

LAST NIGHT I DREAMT I WAS AN ANIMAL

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. LEILA'S APARTMENT BEDROOM, BATHROOM & KITCHEN - DAY

The cluttered interior of a woman's bedroom. The shadow of said woman dressing herself cast long upon the carpet from the adjoining bathroom. Inside, LEILA (MID 20s to 30) gives her outfit a suspicious once over in the mirror.

There is a knock on the door.

Leila exits the bathroom and moves through her bedroom into the hallway until she arrives in her kitchen.

She stops at the front door and checks her reflection in her cellphone. She smiles and inspects her teeth to see if there is anything is stuck in them. Satisfied, she takes a deep breath and finally opens the door.

A young man in gray work fatigues, MARTIN (early to mid thirties), stands there just on the other side of the threshold. He hovers there with his bug sprayer, the living portrait of dissatisfaction. Simultaneously aloof and stoic, his demeanor is marked by an animalistic looseness.

LEILA

Sorry. I was expecting someone else. Can I help you?

MARTIN

Maintenance.

LEILA

Okay... I didn't make a request. What's the issue?

MARTIN

I'm here to spray your bathroom for bugs.

LEILA

Oh. Just the bathroom?

MARTIN

Yes. Roaches like moist areas.

LEILA

Roaches? Alright, then. Well, I guess you know the way.

Martin enters the apartment.

She follows him to the bedroom, then into the bathroom. She is about to enter the narrow half-bath alongside him when he suddenly turns to her.

MARTIN
Can I have some privacy?

LEILA
Privacy?

There's a brief yet pronounced silence.

MARTIN
I have to use the restroom.

LEILA
Oh... Of course. Yes. Sorry, go right ahead. I'll just be in the kitchen if you need anything.

Martin steps into Leila's bathroom and closes the door behind him. He locks it then looks about the room as if it were a puzzle to be solved.

Between the shower surround and the commode, a hamper full of dirty clothes. His gaze lingers there for a moment upon a pair of red lace panties half submerged within the pile between some towels. His eyes gleam like those of a hungry wolf.

Martin sits his bug sprayer down and steps into the shower. With each step he leaves black bootprints upon the off-white acrylic. He moves towards the shower faucet then reaches into his pocket where he retrieves a small electronic device (a tiny camera). He discreetly places it up in the corner of the ceiling. It adheres to the surface like a piece of gum.

He exits the shower and is about to exit the restroom when but is distracted by the reflection of his own dour expression confronting him in the bathroom mirror.

LEILA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Everything okay in there?

MARTIN
Yes.

Martin flushes the toilet absentmindedly.

INT. LEILA'S KITCHEN

Martin enters the kitchen.

LEILA
No bugs?

MARTIN
Excuse me?

LEILA
Bugs. You said you were spraying
for them?

MARTIN
Yeah. No there weren't any. At
least none that I could see. I left
a poison repellent in there. Stuck
it up on the ceiling. It's
chemical. I wouldn't touch it.

LEILA
Chemical? Is that absolutely
necessary?

MARTIN
If you don't want roaches, yes.

LEILA
Okay, okay. I guess that's fine.
Thank you.

Hot mug of coffee in hand, Leila moves to the door and opens
it for him.

As he exits, Martin inadvertently knocks into her, causing
her coffee to spill over her white blouse.

LEILA (CONT'D)
Shit!

MARTIN
I'm sorry. Are you burnt?

LEILA
No.

MARTIN
I'm sorry.

LEILA
It's fine. Don't worry about it. It
was an accident. Accidents happen.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Martin storms through the parking lot of a middle class apartment community. An older man in an identical uniform calls out to him.

SUPERVISOR

Hey, Martin! I need your help with
a...

The man's voice trails off as Martin walks past him as if he did not hear or see him.

INT. MARTIN'S VAN

Sunlight peeks in through the blinds covering the back windows and casts a sliver of light into the back of a cluttered work van.

Martin crashes onto the driver's seat. He's breathing heavy.

He lights a cigarette then quickly puts the car into motion. He peels out of his spot and demon speeds through the parking lot.

A faint, lustful smile plays out at the corner of his lips. He scratches at his chin then places his hand into his pocket. It lingers there for a moment, clutching at something. He pulls it out to reveal Leila's panties.

Slowly, he raises them up to his nose and takes one deep breath in.

Rockabilly on the radio, panties in hand: Martin pounds the ceiling.

MARTIN

(excited)

Wooo!

CUT TO:

MARTIN (V.O.)

I'm restless.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

Define restless.

TITLE OVER BLACK: *Last Night I Dreamt I Was An Animal*

INT. PSYCHIATRIC OFFICE

Separated by a tidily manicured desktop, a rigged Martin sits across from his therapist, DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (40s to 50s), though his castaway eyes seem to indicate he is somewhere else entirely.

MARTIN

I don't know.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

Don't know, or don't want to say?

MARTIN

I mean, I... I don't know. Restless means restless. I'm not sure how else I'm supposed to describe it. What're you trying to get at?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

Let me rephrase the question. Why do you feel restless?

MARTIN

Oh. Well. I guess I just get bored real easy.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

And how does it make you feel to be bored?

MARTIN

Restless.

INT. MARTIN'S VAN / EXT. LIQUOR STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Martin sits in his work van still except it's dark outside now and he's parked out front of a liquor store.

He fumbles his cellphone out from his pocket and opens an app. After a few more inputs, the screen is filled with a black & white image of Leila standing beneath a running shower faucet.

His eyes salivate.

His cellphone begins to ring and this lurid feed is interrupted.

The caller ID reads Tonya. He sends the call to voicemail and resumes his stream but the call comes through again a few moments later. He ends it. She calls back again, immediately. He answers it.

MARTIN

Hey.

TONYA (O.S.)

I guess they're right when they say, 'Third time's the charm.' Where the fuck are you?

MARTIN

I'm still at work. Had a big load today. Gonna be late getting back probably.

TONYA (O.S.)

You are not at work. And do you want to know how I know that? Well someone called your office. They said you left early. So where are you really? Huh? Where the fuck are you?

Appearing bored by the conversation, Martin hangs up the phone and tosses it onto the passenger's seat.

MARTIN (V.O.)

I think my wife is cheating on me.

He pulls a flask out from his pocket, takes a quick hit, shudders, then takes another.

INT. MARTIN'S VAN / EXT. EL MONTAN MOTEL - NIGHT

Martin sits hawkeye outside of a dimly lit motel. His gaze is fixed upon one room in particular. A sliver of light shines through a crack in the curtains upon the black pavement.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

A whores revolver sits upon a crudely made bed littered with creases and wrinkles. Following the sultry sway of tanned hips wrapped in black lace moving along the bedside; a hand with long red nails reaches down and retrieves the gun; moving up to a rounded, partially exposed buttocks only slightly marked by the wrinkles of old age; further up the back lacing of a cheap corset to her shoulder blades; down again with her hands as the pistol is placed within a cluttered bathroom vanity drawer next to a hairbrush; moving back up along the curvature of her body, stopping on the face of a sad middle aged woman, ROSE (40s), staring at herself in the mirror.

Her sad eyes look into themselves.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Martin shambles across the parking lot towards Rose's motel room like some holy roller high on Christ but when he reaches it his mania quickly evaporates and when he knocks it sounds like there's a shy boy at the door.

Rose answers.

ROSE
Can I help you?

He stares at her.

ROSE (CONT'D)
(smile to smirk)
Come on in.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Martin follows Rose into the motel room. He looks around bashfully, all wide eyed and red in the cheeks.

ROSE
Look. It's a hundred and fifty for
the-

MARTIN
(interrupting, fumbling
around in his pocket)
Here, just take this. There should
be three hundred there.

ROSE
Three hundred?

MARTIN
Yes. You can count it if you like.

Martin sits on the bed and waits while she counts the money.

ROSE
Can you please take your shoes off.

MARTIN
Oh. Yes. Sorry.

ROSE
(still counting)
It's fine.

Martin takes his shoes off then scoots further up into the bed and rests his back against the headboard.

He sits there twiddling his thumbs when he notices it: his wedding ring. He quickly pockets it. Rose laughs.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Don't worry. You're hardly the first married man that's walked through that door.

She notices his discomfort.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Sorry, I don't mean to be insensitive. Let's change the subject. So, what do you want to do?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

Why do you think your wife is cheating on you?

ROSE

(voice obscured)
Hello?

MARTIN (V.O.)

I don't know. I just feel it. I feel it in—

MARTIN

(blurting out the words)
I've never done this before.

ROSE

Never done what before? You're a virgin?

MARTIN

I've had sex.

ROSE

That was a joke.

He's so tense she starts to tense up.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Okay. So you've had sex. What kind of sex do like to have? You like it rough, you like it slow and sensual, you getting your dick—

MARTIN

(interrupting)
I've never cheated on my wife before. Fuck... Fuck!

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I never thought I would have but here I am. I'm not a bad person though. Really. I'm not. I'm only doing this to get back at her.

ROSE

She cheated on you?

He nods his head.

MARTIN

Yeah. And if she hasn't, it's only a matter of time until she does.

He turns to Rose.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I won't be the one who gets laughed on. If I'm the first then it'll be. She won't get to feel so superior. That's all this is about. That's all. I'm not a bad person.

ROSE

Calm down honey. I never said you was a bad person. Calm down.

She places the palm of her hand against his forehead.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Jesus. You're a tense one, aren't you?

MARTIN

If I'm the first to do it it'll be easier. You see that, don't you? That's all this is.

ROSE

Have you been drinking?

Martin stares at her for a moment stunned into silence. He turns away with some effort, embarrassed.

MARTIN

So what if I have been? Some priests drink even. You know? Mine does at least. There's nothing wrong with it.

ROSE

Never said there was. It was just an observation. Maybe it would calm you down if I put on some music?

She awaits a response but he seems a bit too dazed for that.

ROSE (CONT'D)

It might make this easier if I played some music. Would that be okay?

MARTIN

Sure. Yeah. That's okay.

She crawls across the bed, grabs a bluetooth speaker from a nightstand drawer and turns it on. Then she's on her cellphone for a moment, scrolling. Some contemporary hip hop starts coming out of the speaker.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(cringing)

No. Not that. Play something else.

ROSE

Okay... What would you like to hear?

MARTIN

Jazz maybe. Duke Ellington.

ROSE

Any song in particular?

MARTIN

Anything. It doesn't matter.

ROSE

Okay. I'll just hit random.

She plays *Banquet Theme*.

ROSE (CONT'D)

(crawling back to him)

Don't think about your wife. Think about me.

She grabs his hand and runs it up her leg and body to her covered breast. She holds it for a moment. He is totally transfixed. Like a child.

They fall into each another.

PAN to the blinds.

PAN back to the bed: Rose lays there, her naked body covered by a thin white sheet. Idly, she puffs away on a cigarette while she watches Martin dress.

She soon gets bored though and the wad of cash sitting atop the night stand catches her eye. She grabs it and begins to count.

Martin walks over to the sink and splashes his face with water. He looks around the vanity top. Quietly, he opens the drawer and sees her derringer. He holds it in his hands.

ROSE (CONT'D)

This really is just about three hundred bucks. Two ninety seven to be exact. Hell, I think I might just retire!

Distracted, Rose doesn't notice when Martin discreetly places the gun into his pants pocket.

He walks over to the front of the bed and she sits the money down.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Hey there stud. Why are you looking at me like you want something? Ready for round two?

MARTIN

No... I need to leave. I have work in the morning.

ROSE

Now ain't that a shame. Well, why don't you come back again sometime.

MARTIN

Okay. I will

ROSE

I like you. You're strange. Sure. But you aren't such a bad fuck, you know that? Anyone ever tell you that? That you was a good lay.

He shakes his head.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Well you are.

Martin rises from the bed impatiently.

MARTIN

I have to leave

ROSE

Well, shit. Alright then. Bye.

Martin rushes to the door, places his hand on the knob and hesitates.

MARTIN

Um.

He pauses, unsure of himself.

ROSE

What is it.

MARTIN

Can I have fifteen of that back? I need to get gas...

INT. MARTIN'S VAN

CUE THE MUSIC: A transition from the previous tune to *Haupe* (also by the Duke).

Martin drives aimlessly through the night. He takes liberal drinks from his flask. Window down, his arm hangs slack along the windswept exterior while the other remains loosely gripped upon the wheel. His eyes like razors slice violently across the dimly lit streets.

INT. MARTIN'S VAN / EXT. MARTIN'S HOME - NIGHT

Martin parks the van alongside the curb outside of his house — an older, middle class abode circa 1970 — kills the engine and sits.

POV: A pair of frustrated eyes watch him from inside the house through a closed set of blinds.

INT. MARTIN'S HOUSE / EXT. MARTIN'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Inside, Martin catches the tail end of his wife heading upstairs. With a sigh, he stumbles through the house and out the backdoor. He almost falls but he manages to catch himself.

A rubber chair (one of the kind commonly placed poolside) sits dead center of the backyard. He crashes onto it. In the process of lighting a cigarette, he notices the moon hanging high up above. Flask out of the pocket, he raises a toast to the night and takes a long hit.

PAN UP: the full moon; PAN DOWN: a tree-line somewhere else wherein a feral choir of coyotes can be heard howling out in the night somewhere within that dark, wild chaparral a atavistic song of hunger and lust writ in an unlearnt tongue.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTIN'S BACKYARD

Martin awakens suddenly to his wife, TONYA, kicking the lawn chair.

MARTIN

Goddamn, do you have to kick the chair like that.

TONYA

So I take it you aren't going to work today?

MARTIN

No. No, I will. Just give me a second...

He relights his cigarette's dwindled flame, then struggles to rise out of the chair. He gives up and grabs his flask from the ground beside him and shakes it.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(tossing flask)

Shit...

TONYA

You're a fucking mess.

MARTIN

(sinking into chair, he
rubs his temples)

Fuck. My head hurts. I had the weirdest dream last night... Dreamt I was an animal.

Tonya sighs angrily.

TONYA

I can't stand you sometimes.

Tonya storms inside, leaving Martin to soak out beneath the risen sun towering above him.

INT. MARTIN'S HOME

Martin enters his house through the back door.

He moseys into the kitchen and searches through cabinets and drawers before he comes up empty. Nothing in the fridge either.

Looking around the room: at wedding pictures, mementos, Americana decor.

MARTIN (V.O.)

You know, they say you marry your mother. I always thought that was bullshit but it's true. At least it is for me... Fuck. This isn't how I thought my life would turn out.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

How did you envision your life would be at this point?

MARTIN (V.O.)

I don't know. Just different... I thought I'd have a degree, a nice job. Thought I'd have some money, maybe a few kids. But I got married too young. Settled down too early and with the wrong girl. I thought that by now I'd... I... I thought I'd have control.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

You don't feel like you're in control?

MARTIN (V.O.)

No... No, I don't.

Martin takes the lid off the trash.

He laughs.

He reaches inside – all the way down to the bottom – and comes out with full six-pack of Pabst.

EXT. BACKYARD

Back outside, Martin makes himself comfortable in the lawn chair. He cracks open a beer.

Martin attempts to look up at the sun but quickly averts his eyes. He closes his eyes and settles into the chair.

His hands slip into his pockets. Surprised, he removes both hands: in one is a pair of panties and in the other he holds the stolen gun.

He tosses the underwear on the ground and shudders. Pistol still in the other hand, he examines it.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Do you think I'll get better
doctor?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

That all depends on whether or not
you want to.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Of course I want to. Who wants to
get sicker?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

You'd be surprised...

Martin looks back up at the sun and holds the pistol out in front of his face using it as a barrier with which he can separate himself from the light, allowing him a sight of not only it's periphery but the full image also as it is reflected upon the edge of that cold steel.

FADE TO BLACK.