

A Night of Violence

Written by

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EXT. WINTERHAVEN, CALIFORNIA - NIGHT

There are no vehicles on the road, no public transit.

Absolutely no movement.

INT. THE COYOTE'S BITE - NIGHT

Neon beer signs and posters with scantily clad women don the walls.

Tables and chairs are piled up against the windows and front door.

Numerous MEN stand around, all of them armed with either GUNS or BLUNT WEAPONS.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

A CARGO VAN is parked curb side. The street is paved, but everything else is dirt. A lone streetlight illuminates the ground in a yellowish hue while the van is just outside of it's glow.

The only sounds are that of dogs barking and the occasional howl.

INT. CARGO VAN - NIGHT

MORRIS(30s) sits in the driver's seat. He wears a black suit with a white shirt underneath. There is a GUN with a SUPPRESSOR on his lap.

JOE(30s) sits in the passenger seat. He's dressed similarly.

Joe catches a glimpse of a CAR approaching from behind.

JOE

Great.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

ROB VALDEZ(30s), exits the car with a shotgun in one hand and flashlight in the other. He limps toward the truck while frantically pointing the flashlight all around him.

INT. CARGO VAN - NIGHT

Morris has his gun in hand.

MORRIS
Don't get jumpy.

Rob stumbles to the window with a worried look on his face.

ROB
Good, you're armed. Who are you and
what are you doing out here?

Morris notices blood covering Rob's jeans.

MORRIS
I'm armed because you came up
behind us with a goddamn shotgun in
your hand.

Rob looks down the road and is startled. He hobbles back to his car.

Morris and Joe both stare into their side-view mirrors and watch Rob pull away.

JOE
What in the hell was that?

MORRIS
Wonder what spooked him?

JOE
We can go look?

Morris checks his watch.

MORRIS
We can look.

Morris starts up the van and drives down the street.

INT. CARGO VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

All of the houses have their lights turned off.

He slams on his brakes as TWO MEN run across the street. They're SHOOTING in the direction they run.

JOE
I don't like this.

MORRIS
Well no shit. Armed maniacs running
through the damn streets.

Morris drives down the main street through town, to Highway 8.

EXT. HIGHWAY 8 - NIGHT

A TRACTOR-TRAILER blocks both lanes of the highway.

Next to that are TWO TRUCKS, each with THREE MEN in the beds. They carry rifles and flashlights and wear hunting fatigues with bright orange hats and vests.

They're waving the lights toward Morris and Joe.

JOE

Oh come on!

MORRIS

Calm. Don't want to give these people any reason.

They pull off to the side of the road and exit.

A sheriff's cruiser roars down Highway 8. It's blue/red lights are on but no siren.

JOE

Could this possibly get any stranger?

MORRIS

Toss em.

Morris and Joe toss their guns in some shrubs near the road.

The cruiser stops just feet from them.

SHERIFF JASON STERNS (50s), a paunchy, dark skinned man exits the cruiser. He wears a cowboy hat tilted down to his eyes.

He walks directly to Morris and Joe's pistols and picks them up. He looks at them for a moment, then approaches.

SHERIFF STERNS

State your business.

A beat.

SHERIFF STERNS (cont'd)

Alright then, how long you been in town?

MORRIS

Since this afternoon.

SHERIFF STERNS
I take it ya'll never been to
Winterhaven this time'a year.

Morris and Joe give each other a confused look.

JOE
Nope, can't say we've been here
before.

Sterns returns the guns to Morris and Joe.

SHERIFF STERNS
Well, you're here, so you'll be
needin' these.

They stand confused, tuck the guns in their waists.

MORRIS
We're trying to leave.

SHERIFF STERNS
At sun down, no one leaves.

The men in the beds of the trucks yell and then fire into
the desert.

Morris and Joe duck behind their van.

Sterns runs toward the trucks.

A HORSE neighs somewhere from behind the van.

JOE
Is that a fuckin' horse!?

A COWBOY on horseback gallops from behind the van. He has a
Winchester Repeater rifle in his hand.

He dismounts, doesn't see Morris and Joe. A PISTOL hangs
from his hip and a strap of ammo around his body. His spurs
jingle with each step.

MORRIS
(quietly)
You seein' this?

The cowboy hears Morris, turns around.

Sterns lets out a loud whistle, the type to call a dog.

The cowboy drops the Winchester, turns to Sterns, who stands
as if ready to draw.

They're about 10 paces from each other.

A beat.

DRAW

Sterns quickly lifts his Colt Peacemaker from it's holster and fires.

The cowboy does the same, but misses and hits one of the trucks.

He crumples to the asphalt.

Sterns spins the gun around his finger before holstering.

Morris picks up the Winchester.

MORRIS (cont'd)

This has to be over 100 years old.
But It's damn near perfect.

JOE

Look at his eyes.

The eyes of the cowboy are bright white, no iris or pupil.

MAN IN TRUCK (O.S.)

Got a couple more over here!

The men in the trucks fire into the darkness. The fire is returned by numerous silhouettes about 50 yards from the highway.

All of the men in the trucks are shot dead.

SHERIFF STERNS

Get in!

Morris, Joe and Sterns run to the cruiser and get in.

Sterns stomps on the gas and flies toward town.

INT. SHERIFF CRUISER - MOVING - NIGHT

Sterns drives fast and erratic.

MORRIS

What in the hell is going on here?

Joe is in the back, holds on for dear life.

SHERIFF STERNS
These are hallowed grounds!

JOE
What are you talkin' about?!

SHERIFF STERNS
It's the cowboys. Every year about
this time they come back and try to
retake Winterhaven.

MORRIS
Come back?!

SHERIFF STERNS
Your guess is as good as mine.
Don't know how, but come sunset
they show up. Then gone by sunrise.

Referring to the Winchester Repeater.

MORRIS
Hold on! You're tellin' me this
rifle is from the 1800's?

Sterns grabs it and looks it quickly looks it over.

SHERIFF STERNS
That there is the 1873, worth a
lotta money. Be careful with that
one...Oh damn!

Another cowboy stands in the middle of the road.

Sterns runs him down and the cruiser bounces as the body
passes under the tires.

JOE
This is absolutely absurd.

SHERIFF STERNS
Absurd or not. You boys are in the
middle of it now!

INT. THE COYOTE'S BITE - NIGHT

LUCY VALDEZ(30s), Rob's wife, tends to Rob's wounds. She
wraps white bandages around his midsection.

DEPUTY RONALD COCHRAN(20s), stands guard near the back door.

Footsteps from the other side of the door, Cochran draws his
gun and points toward it.

Sterns walks in, Morris and Joe follow.

Cochran lowers his gun.

DEPUTY COCHRAN
Jesus Christ, Sheriff. Sorry about
that.

SHERIFF STERNS
No need to apologize, son. Found a
coupl'a stragglers. Morris, Joe,
this is my deputy, Cochran.

They all shake hands.

Joe makes a B-line toward the bar.

MORRIS
Enough with the pleasantries. You
want us to help, you tell us what
you know.

SHERIFF STERNS
I'll tell you what I've
experienced. It ain't always the
same.

MORRIS
Whatever it is, tell me.

SHERIFF STERNS
Alright, come on.

They walk toward the bar where Joe takes a couple of shots.

SHERIFF STERNS (cont'd)
(to Joe)
Might wanna stay level-headed
tonight.

JOE
Just taking the edge off.

SHERIFF STERNS
Like I said, happens every year
around this time. Not always the
same day, not even the same month.
But come summer, we're on high
alert 'round here. The one constant
is that from sundown to sunrise,
the cowboys who died in these parts
try to take back what they think is
theirs. Hell, sometimes they shoot
each other!

JOE

Everyone here is just alright with that? People don't leave?

SHERIFF STERNS

Of course some do. But look around, 'round here we have hard workin' folk, but not everyone can just up and leave.

MORRIS

What about you? You're still here.

SHERIFF STERNS

I have an obligation to this town. As long as I'm Sheriff, I'll be protectin' my citizens.

MORRIS

You're a better man than me.

SHERIFF STERNS

Don't think I don't know why you're here. Couple city boys dressed the way you are, carrying matching weapons and suppressors. Whatever your business may be, come day light I suggest ya'll leave.

JOE

Leave? Just like that?

SHERIFF STERNS

I'll make a deal with ya. Lend a hand tonight and I won't pursue you further, have my word.

Morris and Joe look at each other before Morris extends his hand to Sheriff Sterns.

MORRIS

Deal.

Sterns squeezes Morris' hand hard, doesn't let go.

SHERIFF STERNS

But you do what I say, when I say.

Morris pulls away and nods - yes.

Joe takes another shot.

MORRIS
(to Joe)
Enough, stay sharp.

Three hard knocks at the front door.

DEPUTY COCHRAN
Sheriff! Little help!

Sterns, Cochran and some other men rush to remove blockade.

The knocks continue.

Enough has been cleared to open the door.

In walks a MAN that wears a long, gray coat with matching Derby hat.

The entire room is still and silent.

The man is older, with a mustache that stretches past his chin. There is a sheriff's star on his lapel.

MAN
Name is Ben Daniels, sheriff, Yuma
Territory. I'm here to help.

Before anyone can react, an ARROW pierces into the open front door.

Sheriff Ben Daniels turn around and looks at the arrow.

BEN DANIELS
You'll need it.

FADE OUT.