

The Bunny Man Untold

FADE IN:

EXT. SHACK - DAY

A white bearded man, RUSTY(65), sits in a battered camp chair. His home is a tiny old shack at the end of the street. Its neat, with a flower bed on one side.

Rusty is intent on an iPad on his lap. He frowns, mouths a curse, reaches for his beer can which rests beside him on an weathered ice box.

SUPER - CLIFTON VIRGINIA USA

SUPER - OCTOBER 31 2015

A Ford Explorer makes it way down the street, past well-kept homes, rolls to a stop in front of Rusty's place.

The driver, LUCAS(25) peers out before checking the address. He nods, gets out of the vehicle. He's dressed in casual but neat gear.

LUCAS

Ah...Mr Borland? I'm Lucas Stevens. Reporter from Washington. I wonder if I can talk to you about the\_\_

RUSTY

Bunny Man?

The words spit out from his lips. Lucas stays near his car.

LUCAS

I...yes, the...the Bunny Man urban legend.

Rusty looks down at the Ipad, swipes the screen. Shakes his head.

RUSTY

Ain't no ur-bane legend. The son of a bitch is real.

LUCAS

I see. So is it ok to ask you a few questions? I won't take up too much of your time. I guess you're busy.

He nods at the Ipad.

LUCAS

You doing research on the...you know...Bunny Man?

RUSTY

Mmm? Oh, fuck no. I'm playing Candy Crush! Love this game. Pity its so damn addictive. Come, boy, sit down here.

He indicates a small wooden stool near the front door. Lucas smiles, grabs a briefcase from the car and takes a seat. He gets out a new voice recorder.

LUCAS

Yeah, my mom plays it. She's on, like level four hundred!

RUSTY

The fuck you say! Four hundred? I been stuck on two forty five for nearly a year!

LUCAS

A year? Wow, thats\_\_

RUSTY

Fucking crazy is what it is. Game should be called Crazy Crush. Drives folks madder than a cut snake. Wouldn't surprise me if the fuckin' Bunny Man plays it.

He takes a long swig of beer, tosses the can to one side, grabs a freshie.

RUSTY

Want one, son?

LUCAS

No, thank you sir. Zero alcohol when I'm on the job and driving. Newspaper policy.

RUSTY

That a fact? Well, good for you. I'd offer you a joint but I'm out at the moment.

He LAUGHS, an infectious sound and Lucas CHUCKLES with him.

RUSTY

Yep...ran out of the green stuff back in the late nineties. Had my own crop out the back here for years. Had to let it die when the water bills got too high.

He LAUGHS again, louder.

RUSTY

Too high! Ha, yeah man I was flyin' like a kite there for decades. I guess that's what the spectre of the Bunny Man hanging over your head can do to a person...

LUCAS

Can I record our conversation? I'll edit it later if...

RUSTY

It might be best if you just take notes. This is deeply personal for me and not a pleasant subject, no sir.

He puts the Ipad aside, stares at the young reporter. Lucas blinks, puts the recorder down, opens a small notepad. He flicks through it.

LUCAS

I understand. I've done a lot of background work on this and its a pretty horrific story. Ok, according to my research, the basis of the Bunny Man began in nineteen oh-five at the Lorton Valley asylum just outside of Clifton.

He flips a page, CLEARS his throat.

LUCAS

A couple of inmates escaped and the local farmers began to find half eaten rabbit carcasses tied to their fences. The authorities organized a\_\_

RUSTY

Son, put that away.

LUCAS

Huh?

RUSTY

All the 'official' stories? They ain't worth a tinker's tossbag. Complete shit of the highest bull.

LUCAS

And 'your' version is the right one?

He stares down the old man. Rusty's lips form a hard line before a wry grin appears. He nods.

RUSTY

You got spunk for a young modern fella. I like that. Reminds me of myself at the same age. Before the Bunny Man caused it all to go to crap.

He HAWKS up a loogie, pings it out over the flower bed. Lucas waits in silence, pen poised above the notepad.

RUSTY

I only encountered the Bunny Man once. But that was enough. Thirty nine years ago.

Lucas checks his notes excitedly.

LUCAS

Yes! Halloween, nineteen seventy six. The kids waiting under the bridge, and he ki\_\_

RUSTY

Now hold there! I'm telling this tale. Your notes are useless now, understand? Disregard practically all you think you know about it. It'll be easier to take in.

He SIGHS, a mournful sound. A cloud momentarily shuts off the sunlight and Lucas shivers. Rusty's face is like a pained sculpture. Lucas waits.

RUSTY

Yes, it was Halloween, 'seventy six. I'd only been married for two months. My wife, Cynthia, was young, only eighteen. Absolutely beautiful.

(beat)

She laughed about the Bunny Man legend, wanted him to appear under that bridge.

LUCAS

The Clifton rail bridge? Fairfax line?

RUSTY

Yeah, thats it. The haunt of the  
Bunny Man.

LUCAS

But he hadn't been seen for what...

He consults his pad.

LUCAS

Thirty three years. Halloween  
ninety forty three

RUSTY

Oh yes. Always on Halloween. But  
not every year.

He shudders. A moistness forms in his eyes.

LUCAS

Are you alright Mr Borland? I  
could come back tomorrow?

Rusty takes a beer from the icebox, cracks it and gulps deep.

RUSTY

Thats better. No, no, I'm fine.  
Its helping to finally get it  
outta my system. Its...

He snaps his fingers, frowns.

LUCAS

Therapeutic?

RUSTY

You got it in one. Like I said,  
you're the first person I've told.  
So bear with me.

LUCAS

I will, sir, I will. You were  
saying?

RUSTY

Ok, where was I? Right...

(beat)

It had been a wonderful night for  
Cyn and me. Dinner at a friend's  
house. But she drank maybe a  
little too much. Whole bottle of  
wine. And as we were walking home,  
she suggested a detour via the  
rail bridge.

LUCAS

And it was nearly midnight?

RUSTY

Oh yes. Look, I never paid no heed to the Bunny Man legend at the time. Hogwash of the highest order. But I gotta tell you, son, I felt uneasy. Somethin' wasn't right.

Lucas writes slowly, taking it in. He pauses, waits. Rusty SIGHS again.

RUSTY

Cyn started hugging and kissing me like there was no tomorrow. She dragged me under the bridge, tearing at my clothes. And despite my fears, I...well, you know how it is when a pretty gal is indicating she's wants you.

(beat)

Pretty soon we were going hard at it, right on the road under the bridge.

LUCAS

Going at it? Oh, you mean you were...

He clears his throat, blushes.

LUCAS

...making love?

RUSTY

That's puttin' it mildly, boy. We were going hammer and tongs like...sweet jesus, like a couple of rabbits!

He LAUGHS but there's no mirth in it.

RUSTY

Thats some fuckin' irony there, ain't it?

LUCAS

I...yes, I guess so.

RUSTY

Anyway, right when we was fixin' to finish, it happened.

LUCAS

The Bunny Man?

RUSTY

Oh yes. A blinding light appeared above us, coming from within the bridge itself. I could feel a presence before I saw anything. God, it was like...pure evil. He just stood there, looking at us.

His breaths shorten. Lucas watches anxiously.

RUSTY

I'm ok. So Cyn starts to scream. Full blown terror. She pulled her clothes on and runs right past him.

LUCAS

She escaped then? Wasn't harmed?

RUSTY

No. She got away. Saw nothin' of what was to follow.

He wipes a trembling hand across his face.

RUSTY

I managed to get my clothes on too. I wasn't facing this madman with my nuts out, no way in the wide. But I couldn't get up to run. I was welded to the very ground, the bitumen of the road. By the aura of the Bunny Man.

LUCAS

Was he...did he have a weapon of any sort? The legend says he used a huge knife to slice gashes on the victim then...

He stops as Rusty turns to gaze at him. The old man's face is a mask of pain.

RUSTY

No. He simply stood over me. I saw his bunny ears, whiskers, even his little fluffy bob of a tail. All real. Then he knelt down and...

LUCAS

(whispers)  
I'm listening.

RUSTY

The Bunny Man started tickling me.

Dead silence. Rusty looks away quickly, fumbles for his beer. Lucas sits, stunned, pen hovering over the page.

RUSTY

You can laugh if you want. I know  
it sounds...funny.

More silence. The old man risks a peek at Lucas.

LUCAS

I won't laugh at you, sir. Not ever.

His eyes close, face etched in anguish.

LUCAS

Unconsensual tickling is a  
heinous act.

(beat)

I should know as it happened to me.

Rusty stares, gob smacked.

LUCAS

Tell me...did the Bunny Man  
tickle your tummy? Or under your  
arms?

RUSTY

Both. I was totally helpless.

LUCAS

Oh lord. I might have one of  
those beers after all.

Rusty already has one in his hand, gives it to the  
reporter. He drains it in one long swallow and crushes the  
empty can.

LUCAS

My sister was a total tickling  
machine when I was younger. Every  
night she would sneak into my  
room and just...tickle me  
senseless. My parents laughed and  
marveled at the sibling fun. I  
hated them for that.

RUSTY

Its always the parents who stand  
by and do nothing. They don't see  
the mental pain thats goin' on.

LUCAS

Exactly.

He and Rusty hawk and spit in unison over the garden.

LUCAS

What happened after the Bunny Man  
finished tickling you?

RUSTY

He vanished. Never saw him again.  
But I guess no one has gone to  
the bridge at Halloween since  
then either.

He sips his beer.

RUSTY

Then the dreams began.

LUCAS

Oh yeah...the dreams. Nightmare  
city every bedtime. And your wife?  
What became of her?

RUSTY

Oh, she came back after half an  
hour, when her senses returned.  
She woulda been expecting me to  
be hanging from the bridge, guts  
exposed and bleeding out. In  
hindsight it mighta been better  
if I had been...

LUCAS

Let me guess...you told her what  
happened. And she ridiculed you.

RUSTY

You got it. At first it was her  
little joke. She never told a  
soul, not even her best friend,  
I'll give her that. But she  
started tickling me. Little ones  
to begin with. then it became a  
fascination for her. Tickling me  
on the street, in the shops, in  
the car. In the end I had to tell  
her to leave before I did  
something crazy to her.

LUCAS

Be-atches just don't get it! We  
don't want to be tickled for  
fucks sake!

He signals for another beer. The alcohol is making him rowdy.

LUCAS

My fiancée wants to...introduce  
it into our lives. Open slather  
tickling.

RUSTY

Thats unnatural. Its obscene. God  
have mercy on you, son.

LUCAS

Mr. Borland, I...

RUSTY

Call me Rusty. We've bonded now. Like brothers. Tickling has made us comrades.

LUCAS

Ok, Rusty. My mother would kill me for saying this but...I have to seriously doubt the very existence of a God who allows indiscriminate tickling of males.

RUSTY

I'll drink to that.

They clink beers, sit back and contemplate. Finally...

LUCAS

I think we should go to the rail bridge tonight, Rusty. Confront the Bunny Man at midnight. Kill him.

Rusty nods, muses on this.

RUSTY

I've been waiting for years to do somethin' like that. But ain't never had the gumption. Got a plan too, had it for awhile. Now might be the time to try it, yessir.

LUCAS

I'd love to hear that plan, Rusty. And I wanna help you.

(beat)

What say I roll a joint, we get high and discuss this?

Rusty's face splits into a grin for the first time in ages.

RUSTY

You're a mighty fine young fella, Lucas. Had a good feeling about you from the start.

Lucas stands, heads to his car. He opens the trunk, rummages around before holding up a plastic bag full of mull. He comes back, sits and starts rolling a huge bomber.

LUCAS

Got an uncle in Georgia who grows his own. Has a massive hothouse hidden away in the forest. Computerized alarm systems, auto watering, high tech camouflage. Feds have got no fucking basic idea about him.

RUSTY

Sounds like a good man.

LUCAS

He is. But he is one crazy son of a bitch for sure.

He lights up, has a decent toke. Hands it to Rusty.

RUSTY

Yeah?

LUCAS

Yeah. Fucker likes the Seahawks.

Their LAUGHTER ripples O.S as day blends into night...

EXT. RAIL BRIDGE - NIGHT

Rusty and Lucas wait under the bridge, off to the side of the single lane road. Rusty's battered old pickup is nearby, the back gate open. A full moon illuminates the minutes before midnight.

LUCAS

...and when Butler intercepted Wilson, Uncle Jake kicked the shit out of the plasma tv!

He whispers in between giggles. Rusty sniggers too, while keeping an eye out.

RUSTY

What did your aunt say? Not happy?

LUCAS

She didn't give a rat's arse. They got TEN plasmas! And she had money on the Pats as well. Whole family is loopy.

They dissolve into more quiet laughter.

RUSTY

No wonder he rakes in the cash. His weed is the shit.

He checks his watch, peers about. A rope dangles next to him, from the shadows on the bottom of the bridge. He holds it carefully.

LUCAS  
Think it'll work ok?

RUSTY  
Hope so. If it doesn't, well, we could be in trouble.

LUCAS  
I guess getting bent wasn't such a good idea.

Rusty shrugs, slaps Lucas lightly on the arm.

RUSTY  
Stay alert, son.

He checks his watch again.

RUSTY  
Its time.

They study the gloom around the bridge, tensed. Suddenly, the blinding light appears! Its dazzling. At the same time, the BUNNY MAN is there. Lucas gasps then charges at the figure.

LUCAS  
Teach you to tickle, Bunny fuck!

RUSTY  
Lucas! Jesus...

Lucas is almost upon the Bunny Man, directly under the bridge. Rusty is torn between helping or holding the mysterious rope.

LUCAS  
Stay on it, man. I'll give you ti\_\_ah fuck!

He trips, stumbles at the feet of the Bunny Man. He stares up in horror, instantly sober and straight. The Bunny Man stoops.

LUCAS  
Oh god...he's got me. Pull it, Rusty! DO IT!

The Bunny Man starts tickling Lucas in earnest. The reporter writhes at the touch, SCREAMING and GIGGLING intermittently. Rusty hesitates, glances up at the bridge then back to the ticklefest. His eyes widen in horror.

Then...it all happens. The Bunny Man glances up from his filthy work, whiskers twitching. He stares at Rusty, follows the rope up to the bridge underside.

LUCAS

I beg you...DO IT!

He makes a supreme effort to roll away from the Bunny Man's grasp. Rusty sees his chance and yanks hard on the rope. Lucas keeps moving out of the zone. The Bunny Man takes a step forward then looks up just as...

Hundreds, maybe thousands of carrots pour from the bridge to engulf the rabbit shape. In seconds, a massive hill of orange vegetables rises halfway back up to the bridge. Above, a huge, empty net dangles. Silence.

LUCAS

Yes! Oh yes! We did it. YOU did it, Rusty. He's dead.

Rusty's mouth is a hard line as he studies the enormous mound for movement. satisfied, he releases then spits a particularly squelchy loog on the pile.

RUSTY

Enjoy your carrots, motherfucker.

LUCAS

Man, that was some plan. Buying up the entire county supply of carrots. Wooahoo!

(beat)

Now what, bro? Will we haul this sick carcass into town in triumph. Show the free world what we have stopped?

RUSTY

No. I got a more fitting end to this.

INT. RUSTY'S PICKUP - MORNING

Lucas sits in the front, sips a giant coffee. The pickup is parked near the back of some shops. He watches as Rusty hauls a big sack to the back of a store and knocks.

A man pops his head out, listens to Rusty. He looks inside the sack, nods his head, disappears inside. Rusty waits, gives the 'A ok' sign to Lucas.

LUCAS

You crafty old devil...

The man reappears, counts out a heap of bills to Rusty then drags the sack inside. Rusty counts the money before grinning at Lucas as he walks over and gets in.

He starts the engine, slips into gear. Lucas LAUGHS. Rusty joins in.

EXT. SHOP - MORNING

As the pickup moves past, the back door of the shop opens. The Bunny Man suit is thrown out to land untidily on the side of a Dumpster. The door shuts.

RUSTY(O.S.)  
No one will know any difference,  
right?

LUCAS(O.S.)  
Right. Or they wouldn't give a  
fuck if they did, right?

RUSTY(O.S.)  
Right.  
(beat)  
God bless America.

More LAUGHTER as the store is revealed to be a K.F.C...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A pitch black room. Gentle SNORES. Suddenly, a blinding light comes on!

Lucas sits up groggily. The Bunny Man is next to the bed, soft paws reaching for him. The SCREAMING begins. The light goes out.

BUNNY MAN(O.S.)  
Tickly wickly, Lukey boy...

FADE OUT.

THE END