

In a Dirty Place

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FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL (VARIOUS ROOMS) - NIGHT

MONTAGE:

1. The lens of Davey's camera. He fires off a test shot, lowers it, and pops the back open to load a roll of film.
2. Davey leans against a wall, in the hallway as MR. FRIAR, the Home Ec teacher, walks out of his office. He holds a box marked "Donations." Davey snaps a few pics.
3. EXT. Mr. Friar meets with a student. An exchange. Mr. Friar gives up the money; The student hands him - a pair of panties.
4. Close-up on Davey's face. He lowers the camera with a fatuous grin.

DAVEY

Got him.

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Sunlight shines in slits through the closed blinds, illuminating an otherwise dim room. DAVEY HARLES (17) sits behind an oak desk, facing the window. He wears a duster jacket and a fedora pulled low over his eyes. Next to the desk, a dustbin stuffed to the brim with Slim Jims.

On the desk is a plaque that reads "Janice Harles Guidance Counselor"

From Davey's shadow, we see a cylindrical, cigarette-like object in his mouth.

In walks LAURA (16), nervous, well dressed; a real dame.

LAURA

What've you got for me?

Davey raises his head and turns to face her; half a Slim Jim hangs loosely from his lips.

Quickly, he composes himself. This is just business.

DAVEY

I didn't want to believe it, but you were right.

(CONTINUED)

He pushes a stack of photographs in an open manila folder across the desk to Laura.

She flips through them.

LAURA

I knew Mr. Friar was a creep.

DAVEY

This school's a madhouse. Everyone has a secret, some dirtier than others.

LAURA

But you clean up so well.

Beat.

LAURA (CONT'D)

We should have lunch sometime.

She takes the photos, and gets up.

Davey takes a moment to process, and stands up, insulted.

DAVEY

You must have me pegged for some other kind of private dick. I don't get involved on the job with-

She straightens out her skirt, feigning astonishment, but she knows what she's doing.

LAURA

It seems like you don't get involved with much at all.

She exits.

Davey stretches, putting his feet up, a puzzled look on his face.

He snaps off a bite of his Slim Jim and looks down at it as he chews.

DAVEY

I really gotta quit one day.

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A few days have passed. Davey paces idly, tooling with some rear-vision sunglasses.

His mother, JANICE HARLES, a bittersweet middle-aged woman (and the office's owner), sits behind her desk, looking at a men's health magazine.

Davey's phone rings. He looks at the number. Unknown.

Davey turns away from Janice answers.

DAVEY  
Detective Davey -

DISGUISED MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I heard you want to have some  
fun. Meet me under the bleachers  
after school.

DAVEY  
I find *solving cases* fun, if that's  
what you're talking about.

DISGUISED MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm talking about me and  
you. Coitus.

Davey looks disgusted. He hangs up.

JANICE  
Who was that?

DAVEY  
Wrong number. I hope.

Janice shrugs. Davey goes back to tooling with the glasses. Another call.

DISGUISED VOICE (O.S.)  
(Raspy)  
What's the difference between jam  
and jelly?

DAVEY  
What?

DISGUISED VOICE (O.S.)  
I can't jelly my -

Davey hangs up.

(CONTINUED)

JANICE  
What was that?

DAVEY  
I'm not sure...

His phone rings again. Another unknown.  
Annoyed, Janice grabs the phone.

JANICE  
Listen here you dirty birdie -

DAVEY  
Mom!

Davey takes the phone.

DAVEY  
(into the phone)  
I will not be propositioned!

JARED (V.O.)  
What are you talking about? It's  
Jared, man- I'm right outside.

Davey looks out into the hallway and sees Jared Bodermin  
(22), burnout extraordinaire. Eternally stoned, Jared waves,  
smiling.

JARED  
I need to show you something.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jared leads Davey up to a closed stall.

JARED  
In there, man. It's not pretty...

Davey puts a glove on and strides determinedly forward.

Jared opens up a bag of some munchies-type food and starts  
munching.

He slowly pushes the stall door open to investigate,  
expecting a full-blown crime scene.

Some graffiti on the wall-

Wait! The graffiti reads "For a good time, call Davey  
Harles 617-353-1723"

(CONTINUED)

Davey slumps against the wall in disbelief.

JARED

At least they didn't write your  
email man.

Davey SLAMS his fists against the stall.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

DAVEY (V.O.)

My reputation is all I've got. I'm  
no jock or cheer leader.

Davey makes his way over to RANDALL, the obvious class  
snitch, who sits eating his lunch. When he sees Davey, he  
clearly knows the drill. He looks around to assure the coast  
is clear.

Randall passes Davey a note. It simply reads: "Dorf."

INT. ANOTHER OFFICE - DAY

DAVEY

I'm the school's private eye. I  
can't be portrayed as some... sex  
trafficker.

A young teacher gets up to leave the room. As the door  
closes behind her, it reveals Davey, pressed up against the  
wall in a stealth pose.

He flips through a filing cabinet.

Davey pulls out a Biology test belonging to TRAVIS DORF: 58%

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - MURAL WALL - DAY

Travis Dorf, a hulking, cro-magnon type, stands against a  
brick wall, smoking a cigarette with his CRONIES.

Davey marches up threateningly, getting in Travis'  
face. The cronies circle around Davey.

He pulls out his cell phone: the screen reads "Travis Home,"  
followed by a phone number.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEY  
Get the picture, Dorf?

TRAVIS  
Get outta my face, Sherlock.

DAVEY  
Not until you confess, you rat!

TRAVIS  
(Curious)  
What're you talkin' about, Harles?  
You don't have shit on me.

DAVEY  
The graffiti in the bathroom.

Travis laughs. His cronies belt out as well.

TRAVIS  
Oh that? We thought you'd decided  
to answer you true calling, and  
give up this Carmen San Diego shit.

Davey begins to walk away slowly, not breaking eye contact until several steps later. He has trouble pushing past the cronies.

TRAVIS  
(Yelling after him)  
And even if I did it, you can't  
touch me, Harles!

Davey turns back and charges Travis.

The ogre throws one solid punch.

Blackness.

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Two blurry figures stand above Davey.

FEMALE VOICES  
Davey! Davey! Davey!

First his mother's face swims into focus, then Laura's. Janice leans down and plops a wet kiss on his forehead.

(CONTINUED)

JANICE  
Oh my poopsi-kins!

DAVEY  
Laura?

JANICE  
She's the one who found you!

Davey sits up. His head is killing him, and he has a BANDAGE on his nose.

DAVEY  
Where?

Beat.

LAURA  
Girl's bathroom.

Janice looks away, embarrassed. Davey looks around, confused.

DAVEY  
Mom, can you give us a minute? I need to ask Laura some questions.

Janice sighs, but leaves the room.

LAURA  
Listen. I heard about the grafitti. I just want to help.

She puts a comforting hand on his leg.

DAVEY  
Dames can't be trusted.

LAURA  
Neither can dicks.

Touche.

Davey's phone vibrates. A text.

It reads "8===D ~~ Harles."

He sighs.

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Davey and Laura sit together. They pore through tests, assignments, sign in sheets; attempting to match the handwriting.

Janice comes in, with a tray of cookies.

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Davey and Laura eating lunch together, with the case files.

Laura has Davey's phone, she is going through and deleting texts/voicemails. She sees a particularly raunchy one. She blushes, fingering a ring in embarrassed enjoyment.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Davey and Laura revisit the scene of the crime.

Davey, with a stethoscope, places his ear to the wall, listening for sounds.

Laura goes into the stall.

LAURA  
Come quick!

Davey heads into the stall. Laura has lifted the water basin above the toilet. Inside it are many empty bags of Jared's favorite snack.

DAVEY  
Jared.

EXT. JARED'S STREET - NIGHT

Jared, coming back from a deal, walks to his house.

JARED  
(on the phone)  
Yeah boy, I got a quap of this  
vanilla fog. It's the dankest!

Beat.

Davey emerges from the shadows behind Jared.

(CONTINUED)

DAVEY

Dankier than our friendship?

Jared's not even fazed. Davey enters conversations like this a lot.

JARED

What are you talking about man? We're tight like dense nugs.

Davey holds up the incriminating snack food.

JARED

You didn't save me any?

DAVEY

Laura and I found the trail you left.

Jared laughs.

JARED

I get it. She squealed on her own faculty advisor, you know. Yeah, I hang out in that stall. So what? It's like a second home for me; I never deface my temple, man.

Beat. Jared has a point.

DAVEY

You realize I'm running out of options. I need to find this punk.

Beat.

JARED

...Travis. It was just a matter of time before you caught him doing... something. So, obviously, he must have decided to make the first move.

DAVEY

Is this a highdea?

JARED

No dude, I'm taking a tolerance break.

Beat. Jared laughs.

(CONTINUED)

JARED CONT'D

Anyways -

Jared unzips his bag. Inside is a big brick of dank.

JARED CONT'D

Here's how you get back at him.

Davey rubs his nose, where he was punched. He likes the thought of revenge.

EXT. TRAVIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Davey, with Jared's backpack stealths to Travis' window.

Inside, he sees Travis reading to his younger brother.

DAVEY

"And bingo was his name-o."

He goes to the mail slot at the front door.

JARED (V.O.)

She squealed on her own faculty advisor!

Davey shakes his head. He pulls his phone out, about to call Laura.

Then it rings. A pranker. Angry, he hangs up.

Davey takes the weed out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Davey dumping the contents of his bag into a trash bin.

Jared's munchies bags, the evidence, spill out.

A CLINK. Fallen from the bag, and bounced on the ground, is a RING.

Davey leans in to examine it.

CUT TO:

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Flash back to lunch scene, close-up on Laura fingering her ring.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The sound of a BIKE PEDALING.

Laura appears, riding like a bat out of hell. She stops, seeing Davey with the ring.

Beat.

LAURA  
(sadly)  
Davey...

DAVEY  
Hmm, topaz. I'm a Cancer.

LAURA  
So you know.

DAVEY  
Save it. You got a clean break;  
Travis is taking the fall.

LAURA  
Travis may be a creep, but... think  
of the kind of person who would do  
this to him?

He walks right past her, pulling a Slim Jim from his coat.

DAVEY  
You should scram.

LAURA  
I'm staying.

Beat.

DAVEY  
What? Just get out of  
here. Travis isn't worth your  
time.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

But catching the right perp is.

Davey stares, considering. He turns from her, walking away.

Laura looks at him POLICE SIRENS can be heard in the distance.

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A few months later.

Davey sits at his desk, doing homework. He is in normal clothes, it seems as if his detective days are behind him.

Janice pores through a dress catalog, looking wistfully at the dresses.

JANICE

You haven't had any cases in awhile.

DAVEY

(bitter)

Well, no one's trusts a dick who advertises in the bathroom.

A few strained beats of silence.

A KNOCK at the door. Davey looks to his mom.

JANICE

I don't have any appointments.

Davey gets up and opens the door. On the other side is Laura, in her trenchcoat. She looks happier, less troubled.

LAURA

Davey. I need your help.

Laura looks at Davey. Davey looks at Laura. He grins.

FADE OUT