

THE INTERROGATION

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Written by

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2010-04-02 DRAFT

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"THE INTERROGATION"

FADE IN:

INT - POLICE STATION - DAY

A lunchbox sits quietly on the edge of a police detective's desk. The box is red, with the image of a cartoon monster printed on its side.

CREDITS PLAY OVER.

A man's hand grabs the lunchbox by the handle. We follow the hand and lunchbox across the room.

CREDITS END.

INT - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The lunchbox slams down on the interrogation room table. Pulling back, we see the owner of the hand, one DETECTIVE HARRIS. He glowers down across the table.

HARRIS

Got anything to say? Hmm?

We now see the hapless suspect. DAN MINNOW is a small, unimposing man. He's shaking in his boots.

Harris leans in.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

See, this lunchbox of yours was found at the scene.

Harris breathes on Minnow for an uncomfortably long moment.

MINNOW

I --

HARRIS

It was a good thing you had the forethought to put your name on it.

Harris flips the box over. Scrawled in marker on the bottom is the name "Dan Minnow."

Minnow swallows. He's sweating now.

SECURITY CAM POV

In grainy video, we see the room from a high angle. Harris looms over Minnow.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Now I'm not one to judge. I could care less that a grown man carries a Mad Monster lunchbox. Really none of my business. But here's what's got me wondering...

BACK TO THE ROOM

Harris sits on the edge of the table. He's a little too close - invading Minnow's personal space.

Casually, he flips open the box lid.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Why is it full of Bazooka Joe comics?

MINNOW

No, don't open it!

In a surprising burst of energy, Minnow reaches out with his cuffed hands and slams the box lid shut.

Harris jumps down from the table.

HARRIS

What is it, Minnow? Something you don't want me to see?

MINNOW

No, it's not like that. You wouldn't understand.

HARRIS

I'd like to. I'd like to understand how you thought you could get away with all of it. The spray-paint, the manhole covers. Even the school bus full of golf balls. Why don't you try to explain it?

Minnow looks at Harris. He relaxes his grip on the box.

MINNOW

Look, it was all a big misunderstanding. Things got out of control.

HARRIS

Out of control? The Southside parking garage is wrapped in piano wire. The performing arts center is hip deep in banana milkshake. Do you have any idea what that's going to smell like tomorrow?

Minnow sighs.

MINNOW

It's not my fault! I'm not responsible.

HARRIS

Uh-huh. So who was?

Minnow looks down at the lunchbox. The cartoon face of Mad Monster grins back at him.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Minnow! Who was it?

MINNOW

Forget it. Just go ahead and arrest me.

HARRIS

Not so fast. I want to hear this. Who's your "man on the grassy knoll?"

Minnow doesn't answer. He puts his head down on the table.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Or did someone put you up to it? Who are you protecting?

Harris spins the lunchbox around. Minnow's eyes watch as Harris flicks the switch. This time he doesn't do anything.

MINNOW

(quietly)

You'll find out.

Harris opens the lid. He pulls out handfuls of bubble gum wrappers and lays them on the table. At the bottom of the box is another hideous smiling monster face.

Harris sets the box down. He circles the room.

HARRIS

You're not doing yourself any favors here.

Minnow watches the lunchbox. It just sits there, open.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Refusing counsel. No explanations. At some point, we're gonna make our case and it'll be too late.

The box jiggles, ever so slightly.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Now's the time to help yourself. If you give me names, I might be able to get you a deal.

Unbelievably, a green cartoon monster hand emerges from the lunchbox. It slaps down on the table. An elbow follows. Minnow watches with anguish.

Harris is oblivious.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

What's it gonna be, Minnow? Time is running out.

Another arm lurches out of the box. Then that bizarre cartoon face.

MAD MONSTER

Yeah, Minnow, what's it gonna be? Tick tock!

MINNOW

Shut up! Leave me alone!

Mad Monster chuckles, then grunts as he pulls the rest of his bulky frame out of the box.

Harris doesn't see or hear any of this.

HARRIS

You'd better watch your mouth. I could be the only friend you've got.

Mad Monster takes a seat in the chair next to Minnow. He puts his elbows on the table, mimicking Minnow's posture. Mad Monster is chewing gum, presumably Bazooka Joe. He blows a bubble.

SECURITY CAM POV

It's just Harris and Minnow in the room. No sign of Mad Monster.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

You think the D.A. is going to have a sense of humor about this? You've got another think coming.

BACK IN THE ROOM

Mad Monster is visible again.

MAD MONSTER

Think, think, think.

Harris puts his fingers in his ears. Squeezes his eyes shut. Mad Monster follows suit.

HARRIS

So that's it? Fine, I'm done. I'll make that call to the D.A.

Harris moves toward the door.

Mad Monster opens one eye, then the other. He jabs Minnow in the side.

MAD MONSTER

Hey, buddy. C'mon. Give him something to work with. This could be fun.

MINNOW

No.

HARRIS

What?

MAD MONSTER

C'mon, he's begging for it.

MINNOW

I said no.

HARRIS

So give me a name. I know it wasn't just you.

MAD MONSTER

Yeah, Danny boy. Tell him!

HARRIS

Who's the big fish?

Minnow looks at Harris. He looks at Mad Monster. The cartoon grins wide, nodding his head. He blows another bubble.

MINNOW

I've known him since I was a kid.

Harris grins.

Mad Monster claps his hand on Minnow's shoulder.

MAD MONSTER

Ata boy, Minnow.

MINNOW

I used to get picked on.

HARRIS

Sure, I get that. Kids can be cruel.

MINNOW

I didn't know how to fight back. But Mad Monster did.

HARRIS

The character on your lunchbox, eh? Go on.

MAD MONSTER

Go on.

MINNOW

One day, I got stopped on the way to school. The same guy had been knocking me down all week. I knew if I was bigger, stronger, like Mad Monster, he wouldn't bother me.

MAD MONSTER

That's right. Jerry Kubiak didn't see what was coming.

MINNOW

Kubiak grabbed my lunchbox, started hitting me with it. That's when Mad Monster started protecting me.

Harris looks worried. This has gone in a direction he didn't expect.

MINNOW

He came right out of the lunchbox. Beat poor Jerry within an inch of his life.

Mad Monster is out of his chair, pantomiming the fight, shadow boxing around the room.

HARRIS

Tell me, Minnow, you ever undergo any psychiatric care?

MINNOW

It frightened me, but at the same time, I kind of enjoyed it.

Minnow looks up. For the first time, there's an air of confidence about him. Something scary in his eyes.

MINNOW (CONT'D)

Mad Monster has been with me ever since. For better or for worse.

HARRIS

You're telling me a cartoon character was responsible for today's prank gone haywire?

MINNOW

He's got a strange sense of humor.

Minnow looks over at Mad Monster.

MINNOW

I can't always talk him out of things. Sometimes I have to just go along with it.

Mad Monster shrugs. He pulls the stringy gum from his mouth and slaps it on the table.

MAD MONSTER

Hey, Danny, you got any more gum? This wad's lost its taste.

HARRIS

Dan, I'm going to have a friend of mine, Dr. Pierson, come on down to talk with you. I think she'll be able to help.

Minnow looks at Harris. He doesn't like the sound of that. Mad Monster doesn't either.

MAD MONSTER

You hear that? He's bringing in a shrink! You know how I feel about shrinks.

MINNOW

We don't like shrinks.

Harris notices something on the table. He reaches out, touching the wad of gum.

HARRIS

Where did this come from?

Mad Monster grabs Harris by the throat and lifts him up. He slams the cop against the wall.

SECURITY CAM POV

Harris is hovering above the floor, held by an unseen force. His heels kick against the wall.

BACK IN THE ROOM

Mad Monster continues to hold Harris.

MAD MONSTER

Let's go, Danny. This isn't fun any more.

Minnow snaps his lunchbox shut and makes for the door.

MAD MONSTER (CONT'D)

Nah, leave it. We don't need it any longer.

MINNOW

You sure?

MAD MONSTER

Yeah.

Minnow leaves the box on the table. He opens the door.

MINNOW

Sorry, Detective. Nothing personal.

MAD MONSTER

Get going, Danny. I'm right behind you.

Minnow exits. Mad Monster waits a second, then dumps Harris on the floor. He lumbers out after Minnow.

Harris gasps for breath. He'll live.

Offscreen, we hear the sounds of the police station in uproar as Mad Monster and Minnow make their escape.

THE END