlavey. Dunlavey recoils. Falcon smiles.

FALCON
(smiling)
Don't worry, *homme*. This ain't for you. You gonna wish it was, though.

Falcon brings the shotgun to his mouth, and pulls the trigger.

CUT TO:

SCENE NINE

DAY-INTERIOR-ROXY'S BED

A truck backfiring on the street rouses Dunlavey from his nightmare.

The sound of hard, driving techno music still fills the apartment. Dunlavey stumbles from the bedroom, shrugging his shorts on.

CUT TO:

SCENE TEN

INTERIOR-DAY-ROXY'S BATHROOM

Roxy dances in her underwear, oblivious to Dunlavey's reflection in the mirror.

She glances toward the mirror and screams as Dunlavey's haggard face half-smiles and half-grimaces at her.

Roxy turns and punches Dunlavey in the arm.

ROXY

You son of a bitch. You scared the shit out of me.

Dunlavey barely acknowledges the punch and pushes Roxy aside for mouthwash that he drinks from the bottle.

DUNLAVEY

Sorry, babe.

Roxy scowls for a minute, and then she leans against Dunlavey's bare back.

ROXY

You wanna hang tonight?

DUNLAVEY

Where?

ROXY

Wherever.

DUNLAVEY

Yeah, okay. But I have to take a bite out of this case first.

ROXY

Like this?

Roxy bites down hard on Dunlavey's shoulder.

DUNLAVEY

Ow... ow... god damnit...

ROXY

Shut up, you fucking woman. You love it.

CUT TO:

SCENE ELEVEN

EXT-DAY-SIDEWALK

Dunlavey walks slowly down a crowded midday Manhattan sidewalk. Work day people brush impatiently past him. His eyes are downcast and hidden by sunglasses.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

It was time to head back to the old hacienda. I needed to wash the sex and grime off and get cracking on this new case. For some reason, the visions weren't so god awful

in the light of day. For whatever reason, my monsters came out primarily at night. But you could see the occasional wraith, churning in the streets like a rabid nocturnal animal caught in daylight.

Dunlavey sees putrid hands emerge from a trash can on a corner. He veers away and picks up his pace.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWELVE

INT-DAY

SPIRAL STAIRWELL OF AN ANTIQUATED APARTMENT BLDG

Dunlavey pulls himself slowly up the stairwell.

He sweats and seems to barely have the energy to make it.

He notices a pile of pink, oozing flesh on the stair above him. Puss secretes out of it and runs down the stairwell. Veins pulsate through the blob. Phantom faces press out of it, intent on ripping through the fleshy prison. The faces glare at Dunlavey in horror.

Dunlavey grimaces and steps over the nightmare.

DUNLAVEY
(softly)
Pardon me.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTEEN

INT-HALLWAY

Dunlavey emerges from the stairwell and trudges to his apartment door. The hallway is filled with the sounds of TVs and stereos blaring, mothers screaming at wayward children, and a power tool working intently.

Dunlavey notices an old man standing at an apartment door, fiddling with his keys. The old man wears a hearing aid and holds a pharmacy bag.

Dunlavey regards the old man as he passes.

DUNLAVEY

Hello, Mr. Weiss.

MR. WEISS

(cupping his ear and straining after Dunlavey)

Huh, what was that you say?

DUNLAVEY

(louder)

I said hello, Mr. Weiss

The old man nods, waves and enters his apartment.

As Dunlavey passes the last unit before his own, Gavin Straub, the super of the building, comes bounding out after him. Gavin is in his late twenties, slightly overweight, and looks like a large bookworm/geek.

GAVIN

Hey, Dunlavey, I have something to show you.

Dunlavey stops and, with a tired smile, he regards Gavin.

DUNLAVEY

Hey, Gavin. Can this wait? I'm really shot.

GAVIN

It will just take a second. See?

Gavin thrusts his left fist toward Dunlavey's face. Gavin's pinky is adorned with a silver ring in the shape of a wolf's head.

GAVIN

Bought this in Chinatown. Sweet, isn't it?

DUNLAVEY

Real nice.

Dunlavey nods approvingly as he desperately searches his pants pockets for his keys.

GAVIN

I thought you would appreciate it. If anyone understands my taste, it's you.

DUNLAVEY

(barely suppressing laughter)

Yeah, Gavin, we're two pees in a pod.

GAVIN

I wish the store would have had two of these rings. It would be awesome for both of us to wear it. So, have you given more thought to my proposal? I still have that friend in publishing. Could probably get a five, hell, maybe even six figure deal for your memoirs. Only ten percent for me. I think agents want fifteen or so. But, what the hell, we're friends. All I need is an outline and bio, and I'll get the ball rolling.

DUNLAVEY

(obviously trying to blow Gavin off)
Yeah, hey, you know I would love to. I'm just so damned busy, right now. But we should definitely get together and talk about it.

GAVIN

Hey man, look, if you're not interested, just say so. I do have other pots on the stove. I don't plan on running this place for the rest of my life.

DUNLAVEY

Of course I'm interested, Gavin. I'm just really busy right now. And walking up eight flights of steps doesn't help.

GAVIN

Oh, yeah, right. The elevator.

DUNLAVEY

Any chance of getting that fixed?

GAVIN

I called the guy, but you know how it is.

DUNLAVEY

Yeah. Well, maybe you should call another guy, because we're going on six weeks here. And I could use the energy I'm expending on the stairs to whip up that proposal for you.

GAVIN

Point taken. I'll let you relax. But start taking notes, bro. This could be big for both of us. Oh, by the way, I went in earlier and fixed your bedroom window. And I fed your cat. You didn't have any food, so it gave it a can of tuna from your cupboard.

Gavin walks back to his unit. Dunlavey stares after him.

DUNLAVEY

Gavin, I don't have a cat.

GAVIN

(staring back at Dunlavey)

Sure you do. You've always had a cat.

CUT TO:

SCENE FOURTEEN

INT-DAY-APARTMENT

Dunlavey opens his door and steps into his apartment.

His attention is immediately drawn to the kitchenette, where a large stray cat sits on the counter. It stares at him intently.

He immediately checks the living room window, whipping it open and points.

DUNLAVEY

Fire escape is that way, chief.

The cat simply stares at him.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I don't know how or why that fucking cat keeps coming into my home. It would give me the heebie-jeebies, if my life were not already a horror show.

The cat stares defiantly at Dunlavey.

DUNLAVEY

Come on, whiskers. I really don't want to call animal control. It's been a long day, and it's not even lunch time, you know what I'm saying?

The cat jumps from the counter, crosses the room, and gingerly exits through the window. Dunlavey closes the window, and rubs his brow.

Dunlavey takes white candles from a shelf in the living room and begins lighting them.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I know the cat has some kind of meaning. I've received little road signs like this before. But I doubt that the powers that be are as allergic to the little fuckers as I am.

Dunlavey sneezes.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTEEN

INT-BATHROOM

Dunlavey showers. White candles fill every perch available, inside and outside the shower.

CUT TO:

SCENE SIXTEEN

INT-LIVING ROOM

Dunlavey comes walking into the living room, a towel wrapped around his waist. White candles burn throughout the living room. He steps into the kitchenette and grabs a beer. He walks to the window and opens the curtains. He calmly stares at the dead faces pressed against the glass. He nonchalantly walks over and sits on the couch, draining the beer.

CUT TO:

SCENE SEVENTEEN

INT-OFFICE

Dunlavey enters a door lettered DUNLAVEY INVESTIGATIONS. His office is a disaster area. Tabloid headlines litter the walls. Bookshelves are crammed with archaic tomes on ritualistic killings.

Outside the office window, the sky is darkening.

Dunlavey sits at his desk and immediately notices the FedEx package awaiting him.

He rips open the envelope.

He pours the police files and crime scene pictures onto the squalor of his desk.

He looks at the pictures of the victims, their faces sewn shut.

Dunlavey grabs a mini tape recorder, presses the record button, and speaks.

DUNLAVEY

In each case, the victims were completely eviscerated. All of their organs were taken neatly. No mess at the crime scenes. All of the victims were found outdoors, so it's likely that the killer has an area set up for this type of elaborate work. Someplace private where he can take his time. And you do take your time, don't you, you son of a bitch. He's a fine craftsman. And the symbolism behind stuffing them with straw. Is the killer objectifying these people? Reducing them? Transforming them?

Dunlavey crosses the room and takes a book on satanic rituals from a shelf. He sits back at his desk and thumbs through the aged volume.

DUNLAVEY

(continuing his audio notes)

Don't think what I need is in here. But it's the most obvious first route to discount. There has been a huge increase in satanic ritual killings since the new millennium. Especially in the States and Canada. Officially, you won't hear that on any news broadcasts. But when you have your ear to the ground like me, you find out the real score real fast. And if you don't find it, it'll find you.

Dunlavey closes the book in frustration and sets it aside.

DUNLAVEY

Don't have enough physical evidence on this one. Need to hit the occult bookstores. Talk to some people in the know. See if any rare editions on this type of ritual have been sold.

Dunlavey's phone rings. He clicks off the recorder and answers it.

DUNLAVEY
Dunlavey Investigations.

Dunlavey puts a finger in his free ear.

DUNLAVEY
What? Yeah. Okay, I'll meet you there.

Dunlavey rises and quickly leaves the office.

CUT TO:

SCENE EIGHTEEN

INT-NIGHTCLUB

Dunlavey enters a crowded dance floor, making his way to the back of a nightclub. He passes young patrons gyrating to techno music, and also notices clumsy apparitions trying to emulate the moves of the patrons.

Roxy beckons from a booth in the back of the club. Dunlavey joins Roxy, who sits with a young blonde dressed in hot pants and a tube top. Roxy jumps at Dunlavey and she kisses him. She then motions to her friend.

ROXY
This is Janice. She's a model.

DUNLAVEY
Nice to meet you.

JANICE
(obviously polluted)

Hey man. How's tricks?

ROXY

I met her at the dungeon.

DUNLAVEY

Oh, okay.

ROXY

She is a dom extreme.

JANICE

So what are you drinking, handsome?

TIME ELAPSE

Dunlavey sits at the booth, the table in front of him crowded with bottles and shot glasses. He obviously has a nice buzz going. He glances to his right and sees Roxy and Janice dirty dancing. He ferrets through the empty glasses on the table and comes up with a nearly empty bourbon and coke. He downs it. Roxy walks to the ladies room and Janice perches next to him.

She digs a baggie out of her purse, looking around to make sure no one is watching.

JANICE

Want a line?

Dunlavey nods and takes the baggie. He clears a spot on the table and pours a huge line.

JANICE

Go easy, cowboy. This isn't coke. This is heavy stuff.

Dunlavey shrugs and halves the line. He snorts it, and then settles back. Janice follows suit, then snuggles next to him.

Dunlavey stares out at the patrons on the dance floor. Suddenly, the dancers start to cannibalize each other, ripping each other to shreds while keeping the beat. It looks like a crowd of hunger zombies in a feeding frenzy.

DUNLAVEY

(queasy)

I don't feel so hot.

JANICE

It's okay, baby. Just go throw up, and then you'll be riding smooth and clear. Here. Take a breath mint.

Janice digs in her purse and gives Dunlavey a mint. He stands on unsteady feet and walks precariously to the bathroom.

Roxy walks out of the ladies room and approaches Dunlavey, who side steps her and rushes into the men's room.

CUT TO:

SCENE NINETEEN

INT-MEN'S ROOM

Dunlavey enters the men's room. It holds little.

One urinal.

One small sink.

One partition.

He stumbles to the sink. An empty beer bottle rests on it.

He begins to retch into the sink. When he is done, he slumps to the floor.

Suddenly, the partition door to the toilet begins to shake.

Dunlavey watches in horror as the door shakes its hinges off and a massive form shambles out of the stall.

It is the murder victim Dunlavey had seen in the alley. It is nude. It's mouth and eyes are sewn shut. It marches clumsily at Dunlavey, who recoils in fear.

The creature grasps the beer bottle on the sink and smashes it in half.

Dunlavey shields his eyes from the rain of glass.

The corpse then uses the bottle to cut its mouth free.

CREATURE

The one you search for searches for you, hell seer. You will find no precedent to his acts. He does the things he does to impress. He implores no ancient entities. He has no desire to resurrect the old ones or the old ways. Do not fret over finding him, one with the vision. He will find you. And when he does...

The creature's rant is interrupted as maggots fly from his mouth.

Dunlavey mercifully passes out.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

SCENE TWENTY

INT-APARTMENT-NIGHT

Mr. Weiss sits in front of his television. The volume is cranked full blast and an infomercial drones on. As the old man stares zombie-like at the tube, the front door of his apartment slowly opens. A darkened figure creeps up slowly on the old man. A chloroform drenched handkerchief is forced over the old man's mouth. He bucks for a few seconds, and then Mr. Weiss succumbs to oblivion.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY ONE

INT-BASEMENT

A hand pulls the cord on an overhead light, illuminating a dark, dank basement.

Mr. Weiss is strapped down to an operating table. His clothes have been removed. A thin sheet covers his mid-section. His hands and feet are strapped down and a piece of duct tape covers his protesting mouth.

Mr. Weiss watches helplessly as a dark figure looms over him. His petrified eyes follow a gloved hand descending toward his abdomen. The hand bares a long needle, attached to a thin hose.

The hand plunges the needle deep in Mr. Weiss' stomach. Mr. Weiss struggles in agony. He glances over to his right, watching a large glass container fill up with his blood.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY TWO

INT-DAY-DUNLAVEY'S APARTMENT

Dunlavey awakes reluctantly with a long groan. He sits up on his couch and immediately grips his head.

Roxy appears from the hallway.

ROXY

So, it lives. Jesus Christ, you crazy son of a bitch. I almost took you to the hospital last night.

Dunlavey glances painfully at Roxy, who is zipping up her dress.

DUNLAVEY

Where are you going?

ROXY

To work. It's almost noon. I had to reschedule two very good clients to baby sit you. You look like you'll live now, though. How do you feel?

DUNLAVEY

Like a used condom.

ROXY

You smell like one, too.

Roxy crosses the room and kisses Dunlavey on the forehead.

ROXY
Eat something.

Roxy goes to the front door and opens it, pausing and turning back to Dunlavey.

ROXY
Oh, I fed your cat while you were asleep. You owe me for canned food.

Roxy leaves. Dunlavey stares absently at the door.

DUNLAVEY
(muttering)
I don't have a cat.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY THREE

EXT-DAYTIME-NEW YORK CITY

Dunlavey marches painfully down the late afternoon sidewalk.

He wears dark glasses and keeps his eyes to the pavement.

DUNLAVEY
(VO)

It took me a good three hours and two pots of coffee to feel human enough to leave the apartment. Self-destruction. It's my hobby. I wouldn't necessarily say that I was suicidal. I just didn't give a fuck. Destiny's hand was shoved so far up my ass that I could taste her fingers. There were designs on me. Whatever force that pushed me through my shitty life was calling the shots, and ending the torment was not an option for me. No matter how hard I tried. The alcohol, the drugs, the rough sex... I dove in headfirst, but somehow always buoyed back to the surface.

Dunlavey passes a woman specter in funeral attire. Her ashen face glows beneath a black veil. The woman pushes a baby carriage. Grey tentacles swirl out of the carriage.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

All I wanted was to get the hell out of my eyes. But now, I needed them to solve this case. I decided to head to the occult book store run by my friend Sergio. I was still trying to wrap my brain around the vision I had in the men's room last night; the scarecrow from the first murder. Wish I could chalk it up to the heroin, but I know better. It was the first time ever that I had been addressed by the freak show. I have always been an observer, under the assumption that the thing in the dark mirror was not looking back. Now, it seemed, the visions were trying to communicate with me. I don't succeed at what I do because of my condition. I succeed despite my condition. The visions have never contributed directly to my solving a case. Now, it looked like the rules were changing. And if that was the case, I had a whole new reason to be afraid.

Dunlavey enters an antiquated bookstore called simply:
THE ENIGMA. A smaller sign reads: RARE OCCULT ITEMS AND
BOOKS

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY FOUR

INT-BOOKSTORE

Dunlavey enters the bookstore and gently removes and tucks away his sunglasses. The store is filled wall to wall with ancient tomes. In the center of the store, Sergio prepares a bright section adorned with angel paraphernalia. Statues, books, tee shirts. Sergio is neatly dressed in a smoking jacket and he carries a European air. He is around the same age as Dunlavey.

DUNLAVEY

Good God, man. So you've finally sold out to the New Age sect. What's the matter, too many people buying into the rule of three? What happened to good old fashioned hexes?

Sergio regards Dunlavey with a warm smile.

SERGIO

No one dabbles the dark anymore, Dunlavey. And if they do, I have my internet store to keep it nice and discreet. If you want to stay in business these days it's angels, crystals and Wiccan seminars that pays the rent.

DUNLAVEY

It's just weird to see the master of darkness peddling happy horse shit.

SERGIO

There is a positive side to the occult. Of course, a man of your vision wouldn't know that. So how have you been? Still wallowing in angst, I take it.

DUNLAVEY

Well, it is my thing, I guess.

SERGIO

And you excel at it. And, as much as I would like to think you're here because I'm the closest thing to an actual friend you have, I highly doubt it.

DUNLAVEY

I've got another whacko upsetting the apple cart. This one is into some kind of mummification. Likes to clean his victims' organs out and fill them up with straw. Also likes to sew up the eyes and mouth. Any thoughts?

SERGIO

Sounds like a little old fashioned voodoo. How quaint. Any pentagrams or configuration of the organs? There aren't any impending planetary alignments that I'm aware of.

DUNLAVEY

He takes everything. He leaves the crime scenes cleaner than they were to begin with.

SERGIO

You have a got a strange bird there. What's the profile of the victims?

DUNLAVEY

Transients, from what I understand.

SERGIO

The point of ritualistic killings is to say something. This cat is saying nothing. Sounds like he's either certifiable or he's grandstanding.

DUNLAVEY

I'm leaning toward the latter. I think this psycho has a hard on for me.

SERGIO

And why, pray tell, would you think that?

DUNLAVEY

Last night, I had a vision of one of the murder victims. It... he... told me not to worry about finding the killer, because the killer would find me.

SERGIO

Wait a minute, you actually communicated with a spirit? I didn't think it worked that way with you.

DUNLAVEY

It doesn't. I've never interacted with these things before. I never even thought they were aware of my presence. I've always thought of these things as psychic residue, you know. Impressions. Bad karma leaving a bloody fingerprint.

SERGIO

And what do you think now?

Dunlavey grimaces and shakes his head.

DUNLAVEY

I don't know what to think.

Sergio sees that Dunlavey is deeply troubled by this.

SERGIO

Tell you what. I'll dig around and hit the books and see what I come up with. But, Dunlavey, you should remember something.

DUNLAVEY
What's that?

SERGIO
I know you deny your gift...

Dunlavey shoots Sergio a hard look.

Sergio corrects himself.

SERGIO
...Or whatever you want to call it. You are a walking magnet for this type of thing. You could put absolutely no effort into this case and you'll still get hooked by your thumbs and dragged through it. You're a *Lebowski* from hell, my friend.

DUNLAVEY
As always, you're a reliable fountain of optimism.

SERGIO
You know what I mean. Embrace your vision, Dunlavey. Wield it. Use it. You have it for a reason.

Dunlavey nods solemnly and heads for the door.

DUNLAVEY
Hate to tell you this, pal of mine, and I won't let it out of the bag and ruin your business, but I don't see any angels out there.

SERGIO
That's because you're not looking for them.

Dunlavey digests Sergio's comments, and takes his leave.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY FIVE

EXT-THE STREET OUTSIDE THE BOOKSTORE

Night is creeping into the skyline.

Dunlavey steps out of the bookstore and silently trudges down the street.

As he walks, over his shoulder, we see the setting sun sink below the buildings. As darkness grows in front of him, the wraiths in his visions begin to skitter out of the alleyways. They are dark forms, scurrying about like rats. Otherwise, the sidewalks are deserted.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

Well, that was an absolute waste of time. I am going to remove myself from Sergio's mailing list, if he's not careful.

Dunlavey notices a tall, dark figure suddenly appear at the corner scant blocks from him.

He watches it intently as he slowly approaches it.

The creature wears a dark robe and has the visage of a demonic pitbull. It has dark grey flesh, absurdly large jowls, yellow eyes, and two fangs protrude toward its upper lip.

Dunlavey pauses, regarding the beast.

DUNLAVEY

Well, if you aren't the ugliest thing I've seen since the divorce, I don't know what is.

The creature suddenly snaps its head in Dunlavey's direction. Dunlavey smirks, and looks behind him.

DUNLAVEY

Damn, for a second there, I could have sworn you heard me. What are you looking at? Somebody waving the Fucking Ugly Trophy behind me?

The beast howls and Dunlavey takes a slight step back.

DUNLAVEY

Good thing you hold no domain here. Didn't you read the handbook? You can't touch me.

The beast charges at Dunlavey, slime raining from its howling mouth. Dunlavey stares at the creature incredulously.

DUNLAVEY

Where's the dog catcher when you need him.

To Dunlavey's shock, the beast barrels right into him, sending him crashing painfully to the sidewalk.

Dunlavey looks up in horror as the beast crouches over him, roaring in his face.

The beast jerks a stunned and dazed Dunlavey to his feet and slams the private eye into a brick wall.

Dunlavey slumps to the grimy sidewalk, and stares up helplessly at the beast.

The beast rages at Dunlavey.

DUNLAVEY

(meekly)

Is it too late to apologize for that fucking ugly line?

The beast lashes out, kicking Dunlavey in the ribs. Dunlavey stares up at the creature with a mixture of rage, fear and agony on his face.

DUNLAVEY

(through gritted teeth)

Go ahead then, you fucking mongrel. Get it over with. Do it!

The beast suddenly turns and runs away.

Dunlavey pulls himself painfully to his feet and staggers toward the creature.

The creature runs across the street.

Dunlavey follows, and is startled by the blare of a car horn. A cab stops inches from him, the driver swearing at Dunlavey in a foreign language.

Dunlavey painfully continues his way across the street. He watches the creature race down a subway entrance.

Dunlavey pauses, staring down the dark steps. He hears what sounds like hell itself going on underground.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I don't do subways. Don't ask.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY SIX

INT-DUNLAVEY'S BLDG-THE LOBBY

Dunlavey enters the building. He cradles his ribs and walks slowly toward the elevators.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

Went to a bar and licked my wounds for a few hours before I caught a cab and headed back home. Nothing felt broken. I wanted to head upstairs and crawl into another bottle. My whole world had been turned upside down. That dog-faced fuck had made tangible contact with me. How and why? If there was an otherworldly contract on my ass, I'd be in it up to my short hairs.

Dunlavey passes two pale, lost souls in the lobby and walks around them cautiously. It is clear that he is now afraid of these apparitions.

He pauses at the elevator door, noticing the out of order sign.

DUNLAVEY

Fuck me.

Dunlavey walks to the stairwell and enters.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY SEVEN

INT-DUNLAVEY'S FLOOR

Dunlavey emerges from the stairwell entrance and immediately steps into a bee hive of police activity.

Uniformed officers stand in front of Mr. Weiss' door.

Ramis comforts Gavin, who is blubbering outside the door.

Gavin notices Dunlavey.

GAVIN

Dunlavey! Oh, Christ, man. It's horrible.

Ramis passes off Gavin to another officer and approaches Dunlavey.

RAMIS

When are you going to get yourself a cell phone?

DUNLAVEY

What happened?

RAMIS

You aren't going to like it.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY EIGHT

INT-WEISS' APARTMENT

Dunlavey and Ramis enter the apartment. The body of Mr. Weiss is sprawled out on the hallway floor. He has been stuffed and sewn back together.

DUNLAVEY

I knew this old codger. He was harmless. What happened?

RAMIS

Your super came in about an hour ago because of noise complaints. The TV was turned up full volume.

DUNLAVEY

Mr. Weiss was hard of hearing.

RAMIS

So, anyway, Gavin let himself in after knocking for ten minutes, and this is what he found. No sign of forced entry. Again, no mess. But, there's more this time.

Ramis steers Dunlavey into the bathroom.

RAMIS

The killer left a message.

Dunlavey peers into the bathroom and sees a scarlet message scrawled in the tile of the bathroom wall.

The message reads: WE SEE YOU, DUNLAVEY

Dunlavey stares in stunned silence.

RAMIS

Have you kept up on your permit to carry?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah.

RAMIS

(nods)

You should probably use it.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY NINE

INT-NIGHT-DUNLAVEY'S OFFICE

Dunlavey puts on his shoulder holster and pulls his .38 revolver from the desk drawer. He regards it for a moment. He shoves the gun into the holster. Dunlavey eases into his office chair, minding his ribs.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

As Ramis had said, the killer was trying to get my attention. Taking out the old man who lived two doors down from my apartment was a way of saying it could have been me.

Dunlavey pulls a bottle of bourbon from his desk.

His phone rings.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

Like clockwork.

Dunlavey finds the receiver and pulls it to his head.

DUNLAVEY

Hey, Roxy.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY

INT-NIGHT-ROXY'S DOOR

Dunlavey knocks gingerly at Roxy's door. The door opens. Roxy and Janice smile at him. Both are holding white candles and wearing lingerie.

ROXY

Hey, big guy. Hope you don't mind a threesome, tonight.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY ONE

INT-ROXY'S BEDROOM

Quick cuts of Dunlavey, Roxy and Janice snorting coke, drinking, and writhing around on Roxy's bed.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY TWO

INT-ROXY'S BEDROOM-DAYTIME

Dunlavey is sprawled out on the bed. Roxy and Janice have crashed out on either side of him.

He stares thoughtfully out the window.

His mind goes back to Myra, and the passionate love they made. He sees Myra's smiling face. He sees the tenderness and love they shared.

Then he sees her head blasted to pieces.

He grimaces and lumbers out of bed. He puts on his pants.

Roxy rouses out of sleep and notices Dunlavey.

ROXY

You out of here?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah. I've got to get back to this case.

Dunlavey grabs his shirt and tugs it on, whimpering.

ROXY

You okay?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah. My ribs are still a little tender.

ROXY

That bruise looks pretty nasty. Maybe you should see a doctor.

DUNLAVEY

It's not that bad.

ROXY

You look perplexed. Anything you want to chat about?

DUNLAVEY

Nothing at all.

ROXY

Thank god. I'm still too stoned from last night to lend a shoulder.

DUNLAVEY

So, why offer?

ROXY

Well, I don't want to look like a heartless bitch. That's the good thing about you, sweetheart. I can offer that shoulder anytime knowing that I won't have to deliver. You're a rock.

Dunlavey puts his holster on, obviously in pain.

ROXY

You want a pain killer?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah, but I think I'll pass. Got to keep a clear head today.

Roxy nods, and then she sags back down, snuggling with Janice who is still fast asleep.

ROXY

Can you take the garbage out when you leave?

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY THREE

EXT-STREET-LATE MORNING

Dunlavey exits Roxy's building and quickly puts on his sunglasses. He walks a block or so when a pair of hands grabs him and hauls him roughly into an alley.

Dunlavey is tossed headfirst into a pile of rubble.

A boot lashes out and catches him in the ribs, sending him into a nausea filled wave of pain.

He looks up and sees the face of a young man he has never seen before. The young man is dressed entirely in black and his pale face glowers with rage.

MAN

I've been watching you, you prick. Watching you for a long time. Leave it alone, man. This is your only warning.

Dunlavey whips out his revolver, startling the man.

DUNLAVEY

Don't move, you sick mother fucker.

The man edges away, a psychotic look in his eyes.

MAN

I'm watching you, Dunlavey. I see you. Remember that.

DUNLAVEY

Move and I'll give you a sun roof.

MAN

(shaking his head)

You won't do it. You're weak. I'm the strong one. Remember that.

DUNLAVEY

Don't try me, you little...

The young man dashes off.

DUNLAVEY

God dammit!

Dunlavey angrily pulls his aim off of the man. He cannot shoot him in the back.

Dunlavey tries to give chase, but his ribs are in too much agony.

He limps out to the sidewalk and frantically searches the crowded sidewalk for the young man.

The young man is gone.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY FOUR

INT-DAYTIME-GAVIN'S APARTMENT

Gavin sits pensively on his couch. Dunlavey sits across from him in an easy chair. Gavin's place is adorned wall to wall with posters of voluptuous women and assorted horror and sci-fi memorabilia.

GAVIN

Thanks for checking up on me, man. It means a lot. I'm still kind of freaked, though.

DUNLAVEY

I can imagine. So, you received the complaint about the TV and headed over to Weiss's unit?

GAVIN

Yeah. And you know the rest. Christ, man, I've never seen anything like that in my life.

DUNLAVEY

There's only one thing I don't understand. You live right next door to Weiss. You didn't hear the TV all night?

GAVIN

I was out. And to be honest, I'd gotten used to it, over the years. Never bothered me. I had only been home a few minutes when I checked the voice mail and decided to knock on his door.

DUNLAVEY

And you used your key to enter.

GAVIN

Yep. My key to the kingdom, as it were.

DUNLAVEY

Does anyone else have access to your keys?

GAVIN

No. Why?

DUNLAVEY

There was no evidence of forced entry. I think whoever killed the old man let himself in.

GAVIN

Maybe Weiss let his killer in.

DUNLAVEY

You think he heard the door over that TV of his?

Gavin shrugs.

DUNLAVEY

What about the former super? Could he still have the keys?

GAVIN

He was buried a long time ago.

DUNLAVEY

Who else could have had a key? Security company? Meals on wheels?

GAVIN

No one except me.

Dunlavey nods, digesting the information.

GAVIN

What the fuck, am I a suspect?

DUNLAVEY

Of course not. Relax.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY FIVE

INT-DAY-DINER

Dunlavey sits in a booth at a diner. Ramis enters, joins Dunlavey at the booth, and tosses a folder onto the table.

RAMIS

So, we ran a background check on that building super of yours.

DUNLAVEY

Anything?

RAMIS

Could be. He was a pre-med at one point.

DUNLAVEY

Really?

RAMIS

He would have made a fine surgeon, but he decided to ditch school and join an Ashram for a few years. Followed some religious, free love kook. Probably the only way a kid like that could get any pussy. This character is all wasted potential. He has a wealthy family that shunned him when he didn't live up to the family crest. He also got in to some juvenile trouble, but the records are sealed there.

DUNLAVEY

So, he graduates to head of class. How fitting. I still can't imagine that geek pulling off these murders. Especially right under my nose.

RAMIS

It would really bruise that ego of yours, wouldn't it? What about your run in? Think it's pertinent?

DUNLAVEY

Two and two adds up to five, in this case. He said some stuff to me that sort of corroborates with the murder scene. But it doesn't feel right.

RAMIS

At the very least we can pull his ass in for questioning. He did assault you. Want to come to my office and see the sketch artist?

Dunlavey pulls out a folded piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to Ramis.

DUNLAVEY

No need.

Ramis unfolds the paper. It is a perfect drawing of the young man who attacked Dunlavey.

RAMIS

Not bad. Another hidden talent. Do you knit, too?

DUNLAVEY

Only on Sundays.

RAMIS

I'll get this photocopied and out to the troops. Want a shadow until this blows over?

DUNLAVEY

Listen, it's been established that the killer is trying to get my attention. We have to let him come. If he sees a blue trail behind me, he'll vanish. And I don't want that frustration to lead to more innocent victims.

RAMIS

All right. We'll play it your way. Just watch your back.

Dunlavey pushes a plate of barely touched food aside and stands.

DUNLAVEY

Pay the bill.

Dunlavey leaves, patting Ramis on the shoulder as he walks by.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY SIX

INT-SPORTS BAR-NIGHT

Dunlavey sits at the bar, staring into a glass of bourbon. The camera is tight on Dunlavey. Camera pulls back slowly as the narration plays, revealing two ghouls on either side of Dunlavey. They stare straight ahead and drool on the bar.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

So now I had two viable suspects. Gavin, whose geek prowess and obsession with my work as well as access to Weiss' apartment elevated him to the top of the list. Probably the first time the kid wouldn't have minded not coming in first. And then the punk that rabbit punched me outside of Roxy's. And I still couldn't decide if either one was capable. I was sticking my bare ass out to catch

this psycho. Ramis would be wrong if he thought I waived police protection because I actually gave a shit.

Dunlavey downs the drink, slaps a five on the counter, and takes his leave.

The ghouls stare at him stupidly as he leaves.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY SEVEN

EXT-NIGHT-SIDEWALK

Dunlavey walks down the sidewalk, which is unusually packed with the night creatures only he can see.

Now, however, he eyes them up and down, nervously watching them.

They seem to notice his discomfort, and begin to flock around him, hissing and snarling in his face.

Dunlavey stumbles into an alley as the creatures swarm over him like a dark cloud.

They aren't really harming him, but he now has no way of knowing if they're capable.

Suddenly, a large black bag lady with dark sunglasses and a walking cane charges into the alley.

She begins to scream and swings her walking cane madly at the apparitions. They dissipate as she strikes at them.

BAG LADY

Leave him alone now, you hear? Get going!

The apparitions all disappear, and the bag lady regards Dunlavey, who perches against a filthy brick wall.

BAG LADY

That fear you got inside of you is attractin' 'em. It's like a beacon to 'em. Better pull your head together, mister.

DUNLAVEY

Who the hell are you?

BAG LADY

Someone who knows, that's who. Where's your confidence, boy? Did you drown it in all of the alcohol you drank tonight? Didn't your treater teach you anything?

DUNLAVEY

Treater?

BAG LADY

Teacher, boy. In my day we called 'em practitioners. You lookin' through the void without a sober, sane grip and it might just swallow you up.

DUNLAVEY

Lady, how do you know about me? About...

BAG LADY

Havin' hell eyes? I know all about that. Only too well. Couldn't deal with mine.

The bag lady takes off her sunglasses. Her sockets are empty.

BAG LADY

Funny thing is, I can still see 'em. Can't cut out that third eye. Some folks can carry the burden. And others, well. They do what they have to.

The bag lady puts her glasses back on.

DUNLAVEY

You know what's it like? You've been cursed like me?

BAG LADY

It ain't no curse, boy. It's a calling. Once you sort that out, you might just come to peace with it.

Suddenly, the dogfaced demon that had attacked Dunlavey outside of the bookstore glowers behind the bag lady.

She turns around and swats it with her cane.

BAG LADY

I said get now!

Her cane makes physical contact with the beast.

Dunlavey watches in horror as the beast runs a huge ceremonial sword through the bag lady.

Dunlavey pulls his revolver.

The beast tosses the bag lady at Dunlavey, knocking him down.

Dunlavey scrambles to his feet and rushes to the sidewalk.

The beast is gone.

Dunlavey goes back to the bag lady and cradles her head in his lap. She is dying.

Due to the commotion, a passerby sticks his head into the alley.

DUNLAVEY
(to the passerby)
Call 911!

The passerby nods obediently and pulls out his cell phone.

DUNLAVEY
(to the old lady)
Try to hang on.

BAG LADY
(labored)
It's too late for me.

DUNLAVEY
Don't talk...

BAG LADY
You got a blind spot. It'll exploit it. It'll walk up to you and get you through the vision. It'll kill you.

DUNLAVEY
The things we see can't kill us.

BAG LADY
Until now...

The woman dies in Dunlavey's arms.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY EIGHT

INT-DUNLAVEY'S FLOOR

Dunlavey enters the stairwell to his floor. He walks brazenly through an apparition, which whips around like wisps of smoke. He no longer seems afraid of the ghosts. He looks angry and fed up.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

According to the police, the old lady was a Doe. No fingerprint records. No priors. Just an old homeless woman whose name was lost to time and indifference. The demon haunting me had taken out the only person on earth who could have helped me understand this condition. And though I had no idea how, I was determined to put the bastard down for it.

Dunlavey digs his keys out and is about to open his door when he sees an ethereal spirit next to the stairwell.

It is Myra, glowing radiantly.

Dunlavey stares at her in awe.

DUNLAVEY

Myra?

Myra beckons silently for Dunlavey to follow, then walks through the stairwell door.

Dunlavey quickly races to the door, throws it open, and follows.

The camera follows Dunlavey as he races down several flight of stairs, following the glowing apparition.

CUT TO:

SCENE THIRTY NINE

INT-BASEMENT ENTRANCE

Dunlavey throws open the entrance to the basement and scans the room.

DUNLAVEY
Myra?!

Dunlavey catches his breath and then begins to look around the basement.

It is a storage facility that splinters toward a boiler room and laundry room.

Several cardboard boxes, thick with dust, are stacked atop a rickety metal shelf rack.

Dunlavey peers at the top shelf and sees something strange protruding through one of the boxes.

It looks like an antler.

He reaches up and precariously brings the box down to the floor.

He removes a mounted deer head from the box.

He reaches in and begins pulling out dead, stuffed animals.

GAVIN
(curiously)
What are you doing down here?

Dunlavey drops the stuffed woodpecker in his hand and turns to see Gavin.

Gavin is standing in the basement, a bag of laundry in tow.

DUNLAVEY

Christ, Gavin. You scared the shit out of me. I couldn't sleep. I came down here because... well, hell. I don't know why.

GAVIN

We're tight, man. But I have got to take exception with you rummaging through other people's stuff. It's not cool. It's up there with breaking the prime directive.

DUNLAVEY

I'm sorry. I was just curious. There a taxidermist in the building?

GAVIN

I guess there was, at one time.

DUNLAVEY

So you don't know who these belong to?

GAVIN

Are you asking for professional or personal reasons?

DUNLAVEY

I'm just curious. Gavin, are you okay? You seem... I don't know... pissed off.

GAVIN

Detective Ramis called me today. Asked me not to leave town anytime soon. Shit, I thought they only said that on

TV shows. And no. I don't know who owns those boxes. They've been here longer than me.

DUNLAVEY

Don't take it to heart. It's procedure.

GAVIN

I guess. I have to throw these in the washer.

Dunlavey takes the box and pushes it back up on the shelf.

DUNLAVEY

Sure. Sorry about screwing around down here. You want to get together in a couple of days. Talk about that proposal.

Gavin shrugs, eyes downcast.

GAVIN

Whatever. Don't do me any favors.

Dunlavey starts to say something, but is too tired and lets Gavin go on his way.

Gavin trudges to the laundry room.

Dunlavey decides to take his leave.

He goes to the basement door.

He stares back into the basement.

An eerie light emits behind the shelving, and then it disappears.

Dunlavey rubs his tired eyes, and then he leaves the basement.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY

INT-NIGHT-DUNLAVEY'S APARTMENT

Dunlavey enters his apartment.

The stray cat sits on the kitchen counter.

Dunlavey barely regards the cat, setting his keys on the counter next to it.

He tugs off his jacket and drapes it over the couch.

He lights several white candles.

Dunlavey walks over to the window and closes the shades on red, peering eyes.

He returns to the couch and stretches out on it.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

Seeing Myra had brought a mixture of joy and shame to me. Why had she led me down to the basement? Or was it all a hallucination? And that little assortment from the Norman Bates collection I found down there... could it have any bearing on this case? I didn't know. I was spent, and thought I could actually fall asleep without a chemical assist. I don't know why, but I wasn't afraid. An innate sense deep down told me that it wasn't time for the inevitable showdown. But, still in all, if Gavin was the killer...

Dunlavey looks at his apartment door.

He pulls his revolver out and sits it on the couch next to him.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

...I'm a light sleeper.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY ONE

INT-DAYTIME-DUNLAVEY'S APARTMENT

Dunlavey wakes on the couch.

He wipes his face and stands, stretching.

He stumbles into the kitchen and switches his coffee maker on.

He walks back toward the living room and stops, noticing something on the floor.

Placed just inside his apartment, by the front door, is a small, brightly wrapped package, with a card attached.

He picks up the package and tears it open.

Inside he is aghast to find a human finger.

The finger has been neatly sewn up at its root.

The wolf's head ring Gavin had shown him was still on the finger.

Dunlavey opens the envelope holding the card.

He opens the card. It is inscribed in blood.

It reads: WHO ARE YOU GOING TO POINT THE FINGER AT NOW?

Dunlavey drops the gruesome surprise package and snatches his revolver from the couch.

The camera follows Dunlavey as he races out of his apartment and runs down the hallway.

He sees Gavin's apartment door opened a crack.

Dunlavey kicks the door in and jumps into the apartment, his gun ready for action.

The apartment looks like a hurricane hit it.

It has been torn upside down and Gavin's possessions have been destroyed.

Dunlavey searches the apartment, but does not find Gavin's body.

In Gavin's living room, Dunlavey searches through the debris left in the killer's wake, and finds a shattered framed photo of Gavin with his arm around Dunlavey.

Dunlavey's eyes have been marked out in red.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY TWO

INT-DAY-DUNLAVEY'S APARTMENT

Dunlavey sits pensively on his couch. Ramis knocks lightly and enters the front door.

RAMIS

Well, the people in this building are definitely getting nervous.

DUNLAVEY

I'm waiting for them to show up on my doorstep with pitchforks and torches.

RAMIS

The finger belongs to Gavin. We had his prints on file for that juvenile infraction. The blood on the card matches Gavin's as well. I'm posting a uniform on the premises, until this blows over.

DUNLAVEY

I don't need protection.

RAMIS

Maybe you don't. But it will help everyone else around here breathe easier.

DUNLAVEY

Has Gavin's body been found?

RAMIS

Not yet. But according to the medical examiner, the previous victims were killed forty eight to seventy hours before they were recovered in alleyways.

DUNLAVEY

All except Weiss, who was neatly deposited back into his apartment.

RAMIS

What do you make of it?

DUNLAVEY

Weiss' murder was a big steaming pile of shit taken in my back yard. Sending me a piece of Gavin... the fucker's baiting me, Ramis.

RAMIS

Which is why you have to keep a cool head. Why don't you move to a hotel until this is over? The city will pick up the tab.

DUNLAVEY

No. This is my home. Besides, I have a hall monitor out there now.

RAMIS

I've got to get out of here. Call me for a pow-wow later. We still have our eyes peeled for the perp you described. That might be a tree we can shake some fruit out of.

DUNLAVEY

We'll see.

Ramis heads toward the door and pauses, staring into the kitchenette.

RAMIS

Cute cat.

Dunlavey looks over and sees that the cat has returned.

DUNLAVEY

Thanks.

Ramis leaves.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY THREE

INT-DUNLAVEY'S FLOOR-HALLWAY-DAY

Dunlavey steps out of his apartment and locks the door.

He notices a uniformed officer perched on a stool, reading a newspaper. The officer is stationed next to the stairwell.

Dunlavey sees Weiss' and Gavin's apartment doors draped in crime scene tape and grimaces.

A young couple down the hall exits their apartment, hauling luggage behind them.

Dunlavey smiles and waves at them.

The young couple glares at him, dragging their luggage to the stairwell.

Dunlavey lowers his hand and the couple takes the stairs.

He glances over at the policeman on watch.

DUNLAVEY

Who did you piss off to pull this short stick?

The officer shrugs.

OFFICER

Beats traffic duty.

DUNLAVEY

I'll bring you a coffee later.

Dunlavey takes the stairwell.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY FOUR

INT-DUNLAVEY'S OFFICE-LATE AFTERNOON

Dunlavey enters his office. He hangs his coat on a coat rack and immediately picks up a white candle and lights it.

He glances out of his office window, noticing that night is beginning to fall.

He perches behind his desk, pours a tall glass of bourbon, and picks up the police files on his desk.

He looks at the pictures of the murder victims.

DUNLAVEY

Come on, work with me. Tell me something.

Dunlavey's phone rings. He answers it.

DUNLAVEY

Dunlavey investigations.

KILLER

(demonic voice)

Hello, seer.

DUNLAVEY

Who is this?

KILLER

I'm your personal demon. Did you get my gift?

Dunlavey glances at his archaic rotary phone.

DUNLAVEY

I've got you on caller ID, you son of a bitch.

KILLER

(laughing)

Hardly. You really must get with the times, Dunlavey. You are quite the dinosaur.

DUNLAVEY

What do you want with me?

KILLER

I want to relish your last scream.

DUNLAVEY

How about a fruit basket, instead.

KILLER

Your bravado is quite amusing. But you and I both know that you are afraid. You fear me.

DUNLAVEY

I don't fear a coward with a voice modulator. Your Halloween charity spook house bull shit doesn't wash with me. You want me to feel like I'm up against a tough customer? Look at your victims. Winos, senior citizens, the weak and defenseless. Christ, strangling puppies would take more work.

KILLER

I could have strangled you last night.

DUNLAVEY

So why didn't you?

KILLER

Class isn't over yet. And there is so much left for you to learn.

DUNLAVEY

So come teach me, mother fucker.

KILLER

In due time.

DUNLAVEY

If this is all about me, then just get it over with. Leave everyone else out of it.

KILLER

That wouldn't be very much fun. You see, Dunlavey, I know that, despite your hard exterior, every victim I take eats a little bit more of that black thing you have inside called a soul. It is time for you to pay for your sins.

The killer hangs up. Dunlavey stares at the receiver, then puts in down.

He inhales the glass of bourbon.

The phone rings again.

Dunlavey snatches it up to his ear.

DUNLAVEY

When I get my hands on you, there won't be enough left to stitch back together you motherless son of a...

ROXY

Dunlavey?

DUNLAVEY
Roxy?

ROXY
Are you trying to turn me on with all of that sexy talk?

DUNLAVEY
I thought you were someone else.

ROXY
Someone who ran over your dog?

DUNLAVEY
Yeah, sort of.

ROXY
Come over here and forget about it for awhile.

DUNLAVEY
Sage advice.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY FIVE

INT-NIGHT-ROXY'S BEDROOM

Dunlavey and Roxy stretch out on Roxy's bed. White candles burn on the night stand. Dunlavey nurses a tall drink.

ROXY
You look like hell.

DUNLAVEY

Thanks. I feel worse.

ROXY

You work too hard.

DUNLAVEY

I think I might play a little harder than I work. I should be out on this case. I shouldn't be here.

ROXY

No one is tying you to the bed. Not yet, anyway. Guess you're getting sick of me.

DUNLAVEY

No. It's not like that. I need the sanctuary you offer, my dear. It's nice to come here and shrug the world off of my shoulders. Even if it's only for a night.

ROXY

I've been reading a lot about this maniac you're after. The press has been calling him the Dollmaker.

Dunlavey almost spits up his drink.

DUNLAVEY

Jesus. I'm sure the killer appreciates that terrifying moniker.

ROXY

Give me the juicy details. Do you have morgue shots? You know how much I love that stuff.

DUNLAVEY

Not on me. And I'd like to forget about that stuff for a little while. That was the whole point of your invite, wasn't it?

ROXY

You never tell me anything.

DUNLAVEY

Next time, I promise. I'll bring some road kill with me for you to get wet over.

Roxy pinches him hard.

DUNLAVEY

Ow. Stop it.

Roxy jumps off of the bed.

ROXY

I need another drink.

Dunlavey takes an expertly rolled joint off of the night stand. He puts it in his mouth.

DUNLAVEY

This is just weed, right? It isn't laced with anything?

Roxy replies from the other room.

ROXY

Just smoke it, you fucking woman!

Dunlavey searches the night stand for a light.

DUNLAVEY

(calls out)

Got a match?

Roxy replies from the other room.

ROXY

Look in the drawer of the night stand.

Dunlavey opens the drawer and rummages through it. He finds a photograph.

It is of Roxy and the young man who had assaulted him. They have their arms wrapped around each other and smile angelically at the camera.

Dunlavey sits up, staring intensely at the photograph.

Roxy enters the bedroom.

Dunlavey stands and approaches her, angrily.

DUNLAVEY

Who the fuck is this, Roxy?

Roxy seems taken aback by Dunlavey's apparent anger.

She eyes the picture.

ROXY

Jealous, much? Christ, this isn't like you.

DUNLAVEY

(angry, but controlled)

Who is he, Roxy?

ROXY

He's no one. An old boyfriend.

DUNLAVEY

Wrong, Roxy. This guy is someone. He's the asshole who jumped me downstairs. He's the number one suspect on the case I'm working.

Roxy shakes her head in disbelief.

ROXY

That's impossible. He wouldn't hurt anyone. He's sensitive. A poet. Killing isn't in him.

DUNLAVEY

A name, Roxy.

ROXY

Andre. Andre Campbell. We dated, for awhile. But I swear, I haven't seen him in months.

DUNLAVEY

You know, it's all starting to make sense now. You're this death groupie who buzzes around me like a god damn moth.

ROXY

What are you saying?

DUNLAVEY

That I've been played. All of this business between us... it's a scam.

ROXY

Oh, you are wrong, mister. I like you, you piece of shit.

DUNLAVEY

You envy me. My lifestyle. My abilities... which speaks twisted volumes about you. You never liked me. In some fucked up way, you want to be me.

ROXY

How fucking dare you, man. I have always tried to be there for you. True, I'm not into harmony and purity and shit like that. I liked you because there's a dark edge to you. It spoke to me. I can't explain it. I... I... loved you, as much as I'm capable.

DUNLAVEY

I'm sorry. I don't buy it. This is the only angle I'm seeing here, Roxy. And it points to you.

ROXY

So, what are going to do? Have me arrested?

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY SIX

INT-INTERROGATION ROOM

Two hard-boiled looking detectives grill Roxy while Dunlavey watches from behind a two way mirror. The interrogation is piped in through a sound system.

DETECTIVE ONE

And you say your clients can testify that you were with them on the nights of the murders?

ROXY

They better, or their wives will be getting very enlightening phone calls.

DETECTIVE TWO

You a whore, Roxy?

ROXY

No. I am a dominatrix. If I were a whore, I'd be in a higher tax bracket.

DETECTIVE ONE

And what about Andre? You have an address on him?

ROXY

Nope. Like I said, I don't know where he is, and I don't care.

DETECTIVE TWO

What's the matter? Did he smack you around?

ROXY

No, he didn't. That was the problem.

DETECTIVE ONE

We searched your apartment. Black candles. Voodoo dolls. Satanic music. You worship the dark lord, Roxy?

ROXY

Fashion accessories and props. My lifestyle has a certain amount of role playing involved.

DETECTIVE TWO

You a witch, Roxy?

ROXY

Yeah. You gonna burn me at the stake, now?

DETECTIVE ONE

Want to know what we think?

ROXY

No, but you're going to tell me anyway, right?

DETECTIVE TWO

We think you and your ex-boyfriend are into some sick shit. We also think that you began your relationship with Dunlavey because you need his heart or kidney or something for a pagan ritual.

ROXY

Believe me, honey, Pagans are a lot more civilized than you are.

Detective One slams his fist down on the table.

DETECTIVE ONE

All right, lady! We have had enough of your bull shit! Now you tell us what we need to hear, or that pretty ass of yours can rot in a holding cell.

Roxy stands and points a finger at the detective. She is absolutely livid.

ROXY

Listen, asshole, I dated a guy with some expertise in police procedure. I am not talking to you or your boyfriend anymore. You either get my fucking lawyer in here right now or charge me! Oh, and that pretty ass line... I'm sure that constitutes sexual harassment. When I'm done your pretty ass will be sitting behind a desk until you draw your pension.

Roxy sits back down and looks away.

The detectives are dumbfounded. They leave the room.

Roxy glares at the mirror. Dunlavey swears she can see him.

Ramis enters the room.

RAMIS

We can't hold her. Or charge her.

DUNLAVEY

I know.

RAMIS

We can and will keep an eye on her.

DUNLAVEY

Good plan.

RAMIS

You really think she's involved?

DUNLAVEY

No. But it's the only thing that makes sense, now.

RAMIS

We found some coke at her apartment. I could have made that stick. But I had a feeling you might want that detail to disappear from the report?

DUNLAVEY

Would you mind?

RAMIS

(shrugs)

It's not enough to clog the sewer. Medicinal purposes, I take it?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah, something like that.

RAMIS

I know you're special. What you do. How you go about it. Don't put me in this position again, okay?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah, I'm sorry.

Ramis leaves the room.

Dunlavey turns back to see Roxy seemingly glowering at him, as if she had just witnessed his encounter with Ramis.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY SEVEN

INT-NIGHT-DUNLAVEY'S OFFICE

Dunlavey sits behind his desk. The police folders are sprawled out on his desk. He rests his chin on his hand and stares thoughtfully into space.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

Whether Roxy was innocent or not, I had a feeling I was going to start spending some pretty lonely nights.

Dunlavey's phone rings.

He picks up the receiver.

DUNLAVEY

Dunlavey investigations.

JANICE

Hey, cowboy.

DUNLAVEY

Hey... yourself. Who is this?

JANICE

Janice, Roxy's friend.

DUNLAVEY

Oh, hey. How are you?

JANICE

I'm good. How's Roxy been?

DUNLAVEY

To be honest, there's a little heat between us at the moment. I don't think I'll be talking to Roxy much for the foreseeable future.

JANICE

Oh. Well, I'm sorry to hear that. You want to get together tonight?

DUNLAVEY

Uh, you sure that's cool? You and Roxy seemed pretty tight.

JANICE

You should know. Roxy's cool, but it's not like you two are exclusive. She does date other guys, you know.

DUNLAVEY

There's no ring on her finger. Guess she has a right to see who she wants.

JANICE

So, what's it going to be?

Dunlavey grabs a pen and paper.

DUNLAVEY

Give me an address.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY EIGHT

EXT-NIGHT-MANHATTAN STREET

A taxi carrying Dunlavey cruises a west side street.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I tried to convince myself that I wasn't thinking with the little head. Janice could have some pertinent information on Roxy. But the thought of savaging her from behind while I snorted heroin off of her back put any work related motivation I may have had to bed. I needed to lose myself in sex and drugs. This case was hitting me in areas that I hadn't thought existed. As much as I hated to admit it, the prospect of losing Roxy bothered me. And it bothered me a hell of a lot more than I would have expected. Sure, it was a sick and dysfunctional relationship. But how could a guy like me nurture any other type? The only pure love I had ever known was ripped away from me when I had my third eye opened.

Janice appears on a sidewalk.

The taxi carrying Dunlavey pulls to the corner and stops.

Janice enters the taxi.

Dunlavey scoots over and allows her to sit.

JANICE

Hey baby!

She throws her arms around Dunlavey and kisses him.

DUNLAVEY

Nice to see you again.

JANICE
Same here.

DUNLAVEY
Where to?

JANICE
I know just the place. It's exclusive as hell, but they know me there.

CUT TO:

SCENE FORTY NINE

INT-NIGHTCLUB

Dunlavey and Janice make out in a booth at a night club as patrons rave on the dance floor.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY

EXT-NIGHT-SIDEWALK

Dunlavey and Roxy walk unevenly down a quiet street.

JANICE
Want to go back to my place?

DUNLAVEY
You have white candles at your place?

JANICE

UUUUhhhhh... yeah... I'm sure I do. Why, naughty boy? You into hot wax?

DUNLAVEY

I'll explain it later.

Janice digs through her purse and pulls out a cigarette.

JANICE

Last cancer stick. I need to grab a pack before we head to my place.

They pass a convenience store. It looks open.

DUNLAVEY

I'll grab a pack for you.

JANICE

Thanks, baby. I'll just have this one and wait for you.

Janice wraps her arms around Dunlavey and kisses him.

JANICE

Don't be long.

Dunlavey smiles and goes into the store. The camera follows him in.

Dunlavey heads to the cashier. It's an old man with dark sunglasses on.

DUNLAVEY

I need smokes.

The old man rips off the sunglasses. His eye sockets are empty and swim with maggots.

CASHIER

It's here, you fool! It's here!

Dunlavey stumbles back, and then a dark realization creeps into his eyes.

He races out of the store.

The real cashier appears from the back of the store, clutching a mop. He is oblivious to the phantom cashier behind the counter.

REAL CASHIER

(looking around)

Hello?

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY ONE

EXT-NIGHT-SIDEWALK

Dunlavey spots Janice standing near a subway entrance. The area is quiet and isolated.

Janice spots Dunlavey and waves.

JANICE

I've got a Metrocard. We can double dip.

Suddenly, the demon that had been tormenting Dunlavey appears behind Janice.

DUNLAVEY

No!

Dunlavey runs toward the startled girl.

The demon grabs Janice, clamps a reptilian claw around her mouth, and cuts her throat with a dagger.

The demon releases the girl, who falls limply to the ground.

The demon then flees down the subway stairwell.

Dunlavey races to Janice.

Her eyes have rolled back into her head and her blood is everywhere.

Dunlavey tried to bind the wound with his hands, but Janice dies quickly, her last breath followed by blood.

Dunlavey pulls his revolver out and faces the subway entrance.

He can hear an unholy orgy of evil down there.

He grits his teeth and runs down the subway stairwell.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY TWO

INT-SUBWAY

Dunlavey races down the stairway to the subway platform.

He sees a procession of the dead. Ashen, forgotten souls float around the subway platform.

No human passengers are present.

DUNLAVEY
(VO)

I hate the subway. The subway system is a feeding ground for a really nasty entity called the Car Nex. Car Nex is short for Carnivore from the Nexus. They are inter-dimensional sharks. A very light layer of reality separates them from us. They can be easily coaxed into our dimension, with the right turn of a phrase. They are thoughtless eating machines, and it doesn't matter what side of reality they exist on for them to feed.

Suddenly, from the subway tunnel, flying whirlwind creatures with flickering teeth and eyes appear. They are the size of an SUV.

The creatures begin to devour the hapless spirits that haunt the platform.

Dunlavey inches through the melee, his gun drawn.

The creatures dive past him and he has to fight the urge to run away from the scene screaming.

DUNLAVEY

Come on out, you son of a bitch! I know you're down here!

Dunlavey looks for the murderous demon in the melee.

The monstrous creatures fly at him and veer off at the last possible instant.

Dunlavey moves through the ghostly bloodbath, and is blind-sided by the demon.

Dunlavey topples down onto the rails.

He looks up and sees a huge creature bearing down on him. The creature is the size of a subway car and races at him with its huge maw opened wide.

Suddenly, Dunlavey realizes that the creature is, in actuality, the subway.

He leaps off of the tracks and feels the rush of hot air as the train barely misses him.

He looks around and the platform is deserted.

He picks himself up, and marches painfully to the stairs.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY THREE

EXT-NIGHT-CORNER BY THE SUBWAY ENTRANCE

Police cars and ambulance are at the scene.

Dunlavey watches sadly as Janice's corpse is zipped into a body bag and loaded into the ambulance.

An officer approaches him.

OFFICER

Mr. Dunlavey? You need to come with me right away.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY FOUR

INT-ROXY'S BUILDING-NIGHT

Dunlavey follows the uniformed officer through the hallway of Roxy's building.

Anxiety builds in Dunlavey as he reaches Roxy's doorway.

Ramis appears as Dunlavey crosses the threshold. Ramis wraps his arms around Dunlavey, whose eyes grow with horror and rage.

Blood is everywhere. Scrawled on the living room wall in blood is a message:

DUNLAVEY, YOU CAN PUT THIS ONE BACK TOGETHER

Dunlavey turns to Ramis, who maintains his grip on the startled P.I.

DUNLAVEY
Where is she?

RAMIS
She's all over the place. Our guy did a number on her. He tore her to shreds.

Dunlavey grabs Ramis by the lapels. Two uniforms start to move in. Ramis motions for them not to interfere.

DUNLAVEY
(angrily)
I thought you were going to shadow her?

RAMIS
I did. I put a plain clothes on her before she was released. He's missing. Presumed dead.

Dunlavey releases his grip on Ramis and stumbles backwards.

DUNLAVEY

This is my fault.

RAMIS

It's no one's fault.

DUNLAVEY

I led the killer to her.

RAMIS

Listen to me... blame parenting, blame society, blame the cycle of the moon... but don't blame yourself. There were yellow flags all over this field. You played it the way it should have been played.

DUNLAVEY

That doesn't make this any better. There were two girls slaughtered tonight because they knew me.

Ramis lowers his head and nods.

Dunlavey composes himself.

DUNLAVEY

Who found her?

RAMIS

One of her clients came for an appointment. He was barreled over at the doorstep by Andre Campbell, who came tearing out of the apartment like he had seen the devil himself.

DUNLAVEY

Maybe he did.

RAMIS

You know something I don't?

DUNLAVEY

Yeah, Andre Campbell is not the killer. Son of a bitch, why didn't I see it before?

RAMIS

See what?

DUNLAVEY

When he attacked me on the street. He was warning me to stay away from her. Not this case. I was assaulted by a jealous, obsessive boyfriend, who was asserting himself because Roxy thought he was too soft for her taste.

RAMIS

So, who does that leave us with for a suspect?

DUNLAVEY

The devil himself.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY FIVE

INT-DUNLAVEY'S BLDG

Dunlavey walks up the stairwell to his building, a coffee in his hands. The camera follows him as he marches upward, to the stairwell door.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I was numb inside. There were no more tears to shed. There was no more pain to endure. I couldn't mourn either Roxy or Janice any deeper than I had mourned Myra. It would have been an insult. Dawn was a few hours away, and

the new day would hopefully bring a fresh perspective. I felt like sleeping for an eon.

The camera follows Dunlavey as he enters his floor.

He sees the stationed officer sleeping on his stool.

He offers his coffee to the sleeping policeman.

DUNLAVEY

(offering the coffee to the officer)

Hey, flatfoot. I think you can use this more than me.

The officer does not respond. Dunlavey rolls the officer's head back, and sees that the officer's eyes have been sewn shut. The officer is dead.

Dunlavey pulls his revolver and looks down the hallway.

Light emits from his apartment door.

Dunlavey slowly creeps up on the door. It is ajar. He nudges it open with the barrel of his gun.

He creeps in softly.

His apartment is a mess.

All over his walls, ancient symbols resembling runes have been scrawled in blood.

He enters the apartment slowly.

He backs toward the kitchenette, as the fabric of reality itself seems to fluctuate.

A dark cloud forms in his living room, and shapes begin to step out of it.

Dunlavey watches in horror as the dogfaced demon that had killed Janice and the bag lady is born from the dark mushroom cloud.

That horror elevates when ten or more of the same demons are spawned.

Soon, a dozen of the dog-faced demons face him.

Slowly, one by one, they begin to approach him.

They rotate by him, in a quiet, unholy procession.

Dunlavey trains his gun as each demon sways at him, baying in his face.

DUNLAVEY

One of you fuckers is the real deal, have I got that much right?

A demonic voice answers, though none of the demons opens their mouths.

KILLER

But which one, seer?

Dunlavey looks at the symbols on the wall.

DUNLAVEY

You used those symbols to take away my protection. Lower my defenses.

KILLER

Look at the symbols, Dunlavey. Don't you know them?

DUNLAVEY
Acadian?

KILLER
Very good.

Another demon dips toward Dunlavey and bays at him, then sways away.

Dunlavey does not know which one to shoot.

KILLER
What's the matter, seer? Don't want to waste your bullets? How many do you have? Six, is it?

DUNLAVEY
One is all I need.

Dunlavey glances down. The stray cat sits on the counter, staring up at him.

Another demon lunges at Dunlavey, and then it pulls away.

KILLER
I have waited a long time for this night, seer. I have enjoyed taking away what little happiness you have managed. I have enjoyed watching you twist and suffer. I have enjoyed hurting you in a way no one ever has. But now the game ends.

One of the demon apparitions looms toward Dunlavey.

The cat hisses.

Dunlavey takes that as a cue and fires his gun once into the demon.

The demon jerks back and falls to the floor.

The other apparitions blink out of existence.

Dunlavey looks at the cat.

The cat jumps from the counter and slowly walks out of the apartment.

Dunlavey approaches the demon cautiously, his gun trained on it.

He rolls it over on its back.

The demonic visage of the creature fades.

Underneath it is a simple novelty mask.

Dunlavey strips the mask off of the killer.

Gavin smiles weakly at Dunlavey, his breath labored.

Dunlavey grasps Gavin's right arm. He pulls off a phony looking demon glove, and stares at the hand.

The pinky is missing.

GAVIN

It was a small price to pay.

DUNLAVEY

Why?

GAVIN

Because I was a joke to you. I've practiced the dark arts since I was a teenager. I'm a walking arcane encyclopedia. I thought I could be your Watson. But no... you couldn't stomach sharing the spotlight with a fat

geek like me. So I decided to become your Moriarty instead.

DUNLAVEY

(tugs at the demon outfit)
How did you pull this off?

GAVIN

It's called a glimmer spell. Pulled it out of a book I found called the Grand Albert. It's used for Day of the Dead ceremonies. It gives its user the ability to appear as a spirit to the spirits. I had a feeling it would work on you.

Gavin grimaces, then smiles triumphantly at Dunlavey.

DUNLAVEY

Well, I'm impressed, you murdering psychopath. You got to me. Congratulations, I guess. A lot of good people had their guts spilled out for this little caper of yours.

GAVIN

This was going to be your biggest case. And your last. And I was going to be the sole survivor. The movie rights alone were going to make me rich and famous. The biggest problem was finding a villain to hang everything on. Then Andre entered the picture.

DUNLAVEY

And you found your patsy?

GAVIN

Tailor made. And he did most of the work for me. I've watched you for so long, that I knew every angle to play.

Dunlavey smirks, despite himself.

DUNLAVEY

You did this for your fifteen minutes. I should have guessed.

GAVIN

But you didn't. So, now you call the police and an ambulance and I go behind bars, plotting my revenge. It's not as cool as murdering the hero, but it will do.

Gavin struggles, hanging on to life. Suddenly, he coughs up blood.

Dunlavey peers down at Gavin.

DUNLAVEY

I don't think that's the ending fate has in mind, kid. But don't worry... I'll set it all straight in my memoirs. At least I won't have to cut you in on the deal.

Gavin stares at Dunlavey strangely. He knows his life is ebbing away.

Despite the pain and his imminent death, Gavin smiles.

GAVIN

See you soon, man.

Gavin's eyes bulge and he dies.

Dunlavey regards the body for a few seconds, and then he leaves his apartment.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY SIX

INT-BASEMENT

Dunlavey enters the basement of his building. He walks right over to the shelves of old boxes and tips the shelving over.

Boxes spill out on the basement floor.

Behind the shelves, there is a padlocked door.

Dunlavey picks a rusty hammer out of the debris on the basement floor.

He smashes the lock open.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY SEVEN

INT-THE HIDDEN ROOM

Dunlavey turns the overhead light on, illuminating the room.

Andre Campbell is strapped down on an operating table.

His mouth is taped shut.

Dunlavey feels Andre's neck for a pulse.

Andre stirs, but is too out of it to open his eyes.

He has been drugged.

Dunlavey scours the room.

He finds a huge bookshelf filled with black magic books.

He also finds medical journals.

He finds an array of surgical instruments and an embalming machine.

Dunlavey picks up what looks to be a diary from a small desk in the corner. He opens it and scans the pages.

Tacked on a wall are dozens of photos of Dunlavey on the streets of New York.

There are also pictures of Roxy and Janice.

Dunlavey sees a huge freezer.

He walks over to it.

He opens it and almost gags.

It is stuffed with human organs.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

It was a workshop of horrors. Gavin had planned to off me, then kill Andre and make it look like he had killed Andre in self-defense. He would have then stumbled out into the streets and led the police to this room. Gavin would have been the only surviving victim of the Dollmaker. The kid hadn't written down every pertinent detail, but his notes gave me the general gist.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY EIGHT

INT-STAIRWELL

Dunlavey drags Andre up the stairwell.

Andre sobs and leans against Dunlavey for support.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

When it was all said and done, Gavin would have had his book deal. The thought of him setting up foundations in my name and tearfully recalling our friendship on the talk show circuit was enough to make me puke.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTY NINE

EXT-DUNLAVEY'S BUILDING-DAWN

Police are all over Dunlavey's building.

Dunlavey sits on the steps of his building and sips a cup of coffee.

Two paramedics roll Andre toward an ambulance.

Andre sees Dunlavey and waves, weakly.

Dunlavey nods and manages a smile of encouragement.

As Andre is loaded into the ambulance, Dunlavey's smile disappears.

Ramis appears on the scene and sits next to Dunlavey.

Ramis looks up at the sunrise, admiring it silently with Dunlavey.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I watched the sunrise for the first time I could ever recall. I'm more the nocturnal type. I knew the obligatory pain and torment would eventually come. But for the moment, I was at peace. Saving Andre's life... any life... made the hell my existence was bearable. For the moment, at least. And as much as I hoped I had saved Andre for a reason, I couldn't help but imagine some deity high above me laughing his ass off.

CUT TO:

SCENE SIXTY

INT-BAR-NIGHT

Dunlavey sits at the bar. He sits alone, eyes downcast.

The bartender approaches him.

BARTENDER

How we doing down here?

DUNLAVEY

Just enjoying the company of my friends.

BARTENDER

(looking around, then waging Dunlavey is drunk)
Oooooookkaay. Well, you folks try to keep it down.

The bartender walks away. Dunlavey looks in the bar mirror.

He is surrounded by Roxy, Janice, Gavin, Myra, Falcon, Weiss and a dozen or so other ghosts. They all stare straight ahead into the mirror, their features ashen and emotionless.

Dunlavey raises a glass and smiles like a drunken loon.

DUNLAVEY
Here's to us.

CUT TO:

SCENE SIXTY ONE

INT-DUNLAVEY'S OFFICE-NIGHT

Dunlavey sits behind his desk.

White candles burn all around his office.

He takes a hungry drink of bourbon.

He pulls the revolver from his desk and loads a bullet into it.

He pauses.

He loads another bullet. And another. He puts five bullets into the gun and spins the barrel.

He puts the barrel into his mouth and pulls the trigger.

Nothing happens.

He sets the gun down and laughs like a maniac.

He then begins to cry. All of the pain comes out. He composes himself, and picks the gun back up.

He shakily puts the last bullet into the gun, and puts the barrel into his mouth.

Suddenly, a white light explodes in his office.

A beautiful angel appears to him, smiling radiantly. She floats in the air above his desk.

Dunlavey puts the gun down.

A small smile of hope crosses his lips.

The angel disappears.

Dunlavey stares into space for several seconds. He puts the gun away.

DUNLAVEY

(VO)

I guess I can see angels after all.

His phone rings.

Dunlavey answers it.

DUNLAVEY

Dunlavey Investigations.

CUT TO: BLACK

Roll credits

About The Author

Terry M. West is an American horror author. His best known works: What Price Gory, Transfer, Turning Face, Car Nex, and his Night Things series. He was a finalist for 2 International Horror Guild Awards and he was featured on the TV Guide Sci-Fi hot list for his YA graphic novel series, Confessions of a Teenage Vampire. Terry was born in Texas, lived in New York for two decades and he currently hangs his hat in California. He lives with his family: wife Regina, son Terrence, and three doggies. Terry is also a passionate horror collector. He has an entire room devoted to books, videos, comics, magazines, and all things Elvira, Mistress of the Dark and Night of the Living Dead. He is currently trying to complete his magazine run of the bronze age Vampirella title. www.terrymwest.com

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