

FILTHY ANIMAL

Written by

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FADE IN:

OPEN ON:

A small pile of dog excrement on the carpet.

FOOTSTEPS approach from O.S. Then stop.

DWIGHT (O.S.)
Aw, Christ, you gotta be fucking
kidding me.

A PAIR of FEET stomp into view in dirty work boots. Stopping
at the mess on the floor.

DWIGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(mutters)
God damn mutt.

Floor-level 360 degree view of the room as the FEET turn and
pivot. DWIGHT, his identity not yet revealed, looking around.

DWIGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Alright, ya little shit, where the
fuck are ya?

We follow DWIGHT'S BOOTS as he searches around --

He stops for a moment.

DWIGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There you are.

Marches faster, to the --

END OF A HALLWAY

Where a frightened PIT BULL trembles, whimpering. Cornered.
Afraid to look up at his owner. His body emaciated. Bald
spots splotching his thinning coat. Nose reddened.

The PIT BULL slowly looks up at his owner.

PIT BULL POV --

DWIGHT CHURCHWOOD (late 30s, pointy, angular facial features,
menacing eyes) glowers down at him with bad intentions.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
You filthy. Fucking. Animal.

Raises his boot into the air and stomps down hard --

CUT TO BLACK:

The PIT BULL lets out an agonizing YELP.

FADE IN:

EXT. WHITE VAN (MOVING) - STREET - DAY

Unmarked. No windows in the back.

The vehicle cruises through an upper-middle class suburban neighborhood. All houses with big yards and driveways.

INT. WHITE VAN (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

J.W. FRITZINGER (mid 30s - black suit and tie, strong build and chiseled jaw) navigates, lighting a cigarette.

A thick cloud of smoke pours from his mouth as his mysterious, piercing eyes scope the area.

He zeroes in on one house in particular.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The WHITE VAN pulls over at the curb and parks right next to a mailbox at the end of a walkway.

The mailbox bears the address and reads -- *D. CHURCHWOOD.*

INT. WHITE VAN (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Fritzinger kills the engine.

Takes a puff from his cigarette while gazing out his window vigilantly. Focused and determined. Smoke pouring hypnotically from his mouth.

WOMAN JOGGER (V.O.)

Poor dog...

EXT. DWIGHT CHURCHWOOD RESIDENCE - YARD - MOMENTS LATER

A modest little one-story home with a large, fence-enclosed yard. The grass tall. As if it hadn't been tended to in a very long time.

The PIT BULL lies sadly at the center of the yard, chained to a tree. In bad shape. Ribs showing. Defeated expression.

Just outside the fence --

SIDEWALK

Fritzinger and a WOMAN JOGGER (late 20s, in track gear and running shoes) stare at the PIT BULL. Fritzinger still puffing away on his cigarette.

WOMAN JOGGER

I run past here twice a day. And he's always here, tied up to that tree.

Fritzinger never takes his eyes off the dog.

FRITZINGER

You speak to the owner at all?

WOMAN JOGGER

No. Not even sure if anybody lives there. I'd ring the bell but...

He nods.

FRITZINGER

I assure you, whoever occupies that house won't be receiving any awards for politeness anytime soon.

Fritzinger takes one last puff, drops his cigarette and stomps out the cherry. Staring at PIT BULL with silent rage.

FRITZINGER (CONT'D)

Well. Thanks for calling.

WOMAN JOGGER

Need me for anything else?

FRITZINGER

Nope.

He climbs over the fence, ignoring a sign -- *PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO TRESPASSING.*

She glances at the WHITE VAN, back to Fritzinger. Perplexed.

WOMAN JOGGER

There's... nobody with you?

YARD

He clears the fence, feet touching grass.

FRITZINGER
I work alone.

Focuses on the PIT BULL as she looks on from the opposite side of the fence.

FRITZINGER (CONT'D)
Have a nice day.

She reluctantly jogs off as he --

Slowly approaches the dog. Carefully.

The PIT BULL BARKS wildly, trying to break free from his chains. Ready to attack.

But Fritzingler keeps forward.

FRITZINGER (CONT'D)
Easy, fella, easy...

PIT BULL cowers against the tree, trembling in fear but still BARKING wildly.

Fritzingler tiptoes closer, gradually gaining the dog's trust. Soon, the BARKING stops.

PIT BULL ceases trembling as Fritzingler reaches arm's length.

Fritzingler crouches down and reaches out his hand -- PIT BULL reluctantly sniffs it. Licks his fingers.

He gently pets the dog's head.

FRITZINGER (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's a good boy. Gooood boy...
(beat)
I'm gonna get you outta here, I promise. No more bullshit.

He gently inspects the dog, checking his teeth and coat. A fresh wound around its neck from the rusty chain. Fleas and hot spots all over.

FRITZINGER (CONT'D)
Who did this to you, huh?

In the background --

Dwight watches from his door, gripping a baseball bat.

DWIGHT
Can I help you?

Fritzinger rises, turns. Brushes off his hands as he approaches Dwight. Eyeing the bat.

FRITZINGER
That for me or the dog?

DWIGHT
In case you missed it, there's a sign that says, no trespassing. I suggest you state your business or get the fuck off my property.

FRITZINGER
You must be Dwight.

Dwight lifts his bat slightly -- Fritzinger stops.

DWIGHT
State. Your. Business.

FRITZINGER
(grins)
My name is J.W. Fritzinger. I'm from animal control.

Dwight sizes him up.

DWIGHT
Nice uniform.

Eyes the unmarked WHITE VAN at the curb. Back to Fritzinger.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Got some identification?

Fritzinger opens his jacket, flashes a pistol in his waist.

FRITZINGER
Good enough?

Dwight takes a step back, lowering his bat.

DWIGHT
Who the fuck are you?

FRITZINGER
That your dog over there?

DWIGHT
(shakes his head)
It's my ex-wife's.

FRITZINGER
And where's your ex-wife?

DWIGHT
(shrugs)
Wherever ex-wives go.

Eyes the pistol in Fritzinger's waist.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
What do you want?

FRITZINGER
I'm here for the dog.

DWIGHT
Fine. Take him. Just get the fuck
off my property.

FRITZINGER
(smiles)
I think you misunderstood.

Takes a step forward. Dwight takes another step back.

Fritzinger points to the baseball bat.

FRITZINGER (CONT'D)
Mind if I see that?

DWIGHT
You can see it fine from there.

FRITZINGER
C'mon. Gimme the bat. Just for a
second. I'll give it right back.

Dwight eyes the pistol. Sighs in defeat. Hands it to him and immediately stands back.

Fritzinger inspects the bat, looks up at Dwight.

FRITZINGER (CONT'D)
You beat your ex-wife, too? That
why she left you?

DWIGHT
(eyeing the bat)
Never laid a finger on her.

FRITZINGER

I see.

DWIGHT

I would never hit a woman. But that thing over there? It's just a dog. I don't see what the big deal is.

Fritzinger seethes with rage, gripping the bat tightly, knuckles turning white...

FRITZINGER

We're all something... aren't we?

Tense silence. Until...

He eases his grip on the bat. Hands the it back to Dwight, who reluctantly accepts it.

DWIGHT

We done here?

Fritzinger quickly draws his pistol and POP! Shoots Dwight in the face.

CUT TO BLACK:

OPEN ON:

EYES fluttering open. Glazed over. Barely conscious.

Dwight comes to, his VISION BLURRED. Lying on tall grass, cheek mashed against the ground.

He blinks his eyes again. Slowly lifts his cheek from the ground, a grotesque gunshot wound to his jaw. Blades of grass stuck to the dried blood on his face.

He hoists himself up on all fours, moving gingerly. Plops to his rear. Looks around, bewildered. Dazed.

DWIGHT

(murmurs)

Where the fuck... ?

Realizes that he's in --

EXT. DWIGHT'S YARD - NIGHT

Panic hits him like a bucket of water.

He rises to his feet, moves forward. But a rusty chain around his neck yanks him back, disrupts his momentum, keeping him stationary.

DWIGHT
What the fuck?!!!

Writhing in pain, he dabs at his jaw wound. Winces.

Looks to his house -- lights on in the windows. Suddenly, the lights shut off.

He tries to break free, digging his fingers under his rusty chain collar, jerking forward. But no dice.

Dwight desperately surveys the area, panting.

His speech impaired from the wound:

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Help! Somebody help me!

His calls go unanswered. Until...

WOMAN JOGGER runs past. But stops, back pedals. Jogging in place while staring sadly at the dog.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Thank God...

Pulls on his chain, short on breath.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
(exhausted)
Please... help me...

She shakes her head in pity.

WOMAN JOGGER
You poor thing.

Reaches into her tracksuit pocket, tosses SOMETHING over the fence --

A half-eaten bagel lands on the grass, near Dwight.

He looks at it, puzzled.

DWIGHT
The fuck is this?

Looks up at WOMAN JOGGER, incredulous.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
 Listen to me, some maniac tied me
 up here, I need you to call the
 police --

She jogs off.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
 Hey! What are you doing?! Come
 back! Get me outta here!

Frantically tries to break free, jerking his neck forward,
 the rusty chains scraping his neck. Drawing blood.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
 GET ME OUTTA HERE!!!

EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - DAY

He wakes up lying in fetal position, against the tree. The
 sun bright in his eyes.

A TRIO of YOUNG TEENAGED BOYS on their bikes stare at him
 from the other side of the fence.

Dwight sits up. Stares back.

DWIGHT
 A little help here?

The BOYS exchange a glance. Stare back at Dwight.

TEENAGED BOY #1
 What an ugly dog.

DWIGHT
 What?

He crawls forward.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
 What, are you kids blind or just
 stupid? I need help, here. Now do
 me a favor and get your parents --

One of the TEENAGED BOYS chucks a rock at him, bopping him in
 the forehead.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
 Ow!

All of them start pegging him with rocks.

Dwight quickly crawls away, hiding behind the tree.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
You little cocksuckers!

The TEENAGED BOYS ride off laughing.

Dwight crawls out from behind the tree. Grimaces as he caresses his forehead.

A CAR drives past -- Dwight jumps up, waves.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Hey!

It disappears down the street.

Another CAR passes, ignores him. And another. And another.

Dwight lies down, exhausted. Looks up, sees the half-eaten bagel on the grass nearby.

THE SKY

DAY becomes NIGHT. NIGHT becomes DAY. Again and again, flashing by faster and faster until --

EXT. DWIGHT'S YARD - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Getting dark out, the sun setting. It looks like it's been raining. Puddles everywhere. Mud.

Dwight, his wounds scabbed over, sits over the half-eaten bagel on the ground. Now soggy and covered in mold.

He hesitates, grimacing in disgust. But his stomach growls.

Uses his finger tips to pick up the bagel. Slowly sinks his teeth into it -- gags.

DWIGHT
Ugh...

He forces himself to finish it off -- but vomits.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Oh, God...

Immediately crawls to a rain puddle, buries his face into it, slurping up filthy water and spitting it out.

He catches something from the corner of his eye, looks up --

A MALE and FEMALE (early 30s) stare at him from the other side of the fence, concerned. Their T-shirts read -- *ANIMAL RESCUE SQUAD*.

Lifts his face from the puddle, embarrassed.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Let me explain.

They scale the fence. Cautiously approach him.

He reads their T-shirts.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Aw, Christ, you fucking people?

FEMALE ANIMAL RESCUER
It's okay, boy, we're gonna get you outta here...

DWIGHT
Boy? Look at me! I'm a grown fucking man!

MALE ANIMAL RESCUER
He's a little aggressive.
(to Dwight)
Easy, doggie... nice and easy...

DWIGHT
I'm not a God damn animal! What the fuck is wrong with everybody!

He lunges at them.

Both ANIMAL RESCUERS jump back. Remaining cautious.

FEMALE ANIMAL RESCUER
Calm down, boy, we're only here to help...

DWIGHT
Fine! Then help!

He calms a bit, catching his breath.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
(defeated)
Just get me outta here.

Dwight allows them to approach.

FEMALE ANIMAL RESCUER pets his head, hushes him.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Really?

MALE ANIMAL RESCUER carefully unlatches his chain --

Dwight bolts off and hops the fence, the ANIMAL RESCUERS chasing after him.

He dashes out into the street, turns just as --

WHAM! A screeching SEDAN nails him. Everything TURNS DARK.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

SUPER: Two Weeks Later...

A cacophony of scattered BARKING echoing throughout.

An EMPLOYEE escorts a COUPLE and CHILD down a narrow aisle lined with rows upon rows of Plexiglas-enclosed cages. Each of them occupied with dogs of all breeds.

In one of them --

PLEXIGLAS CAGE

Dwight sits naked, leaned against the wall. His body tattered with bruises and marks. A cone around his neck. Piles of feces everywhere.

He tries to itch at his neck scab. Jaw wound healed but scarred.

The COUPLE and CHILD stop at his cage and stare down at him.

Dwight peers up at them, lackadaisical.

The FATHER shakes his head.

FATHER

Ugh.

EMPLOYEE

This one's a high priority. If he doesn't find a home by tomorrow, we have to put him down.

WIFE

Awww... poor thing.

DWIGHT

(suddenly alert)

What?

CHILD

He's ugly.

WIFE

Do they have to put him down?

EMPLOYEE

Unfortunately.

FATHER

Ah, honey, it's just a dog.

The COUPLE and CHILD move on, disappearing O.S. EMPLOYEE remains there, gazing down at Dwight sadly.

DWIGHT

What the fuck do you mean, put me down? You can't just... kill me off! You hear me!

EMPLOYEE

I'm sorry, boy. We tried.

Dwight frantically smacks away at the Plexiglas.

DWIGHT

Fuck you, man! Fuck you!

EMPLOYEE'S POV -- Dwight moves his mouth, but only BARKING comes out.

Employee shakes his head, walks away.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Come back here, you motherfucker!

He falls to tears, sobbing hysterically.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

(softly)

You can't kill me... aren't you listening to me? You can't kill me.

Leans his face against the Plexiglas.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

I'm not a fucking animal!!!

His desperate cries ECHO as we...

CUT TO BLACK:

A long, deafening silence. Until...

FADE IN:

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - PLEXIGLAS CAGE - THE NEXT DAY

Dwight twitches in his sleep. Whimpering. Having a bad dream.

He jolts awake, screaming. Breathing heavily as he sees his cage wide open.

EMPLOYEE stands out in the hallway.

DWIGHT
No. Please. No!!!

Cowers in the corner, trembling.

EMPLOYEE
It's okay, buddy. We found you a home just in the nick of time.

Dwight stops trembling. Looks up at EMPLOYEE, skeptical.

ANGELA (mid 30s, attractive) emerges, smiling down at him.

Dwight cocks an eye at her.

DWIGHT
Angela? What... what are you... ?

Angela crouches down, pats her knees and makes kissing noises.

ANGELA
Come here...

He perks up. But is still reluctant.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Come on, baby...

Dwight looks to EMPLOYEE for approval. Then up at Angela waving him over, warm smile on her face.

He laughs excitedly and bolts out of his confinement --

AISLE

And hugs her legs tightly, tears of joy.

DWIGHT
Thank you! Thank you so much, baby!
I knew you'd come back! I knew it!

She pats the top of his head as he hops up and down and kisses her.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... I'm so sorry... for everything...

ANGELA
There, there, Dwight. There, there.

INT. ANGELA'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY - LATER

In the --

BACKSEAT

Dwight sits crammed inside of a doggie crate, deadpan expression.

DWIGHT
Is this really necessary?

Angela, behind the wheel, glances back at him. Turns back to the road ahead.

ANGELA
You always liked to fight, Dwight.

Dwight raises his eyebrow.

DWIGHT
Did I not apologize?

ANGELA
Sorry doesn't fix things.

She looks back again.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
We're gonna see how much fight you have left in you.

Faces the road.

Long, ominous silence.

DWIGHT
Baby? What did you mean by that?

INT. UNDERGROUND DEN - MOMENTS LATER

A musty, dimly lit basement. A SPOTLIGHT shines at the center, EXCITED SPECTATORS circled around a clearing. Hooting and hollering, waving cash.

Dwight remains crammed inside of his doggie crate.

DWIGHT

Angela? Where are we?

DWIGHT'S POV -- Angela crouches down, smiles at him through the crate's metal cage.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

What the fuck is this?!!!

She opens the cage.

Dwight falls out of it, onto all fours. He looks up at --

A growling PIT BULL across the room, held back by a leash. Teeth showing. Staring directly at Dwight. The same PIT BULL he once owned. Now fully recovered. Healthy.

Holding the leash -- Fritzingler.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

Fritzingler grins. Unleashes the PIT BULL, who immediately rushes Dwight, closing in quickly --

CUT TO BLACK:

The sounds of screaming. THRASHING and GROWLING. People cheering.

THE END