

Driven to Death
By
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FADE IN:

INT. TAXI - DAY

GAVIN ASTAIRE (47), botoxed forehead, tailored suit, shuts the door and spreads out on the back seat. The noises from the street cut out completely.

GAVIN

Wow.

A perspex security screen separates him from, PNEUMA (37), the driver, whose dark eyes peer into the rear view mirror.

PNEUMA

Soundproofing.

Gavin is taken aback as Pneuma's voice emanates from a speaker wired into the ceiling.

GAVIN

Can't have too much security. The Rose Garden apartments, please.

As they drive, Pneuma casts occasional glances into the rear view mirror, watching as Gavin quietly celebrates.

PNEUMA

Good day?

Gavin can barely contain his excitement.

GAVIN

Oh yes, it's a good day.

Gavin deliberately shakes out his jacket sleeve - shows off an extravagant Rolex.

GAVIN

So good there's going to be a hefty tip in this for you.

PNEUMA

You a lawyer?

Gavin laughs at the absurd notion.

GAVIN

No, no. It was a corporate thing.

Wanting to avoid talking about it, Gavin looks out of his side window - but still can't contain that victory grin.

PNEUMA

Thought I recognized you. The
Astaire Drainage case, right?

The smile disappears quick and Gavin drills a stare into the
back of Pneuma's neck.

PNEUMA

I was reading about it in some
paper or other this morning.

GAVIN

Which one?

PNEUMA

Local publication I think. A
customer left it in the back there.

GAVIN

You got it?
(off Pneuma's questioning
look)
The paper?

PNEUMA

I... sorry, threw it.

GAVIN

What did it say?

PNEUMA

It had a picture of you.

GAVIN

And?

PNEUMA

Said somebody died.

Gavin's eyes narrow suspiciously.

GAVIN

This some kind of set up?

Pneuma points to his taxi driver identification badge.

GAVIN

Yeah, well I'm not taking too
kindly to your questioning. So, if
you wouldn't mind shutting the fuck
up, that would be great.

Pneuma shrugs and drives in silence.

Gavin's phone rings and he answers it.

GAVIN

(chuckles)

Get that shit on ice! I'm about twenty minutes away... Completely absolved... Yeah, yeah... Well, y'know, accidents happen. Kid should've had more common sense. If anyone, it's the parents that should be up there for not instilling that shit in him... Yeah, well, fifty big ones, meh. They can have it. People like that wouldn't know what the fuck to do with it anyway... What? ... Oh yeah, me too. Bye.

Gavin hangs up.

PNEUMA

Fifty thousand sounds kinda cheap for a young guy's life.

GAVIN

Didn't I already tell you to shut the fuck up?

PNEUMA

I'm not one of your employees, Mr Astaire.

GAVIN

News flash, moron. While I'm in this cab, you're my employee... and who the fuck gave you the right to use my name, Mr Knows-fuck-all?

Gavin stares into the rear view mirror.

GAVIN

Well that's fucked your tip, pal.

PNEUMA

I'm not interested in your money.

GAVIN

I don't give a fuck what you're interested in. Your opinion matters not even the smallest fucking fuck. Are we clear on that?

Pneuma ignores him.

GAVIN
Did you fucking hear me?

PNEUMA
My opinion doesn't matter.

GAVIN
No, but your acknowledgement does,
smart ass prick.

Gavin looks out of the window and frowns.

GAVIN
Do you even know where the fuck
you're going? I'm telling you,
you've made a great day more
miserable.

PNEUMA
What about the dead kid's family?
Think they have champagne on ice?

GAVIN
Probably, yeah. Fifty big ones
coming their way, why the fuck not.
They can pretend they're rich
for... what, two months? Six, even?

Gavin jolts back as the cab accelerates. He looks out of the window and frowns.

GAVIN
This is the wrong way.

Gavin bangs on the perspex security screen.

GAVIN
Hey.

Trees flash by either side as daylight fades.

PNEUMA
Can you imagine what went through
his mind as he lay there, slowly
dying, nobody around to hear his
agonized screaming?

GAVIN
Well this is elaborate. What are
you? A private investigator for the
family or something?

Pneuma meets Gavin's eye in the rear view.

PNEUMA
Or something.

Gavin swallows his fear.

GAVIN
Right, well, I don't have anything
to say to you. So you can switch
off your little recorders and turn
us around.

Gavin looks around the cab, spots the camera, peers into it.

PNEUMA
It's not recording. It's a live
stream.

GAVIN
What's that? A live stream?
(thinks)
To where?

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A middle-aged COUPLE sit on a threadbare couch in front of a
PC that is streaming live images from inside the taxi.

On the wall, a newspaper article, with the headline:

ASTAIRE DRAINAGE TO ANSWER CHARGES IN POISON TUNNEL CASE.

She flinches into her husband's embrace as Gavin peers at
them through the screen. Husband rubs her shoulder, soothing
her, but not enough to stop her tears.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Gavin gives the camera the finger.

PNEUMA
You declassified that tunnel from
being a confined space, then sent
that boy down there to die.

GAVIN
(looks into camera)
That's a lie.

PNEUMA
You destroyed evidence, bribed
officials and witnesses.

GAVIN
Completely wrong.

PNEUMA
If the truth were known then you'd
spend a very long time in prison.

GAVIN
Bullshit.

PNEUMA
You cut corners and somebody died.

GAVIN
Whatever, dickhead. You think I
don't know what's going on here?
You want me to admit liability.
(snorts derisively)
Never going to happen.

Gavin pulls out his phone and speaks into it.

GAVIN
Call the police.

Pneuma presses a button on a black box resting on the
passenger seat.

SIRI (VO)
Calling the emergency services in
five seconds, OK?

Gavin waits.

SIRI (VO)
Calling the emergency services.

PNEUMA
Your phone will not work.

Pneuma shows him the black box.

Gavin notices the signal strength of his phone at zero.

GAVIN
What the fuck?

The cab stops in a secluded car park surrounded by woods.

PNEUMA
They want you to know that when the
case first got to court, the family
believed that justice would

PNEUMA
prevail, that you would pay for
taking their boy's life.

Gavin tries the door, but it's locked. He hits the window,
hurts his hand.

GAVIN
So, what? They want more money?
Fifty K not enough?

PNEUMA
If you look underneath your seat
you'll notice there is a vent.

Gavin frowns and looks under the seat.

PNEUMA
Every agony that he suffered, so
will you.

Gavin tries the electric windows. Nothing.

GAVIN
You're not serious?

Pneuma climbs out of the taxi and shuts the door.

Gavin watches him walk away, bangs on the windows and then a
hissing from underneath the seat panics him. He hammers on
the glass harder and harder.

GAVIN
Let me out. I'll give you whatever
you want. Please, please don't do
this. Please.

Gavin breaks down, sobs and tries to stop the gas pouring
through the vent with his hand.

He holds his breath.

Eventually he breathes in with a defeated sob. He clutches
at his stomach as a greenish red fluid bleeds from his eyes.

GAVIN
(into camera)
Please... please stop this.

He coughs and coughs and coughs... then vomits his stomach
lining over the seat.

GAVIN
Yeah, well fuck you. Fuck, fucking
you! When I get out --

He claws at the windows and breaks the bones in his hands
trying to smash the glass.

His breathing labors and he loses consciousness.

The rear door opens and Gavin is dragged out.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Gavin regains consciousness to find Pneuma standing over
him. A camera on a tripod records. A red provides the light.

PNEUMA
Now you know what it was like.

Coughing, wheezing and occasionally lurching in pain, Gavin
notices a spade and shallow grave a short distance away.

PNEUMA
But the family didn't want you to
die like that.

Pneuma lifts the spade over his head then brings it down
hard, smashing Gavin's face.

Gavin whimpers a muffled scream, then chokes as teeth fall
down his throat.

Pneuma drives the edge of the spade into Gavin's neck then
stamps on it, like digging into hard dirt, decapitates him.

Pneuma holds the head in front of the camera for a few
seconds, then switches it off.

FADE OUT.