

FADE IN:

EXT. NILE CANYON ROAD - NIGHT

A sickle moon hangs bright in the eastern sky. Along a deserted canyon road, walks a solitary soul -- a young woman.

CRACK - a noise in the woods. The woman turns and shines a mini-flashlight. Sees nothing and exhales. Then walks on.

Meet DAWN MACHADO, 20.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

DRIVER'S POV: The hypnotic canyon road ahead.

Dashboard gives off soft light. A small CROSS swings from the rear-view mirror.

The unseen driver's HAND pushes radio buttons and locks in on a news station, to the voice of a female NEWSCASTER.

NEWSCASTER (RADIO)
[...] partially nude body of a woman was discovered this morning in a ravine, one mile east of Rivermont University and near the Nile Forest.

Radio volume is pumped up.

NEWSCASTER (RADIO) (CONT' D)
A police source close to the investigation told WHOA News that the victim's throat was severely slashed.

DRIVER (O. S.)
Oh God, NO.

Volume turned LOUDER.

NEWSCASTER (RADIO)
Police are withholding the identity of the victim pending notification of family. The woman is likely the latest victim of the Phantom Nile Slayer.

Radio sound cuts out. Driver POUNDS the dash with a fist.

EXT. WOODSY AREA OF NILE CANYON ROAD - NIGHT

A lighter sparks a cigarette, revealing Dawn's pretty face.

She takes a heavenly drag. The lighter is dashed and her face returns to the shadows. She exhales smoke.

HEADLIGHTS

rounding a bend. Approaching Dawn, who squints.

DAWN

About time.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Ghostly headlights beam 50 feet ahead. Dawn can be seen waving.

Headlights now reveal Dawn's features: raven hair, slight build and dressed in jeans and a Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

The dark pickup truck gears down and stops. Engine continues to rumble. Passenger-side window slides down.

Dawn peers into the semi-dark truck cab.

DAWN

You here to do the job?

DRIVER/RUDY

Rudy Saxon at your service.

DAWN

It's just you?

RUDY

Let me check ... yep, just me.

Dawn shines her penlight into the cab, on the driver's face. RUDY SAXON, early 20s, slams shut his eyes. He's got that look of a party animal look: Unkempt, stubbles, laid back.

DAWN

You're late.

RUDY
 Got lost. What can I say?
 (squinting)
 You mind aiming that light
 someplace else.

Dawn swings the light off his face. She grounds her smoke.

DAWN
 Can't be too careful, know
 what I mean? I'm Dawn.

He musters a smile.

RUDY
 You're forgiven. Dawn.

Dawn gives Rudy's truck the once over. She shines her light
 on the longbed. Spacious. Nothing back there but a blanket.

DAWN
 Sweet.

She turns back to Rudy.

DAWN (CONT' D)
 Don't take this the wrong way,
 but I need to see a photo ID.

RUDY
 (chuckles)
 I am of drinking age.

DAWN
 I ain't kidding.

Rudy lets out a breath in mock annoyance.

RUDY
 I expect the same in return.

He takes out his wallet, flips it open for display.

DAWN
 Hand it to me. Please.

RUDY
 Seriously? What are you, a
 police explorer?

They exchange ID cards.

Rudy watches Dawn as she examines his driver's license. She
 wipes his license clean on her T-shirt and rechecks it.

Rudy twirls the cross around the rear-view mirror a couple of winds. So it's less noticeable.

He uses the dashlight to casually check Dawn's ID card.

DAWN

Yo, Rudy.

Rudy turns to Dawn and she shines her penlight in his face. Blinding him -- again.

Comparing face to ID picture. She frowns.

DAWN (CONT' D)

You're way uglier in person.

RUDY

Yeah, but I get better looking as the night grows.

DAWN

(shrugs)

This is how it's goin' down. I keep your license till the job gets done. You cut out on me like a certain A-hole did and your license is toast.

Out comes Dawn's lighter. She fires it up, then dangles Rudy's license inches above the flame.

DAWN (CONT' D)

I ain't kidding.

RUDY

Ramp down, girlfriend. Jeesh.

DAWN

From my experience, guys are such A-holes.

RUDY

I'm just here to do the job, OK. Now fair is fair. You keep my card, I keep yours.

DAWN

Whatever.

Rudy pockets Dawn's university card.

RUDY

Get in and shut the door before I go serial on you.

Dawn climbs into his truck and flips him a middle finger.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Dawn locks the door.

DAWN
Hang a U-wee. It's back a
half mile or so.

RUDY
What's back a half mile?

DAWN
Your pay day, boy.

Rudy swings a U-turn and away they go.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Rudy studies Dawn with intermittent glances. She notices.

DAWN
I'm in Professor Lockwood's
night class. You?

RUDY
Early class.
(beat)
Refresh my memory. Why are we
doing this job, at this hour?

DAWN
Cuz his exhibit got bumped to
the A.M tomorrow.

RUDY
Bummer.

DAWN
Just so you know, Lockwood put
me in charge of the pick-up.
You answer to me. We
straight?

RUDY
You're the boss.

Rudy watches the road, while Dawn stares at the woods.

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
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