

CLOSING SHIFT

Written by

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1

OVER BLACK

1

A rap on the counter. A pause. A clearing of the throat. Another pause. Then, the ringing of a bell. Again, and again, and again.

2

INT. MOVIE THEATER CONCESSION STAND - NIGHT

2

KC (late 20s, alt-punk aesthetic) leans against the back of the counter, flipping through a magazine. Someone clears their throat. KC lowers the magazine and eyes the teenager, BRITT, standing in front of her, brandishing a cup and a crumpled bag of popcorn.

KC

How can I help you?

BRITT

I'd like a refill on my popcorn and soda.

KC

Sorry, we've closed down our fountain and popper for the night.

BRITT

But it says on the sign that I get free refills.

Britt points at a sign on the counter.

KC

During operating hours, on the day of purchase. And according to my watch...

KC checks her watch. It's a few minutes after midnight.

KC (CONT'D)

It's no longer the day of purchase.

Britt just stares at KC. Methodically, she pops the lid of her cup, and pours the contents all over the counter and the floor.

BRITT

(sickly sweet)

Thanks for your help.

Britt walks back into the theater. KC is aghast. She grabs a rag and starts to dab up the mess.

A door opens down the theater hallway, and REGGIE (30s), the Theater Manager pokes his head out of the door.

REGGIE
KC, how's clean-up going?

KC stares him down. If he used his eyes, it would be apparent how things are going.

KC
It's a work in progress.

REGGIE
That's what I like to hear! Keep up
the good work!

Reggie's head retracts into the office and the door slams shut.

Over KC, staring at the mess in front of her.

3 INT. AUDITORIUM 4 - MOMENTS LATER

3

The Auditorium is occupied by a couple (TONY and SARAH), and a few rows down sits ELAINE and her "Husband" Brody. She's dressed like she's a mannequin from Lululemon. Brody is stoic, basically a homunculus.

Britt is already half-way down the aisle, and takes a seat next to Elaine.

On the screen, The Exerciser makes his way through a smokey hallway.

ELAINE
Where's the refills?

BRITT
They told me to fuck off.

ELAINE
Ugh. I can't believe how
incompetent those people are.

4 INT. REGGIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

4

We see Reggie hunched over his computer, typing furiously. Lines of code fly by. Whatever he's working on, it's fast and furious.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Reggie slams the laptop shut.

REGGIE
Come in!

KC opens the door. She throws a moneybag on Reggie's desk.

KC
All cashed out for the night. Just
waiting for the movie to finish
now.

REGGIE
Fantastic. Did you do a theater
check?

It's apparent that KC did not. However, Reggie doesn't clock it.

KC
Of course I did.

REGGIE
Nice, nice.

A beat. Reggie whips out a joint.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
You want to smoke?

KC
Fuck yeah.

5 INT. AUDITORIUM 4 - FIVE MINUTES LATER.

5

On screen, the Exerciser arm wrestles with a succubus queen.

In the audience, Britt is glued to her phone. Elaine watches the movie, annoyed.

ELAINE
(to no-one in particular,
at full volume)
You gotta wonder what they spent
the budget on if this is the
climax!

BRITT
Have you considered that it might
just be a bad movie?

Brody grunts in agreement.

AUDIENCE

SHHHHH!

Elaine shoots a dirty look over her shoulder. She returns her attention back to the movie, and almost immediately throws her hands up in the air.

ELAINE

Ugh! And look at that. Of *course* the priest wins. Why don't they ever switch things up?

BRITT

The Priests die in The Exorcist.

Another SHHHHH of screen. The trio ignores it.

BRODY

Is true. Priest fall down stairs and break neck.

ELAINE

When did you watch The Exorcist?

SHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH. It's super aggressive, and still ignored.

BRODY

Brody has lifelong passion for cinema. You just never ask questions about Brody.

ELAINE

Yes, because I don't care.

TONY

SHUT UP! SHUT UP!

Elaine stands up. It's like a switch has been flipped; any hint of niceness has been replaced by rage.

ELAINE

Who said that to me? Who the FUCK said that to me?

A lanky man, TONY, who's had a few too many drinks stands up. His girlfriend, SARAH, tries to pull him back down. He pushes her off, and walks into the aisle.

TONY

We're all just here trying to watch the movie, and you keep on fucking yapping.

Elaine sits back down, grabs her purse and pulls out a meat hook. She then snaps her fingers.

ELAINE

Brody, can you go take care of him?
And take this, will you?

Brody grunts and grabs the meat hook. He rises and starts slowly walking up the aisle.

TONY

Oh, and now you're going to send
your "husband" to intimidate me,
huh? What happened to wanting to do
things for your-

Tony doesn't finish his misogynist comments, as Brody shunks the meat hook right into Tony's chest. Tony crumples to the ground. Brody straddles him, hammering away as blood sprays in his face.

Sarah, seeing her [shitty] boyfriend killed, screams.

Elaine notices Sarah and turns to Britt.

ELAINE

Tear your eyes away from that
screen and get her.

Britt rolls her eyes.

Sarah starts to run towards the door. We can see, clearly behind her Elaine and Britt. As Sarah runs, time seems to slow down.

We then see the reverse of the door...Almost there...

SARAH'S POV **

And then Britt pops out of nowhere, a full on jump scare. She reaches around Sarah's (our's) neck.

MATCH CUT TO:

6

EXT. THEATER - OUT BACK - NIGHT

6

KC in the middle of a yawn. To the side, the fire door is propped open with a trash can. Smoke swirls around with Reggie nursing a roach. He's been rambling on.

REGGIE

-and Travis has been giving me the hardest time lately. "You're always at work, babe. Why aren't you home when I'm home?" Like, what part of managing a movie theater does he not understand?

Reggie takes a puff and passes it to KC.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

What about you? Anyone waiting for you tonight?

KC shakes her head as she inhales.

KC

No, not anymore. It was getting too complicated. Plus, I don't think I'm going to be sticking around here much longer.

Reggie perks up at this.

REGGIE

Oh yeah?

This inquiry energizes KC. She sits up more, finally engaged in the conversation.

KC

Yeah. I mean, I went to school to do art. After graduation, I couldn't find anything that spoke to me. So I came here. And it was fine, for a while. A job is a job. But... I feel like I'm wasting away. I have to get out of here.

Reggie leans over and pats KC on the shoulder. He then takes the joint from her.

REGGIE

I've thought about quitting all the time.

KC

And why don't you?

REGGIE

This is all I've ever known. I'd just end up managing some other theater if I left.

KC
Doesn't that bother you?

One more puff from Reggie.

REGGIE
Only sometimes.

Reggie ashes the J on the wall. There's a tear in his eye, and he hurriedly wipes it away. he feigns the wipe into a glance at his watch.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Could you go check on theater 4?
The audience should be gone by now,
and maybe then we can finally go
home.

KC
Sure.

KC gets up and heads for the door. She stops and turns towards Reggie.

KC (CONT'D)
Hey, it was good talking with you.
Like this.

REGGIE
Yeah, I feel the same.

KC
It humanizes you. I always thought
you were a hardass.

Reggie laughs. KC smiles and walks back inside.

7 INT. THEATER LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 7

KC crosses the pristine lobby, grabs a broom, and walks straight into Auditorium 4.

8 INT. AUDITORIUM 4 - CONTINUOUS 8

As soon as she walks in, KC can tell something is off. The theater is still occupied. Elaine, Brody and Britt are in their seats, watching the pre/post-show theater advertisements.

KC clears her throat.

KC
Hi y'all, the theater is closed.

The trio doesn't turn around.

KC (CONT'D)
Excuse me! It's time for you to go home!

KC is ticked off. She walks a bit further into the theater. Her foot kicks something. KC looks down to find Sarah's body, mouth agape in an eternal scream. Tony's body is a few aisles down, feet sticking into the walkway.

KC throws up right where she stands. When she looks back up, Elaine, Britt, and Brody are staring right at her.

BRITT
That's the one who wouldn't get me more popcorn.

Elaine grunts. She steps into the aisle and sprints towards KC.

KC
Oh shit oh shit oh shit oh shit

KC runs towards the door, with Elaine close on her heels.

9 INT. THEATER LOBBY - SAME

9

KC exits the auditorium and slams the door shut behind her. She sticks the broom in between the two door handles, trapping them inside. They push and slam on the door, struggling.

KC
REGGIE!!! I NEED YOUR HELP NOW!

Reggie comes bolting out of his office, wielding a baseball bat. He gets KC away from the door, ushering her behind him.

Without KC holding the door back, the pushes from inside become more violent. The broom holding everything in place begins to crack.

REGGIE
What's going on?

KC
They killed the customers

REGGIE

Who's they?

The pushing stops for a second. Then, the doors burst open, shattering the broom.

Brody stands in front of the women, bored. They start to walk forward, causing Reggie and KC to retreat towards the center of the lobby.

KC

(to Reggie)

If we die here, it's been nice working with you.

REGGIE

Ditto.

ELAINE

Brody, Britt, take care of them.

Brody smiles. He steps towards Reggie, and easily snatches the bat away from him, tossing it behind the counter. He grabs Reggie and hoists him onto the concessions counter and begins strangling him. Britt walks past Brody, directly towards KC.

Time slows. KC looks the door. She looks at Reggie, struggling for breath. She looks at Britt, walking towards her. Her mind is made up.

She hops over the counter (avoiding Brody), goes to the popcorn machine, and opens up the bottom.

KC rips a tube out of its place from the popcorn cabinet and pulls it out. She points it at Britt and slams her button on a switch, with a big handwritten sticker over it: "OIL."

KC

Here's your popcorn refill, bitch.

The tube sputters. Then out comes hot popcorn oil... directly onto Britt. Her skin blisters and steams, and she screams.

Brody looks up, concerned by Britt's scream. That's when a beer bottle smashes over his head, and Brody drops to the floor, unconscious.

Reggie, still alive, brandishes another beer bottle.

Elaine is furious, she's bright red. KC and Reggie turn to face Elaine, brandishing their weapons.

KC (CONT'D)
You want to try us?

REGGIE
We'll fuck you up.

Elaine sizes them up, and then... runs out the fire door.

KC drops the butter house, hops over the counter, and goes to Reggie. They stare at the mess around them (the passed out Brody and Britt included in the mess).

REGGIE (CONT'D)
(hoarsely)
That's going to be a bitch to clean
up.

KC nods. She takes off her nametag and throws it into the mess.

KC
Good luck. I quit.

KC walks back towards the fire door. Reggie is stunned.

REGGIE
You quit?

KC
Yeah. This shit is not worth dying
over. Have a good night, Reggie.

KC salutes Reggie and walks out the door. Reggie watches. He nods in acceptance, impressed by KC. He looks around the lobby.

REGGIE
Where the hell is a mop?

THE END