

ONE COLD DARK DAY

BY

ANONYMOUS

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FADE IN:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Three large candles on a coffee table. Deep shadows.

Two pairs of legs, both sat down.

One pair shuffles, the opposite pair stays still.

DEEP MALE VOICE

You annoy me. Do people really pay
you to, you know... wind them up...
be all clever like?

SOFT MALE VOICE

My clients choose to come here.
Which makes me wonder. What would
you like to achieve from this
session?

The agitated legs cross, uncross.

DEEP MALE VOICE

Justice.

SOFT MALE VOICE

(pause)

Justice. Could you explain?

DEEP MALE VOICE

It's what I do now. Before I
thought I was no good, you know,
kept losing jobs, stuff. But then I
found my... talent.

SOFT MALE VOICE

Good. What would that be?

Candles flicker. Shadows twitch. The legs continue their
dance.

DEEP MALE VOICE

Since you asked politely. Well, I
kill the trash. You know, dealers,
pimps, them that deserve it. I help
clean society and in the process
I... feast. Yeah, feast.

A knock on the door. The legs stop moving.

DEEP MALE VOICE

Time for supper.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Dave... you in there?

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Single man's bedroom. Washing left on the floor.

The clock turns 8.00, the radio starts to play.

RADIO

And now the news. Another rape has occurred close to the University. It is the fourth serious attack in five weeks. With the recent spate of killings, police are appealing for the public to remain calm and stay vigilant. The police will not confirm whether they believe the attacks to be connected.

In the bed DAVE MEE, 30. He starts to move with a few grunts and groans. Not a morning person.

Slowly he stands, rubs his eyes.

An awkward looking man; skinny and pale with a patchy beard.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The kitchen lies at the rear of the property, away from the road and next to a small garden. Simple and bright; except for the overflowing bin.

Dave sits at the table having breakfast. He remembers something.

On the wall hangs a clipboard. It holds the appointment list for the day. A quick check shows a client at nine. Better get ready.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Brown trousers, cream shirt. A quick brush of the hair.

A phone RINGS back in the kitchen.

EXT. SUBURBAN DISTRICT, PAVEMENT - MORNING

Staring at a terraced house in a designer ski jacket is DAPHNE, 18. A tall girl with too much make up for any time of the day. Someone who has perfected the art of sneering.

Her breath forms a cloud in the cold air. She rubs her hands together.

With a sigh she walks up to the front door. Does she go in? The DRILLING from the nearby road works doesn't help.

Alongside the door bells, a name board. FLAT 1, DAVID MEE, COGNITIVE THERAPIST.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Dave's on the phone. The doorbell RINGS.

DAVE

Look, sorry, I have to go. A client's arrived. That's fine I can do six. Do you need directions... no... that's right... good. Yes, see you then.

He grabs a pen, writes on the clipboard and scampers off to the door.

He doesn't see the corner of the low book shelf. It catches his thigh.

Dave muffles a grimace but carries on to the door, nursing his leg.

INT. FRONT ROOM - MORNING

The front room faces the road and adjoins the communal entrance. The other flats upstairs.

The front room doubles up as his lounge and client suite. In one half a television with a small sofa facing; in the other a chair for Dave, two for clients.

Coffee table to the side.

Holding his thigh, Dave shuffles into the room.

DAVE

Please, come in. Sorry about the delay... enquiry to deal with.

Daphne follows, arms crossed. She looks around, studies the room. A look at the chair before sitting. Time for a sneer.

DAPHNE

Why do I have to come here?

DAVE

And not the University? Oh, I only work part time with students, private clients the rest. You found it OK?

DAPHNE

Yes. What with the attacks around here I'm surprised I wasn't stabbed. It's crazy.

Dave sits down opposite. Therapist's armchair.

DAVE

Yes, strange times. Now, they have referred you for six sessions. I understand you have considered leaving your course?

Daphne crosses her legs and looks casually around the room. She remains silent.

Dave waits... and waits.

DAPHNE

You know why I walked here alone? No? Well, nobody would join me. I asked around, everyone's busy. Fucking place.

DAVE

It's the end of your first term, right? How's it been?

DAPHNE

Didn't you get it? It just shows what I have to face. The hall, the course... fuckers.

Daphne shuffles in her chair. Dave remains still, just a tilt of the head.

DAVE

You have travelled a long way to be here. Why not stay at home?

DAPHNE

What?! Like spend my life at the spa or golf course, bitching about my friends and ignoring my kid.

Daphne looks away, stifles some tears. Dave waits.

DAPHNE

Came for the course. Child Speech Therapy. I just want it to work.

INT. FRONT ROOM - LATER

Session over, both stand. Daphne smiles for the first time.

DAPHNE

Thanks. You know what, I feel... lighter.

(pause)

Don't really want to give up, just need to chill, I suppose. Same time next week? Still got five.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Dave shuts the communal front door behind Daphne. He ponders, smiles in reflection.

The letter box and basket sit to the side. Post's arrived.

He collects his post, arranges the rest into piles.

INT. KITCHEN - LUNCH

Radio on, lunch on the table.

A KNOCK on his front door.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

In the doorway, KRYSTAL, 20, blonde hair, very attractive. She looks at her post, ignores Dave. He smiles at her, leans against the door frame.

DAVE
(Jovial)
Won some money?

KRYSTAL
What? Oh yeah... my lucky day.

DAVE
Problem to report or just fancy a coffee? I was just going to put the machine on?

Krystal looks at her letter with curiosity.

KRYSTAL
Humm... Oh, thanks but got a few things on.

She finishes reading. Time for the - I need something - smile.

KRYSTAL
I wish I could, you are the best with coffee. Really. Anyway, what with these attacks and so on, I need someone to take me to the student bar tonight.

DAVE
Oh, OK, sounds good, what time?

KRYSTAL
Yeah, won't take long. Just drop me off at the entrance, you'll be back in twenty minutes. Say seven.

DAVE

Oh, yeah sure. Best be safe.

Krystal places the palm of her hand on his chest. Part touchy, part pushing away.

KRYSTAL

You're the best landlord ever.
James is not reliable like you.
Always where I should be; the
library.

DAVE

Good place for students.

Krystal backs off and starts towards stairs.

KRYSTAL

Don't know about that. Always the
weird ones there at night. You
know... drink avoiders.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Dave slumps back down. Lunch no longer appeals.

RADIO

And now the weather. The cold snap
will remain tonight causing
widespread ice continuing into
tomorrow. What with the days
getting shorter this is going to be
one cold dark day...

He stands at the sink, stares out the window. Ice across the lawn.

INT. FRONT ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dave glances at the appointment sheet, next client three o'clock. A check of the watch, Two fifty nine.

The doorbell goes. He grins. Likes them on time.

INT. FRONT ROOM - AFTERNOON

He closes the door, client has gone. It's getting dark, time to switch the lights on.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

A filing cabinet sits in the corner. Inside everything neatly arranged. He returns a file.

Next client is NEW, Six o'clock. It's now just before five.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Bath run, time for a soak. His watch says 5.15.

As he relaxes the radio plays in the background.

All goes DARK.

The bathroom has no windows.

DAVE

What! Oh no.

Dave stands up, fumbles around, knocks over bottles. He steps out, slips.

In the darkness a THUD.

DAVE

Urrggh.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

In the vague light Dave gingerly feels his way. He kicks the door frame.

DAVE

Oww.

No sound from the radio. No light from outside.

Cupboards are opened, a search commences.

A MATCH ignites. Dave's eyes dart around the room.

More light, a larger flicker. On the kitchen table a large candle glows.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

In the air candles float.

Dave walks forward, a look of concentration. In his hands a tray of lit candles. He places them where useful.

As he does, shadows scatter along the corridor, across the walls.

A distant KNOCK on the communal front door. His watch reads 5.45.

DAVE

Damn.

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Dave moves the coffee table into the middle, places three candles in the centre. Just enough light to see each other.

Satisfied, he goes to the communal front door.

DAVE (O.S.)

Hi, I'm David and you must be my
six o'clock. Come in. Sorry about
the lights but--

CLIENT (O.S.)

(Deep voice)

Road works went through the local
supply. Everything is down. I don't
mind, quite like it.

From the hallway they enter the front room. Dave leads, the
client follows.

The client is huge. He wears a black leather coat, jeans and
army boots.

As the client sits, he places a ruck sack to the side.

DAVE

Well if you're happy with the
candles we'll carry on. Just need
some details--

CLIENT

Later.

Dave sits opposite, file open. He studies the client.

DAVE

OK. Lets do that later. So, how can
I help you?

The client looks around the room. Not interested in Dave.

CLIENT

Had this place long? Nice. Mind
you, too many students around here
for me. Wankers.

Dave looks on, concerned.

INT. FRONT ROOM - LATER

Dave remains seated but his legs are busy.

DAVE

I suppose what I am saying is that
we all have things we wish to
discuss. Something brought you here
tonight.

CLIENT

Talking never did me any good.
Always some clever Fuck wants to
get one over on you. You'll learn
that one day.

Dave starts to chew his lip.

INT. FRONT ROOM - LATER

Dave's legs continue to fidget.

CLIENT

I... feast. Yeah, feast.

A knock on the door. Dave stops twitching his legs.

CLIENT

Time for supper.

KRYSTAL (O.S.)

Dave you in there.

With horror Dave looks at the door. He doesn't notice the client is up. The client moves quickly at Dave with a long, vicious looking, knife.

Before Dave knows it, the knife is pressed under his chin.

CLIENT

(Quietly)

Take it slowly. We are going to the
door and you are going to bring her
in. OK?

Dave signals agreement. He gets up and they walk together, the client towering above him. Menacing.

CLIENT

(Quietly)

Don't be silly otherwise there will
be blood everywhere. Yours. Now
bring her in.

Dave opens the door. The client stands behind Dave, knife in his side, hand holding his back.

KRYSTAL

Remember? We said seven. Anyway
I've checked with my friend, campus
is fine, so... time for walkies.

Sweat drips down Dave's forehead.

DAVE

Come in will you. Just need to get
something.

He backs off to let her enter, she follows.

KRYSTAL

OK, but I need to get going... AHHH

The client pushes Dave down to the floor, out the way.

He grabs Krystal, puts the knife to her throat.

A finger to his mouth. Time to be quiet.

CLIENT

Nothing silly both of you. So, no shouting. That would make me angry.

They all back into the room.

CLIENT

(To Dave)

Open the sack and put the stuff on the table. The wrong move and this throat is opening.

Dave opens the rucksack.

On the table he places a hammer, screw driver, industrial tape and... a small rusted saw.

Metal on metal breaks the silence.

Krystal starts to hyperventilate. Dave shakes.

CLIENT

Break off some tape, bring it here.

The tape is put on Krystal's mouth, then her hands are bound. Dave has his hands bound but not his mouth.

The client sits them on the sofa.

CLIENT

Need you to talk for me again, don't I?

DAVE

Can I ask you something?

(Pause)

Why us? Why here?

CLIENT

Who said it was you? Mind you I think the world will be better without you both. She's just some prick teasing whore who plays you like a fiddle. I saw you. Pathetic.

(pause)

No. Bigger fish to fry.

The client goes to the window and from behind the curtain looks out into the darkness. All quiet.

Dave works on the tape around his hands.

DAVE

I do understand. I do. Life has been harsh. No one has taken you seriously, or seen what you can do. I can, that's my job. You have talent. But why us?

The client registers the comments. He continues to look out the window.

CLIENT

Don't give me that. You pretend to be all straight up and yet you rent your flat to a fucking rapist. You're the shrink. You know that.

DAVE

JAMES?!

Client turns to face him, across the room.

CLIENT

Yeah. Spotted him last night. Too late to stop it, but I followed him here. You've been looking after a sick fuck. You knew it all along.

Client turns back to the window.

CLIENT

(to himself)
Three in one. Bonus night.

Dave sits up shaking his head. Krystal squirms alongside him.

DAVE

No! I never knew, barely see him. Why don't you just call the police. You'd get recognition, maybe awards.

The client spots something. He closes the curtain a little and backs off into the room.

In the dark, a figure approaches the house.

Dave's hands are nearly free.

CLIENT

(To Dave)
You, get here. When he enters I want you to call him. Get him in here. Understand?

The client watches from behind the curtain, knife in hand.

Dave prepares to stand. Before he rises...

DAVE
(Whisper to Krystal)
When it starts, run for the
kitchen.

Dave stands and moves to face the door, his back to client.
The communal front door closes.

A jab in the ribs, time to shout.

DAVE
(Shouting)
James, hi there. I've got some
candles for you, let me just get
them. Come in, the door's open.

The door opens, slowly. No other sound.

A tall hooded figure enters, face hidden.

The client jumps out, pulls him in, stabs with the knife.

The figure falls behind a chair. A glint of light, the figure
has his own knife. The client attacks.

Krystal goes to run, falls and strikes her head on the coffee
table. A candle topples, wax runs towards her face. Trapped,
she watches in horror.

Seeing Krystal, Dave drops to the floor, tries to push the
table. Desperate, he picks up the hammer, starts swinging.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Shadows across the front window.

Out of the silence, distant SCREAMS.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The alarm clock flashes following the loss of power. The
radio plays.

RADIO
And now the news. Two people were
killed in an incident close to the
University last night. Two others
were seriously injured and taken to
hospital. Despite recent events the
police will not confirm whether the
killings are connected.

FADE OUT.