

A Place of Worship

Written by
Anthony Cawood

Copyright (c) 2019

anthony@anthonycawood.co.uk

EXT. QUIET HIGHWAY - DAY

A small brown sedan cruises the empty road.

Ahead looms a modern Church, an empty lot on either side.

The car signals and turns into the Church car park.

CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

The car stops, one of just a few parked up.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

DWIGHT, 40s, spaghetti-thin uber-nerd, checks his watch.

INSERT: Watch-face, 5.58pm

Dwight glances at the exterior of the Church, a neon sign flickers on, then another.

The signs advertise DANCING GIRLS, HOT NUDES, BEST STRIPPERS IN THE STATE, WORSHIP HERE.

DWIGHT

C'mon.

The last sign flickers on, KITTEN emblazoned across a larger than life pair of neon breasts.

Dwight smiles and exits the car.

EXT. CHURCH ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Dwight stands patiently at the door examining the signs for the opening hours, Liquor license, the girls that are appearing this week and a morning service on Thursday from the Strip Church ministry.

He tries the door, still locked.

Dwight frowns and bangs on the door. Silence.

He brays on the door again.

HARRY (O.S.)

We're not open yet.

DWIGHT

It's gone six.

HARRY (O.S.)
Only just.

Locks and chains RATTLE and CLICK as HARRY, 30s, built like a brick wall, pulls open the door.

HARRY
Bit eager, ain't ya?

Dwight pushes in and past.

DWIGHT
She here yet?

HARRY
Who?

DWIGHT
Ms Natividad.

Harry follows Dwight through a curtain and into the church.

CHURCH INTERIOR

Dwight takes it all in.

A series of pews are arranged in front of a raised stage cum runway. Three poles rise upwards towards the arched roof.

At the rear is a bar area, a bunch of tables with upturned chairs atop them but not much else.

Round the sides of the church are shadowy private dancing booths and covering every wall and eye level surface are posters of strippers, pornstars and adult films.

DWIGHT
Nice.

HARRY
Thanks, we try, and no.

DWIGHT
No, what?

Harry points at a large cardboard cut-out of Kitten Natividad from much earlier in her career.

HARRY
She ain't here yet.

BAR AREA

Dwight sits with a beer, other men sit nearby taking glances at the stage as the bored STRIPPER gyrates awkwardly.

He motions at Harry who's talking to RUSS, the Bouncer, 20s, with muscles that turned to fat after he left school.

DWIGHT
What time is she on?

HARRY
Why? What's the big deal?

Dwight struggles to pull a small box from his jacket pocket as it gets stuck on something metallic the way out.

He pulls a stack of cards out and fans them on the table.

Harry peers at them and WHISTLES. He picks up a card of the stripper, Blaze Star. It's signed across the bottom.

He looks at the back, a Mother Productions logo embossed in across it in silver leaf.

HARRY
Quite the collection.

Harry picks up the Kitten Natividad card, unsigned.

DWIGHT
Her signature will make a full set.

HARRY
Wow, worth much like that?

Dwight grins, unpleasant avarice in the creases of his skin.

DWIGHT
Complete, about twenty grand.

HARRY
Really?

DWIGHT
Yeah, I got Lili St Cyr before she passed. No one else does.

Harry glances at the entrance, smile gone entirely.

HARRY
Russ, throw this weirdo outta here.

Harry sweeps up the cards before Dwight can react.

DWIGHT
What the fuck?

He grabs Harry's hand, just as Russ, the Bouncer, grabs Dwight by the collar and yanks him backwards.

Dwight still has Harry by the wrist, they both go flying backwards as the cards flutter into the air.

Dwight hits the floor hard.

DWIGHT
(screaming)
Bastards.

He grabs something else from within his jacket, a small metallic revolver.

DWIGHT
Think I'd come into this shithole
unarmed?

He aims the gun at Harry.

HARRY
Hey now, let's just calm it all down.

Dwight waves the gun erratically.

DWIGHT
Fucking pick up my cards and God help
you if any are damaged.

Dwight notices that the music and chatter has stopped, he turns to find the stripper and audience are watching him.

One of the audience, a few beers ahead of everyone else, starts to cheer and clap the new floor show.

The Bouncer hasn't stopped though, he brings a fist down like a hammer onto Dwight's arm, the one holding the gun.

BANG

Harry SCREAMS and grabs his ear, what's left of it.

The gun clatters to the floor as Dwight dives after it, followed by the Bouncer.

They struggle on the floor like Greco-Roman wrestlers.

The gun fires again, muffled by someone's flesh.

Dwight struggles but manages to push the dead Bouncer away.

He climbs to his feet, gun clenched in his fist, madness in his eyes.

He spins looking for Harry, who's almost at the bar.

Dwight fires as Harry ducks behind the barrier.

Harry springs up a few feet further down the bar, a pump action shotgun in his hand.

He pumps it.

STRIPPER

Fuck this.

She runs, and the audience follows suit.

Dwight launches himself towards the nearest table.

BANG the shotgun bellows and the table explodes.

Shot and wood splinters catch Dwight in the shoulder as his dive below the table becomes a crash.

HARRY

Look at this fucking mess.

Dwight pokes his head above the table and fires wildly.

BANG.

HARRY

Fucker, stop shoot --

Dwight fires again. BANG.

This bullet hits Harry in the gut, he doubles over in agony as it sears right through leaving a gaping exit wound.

BANG the shotgun discharges and cuts the cardboard effigy of Kitten in half.

DWIGHT

Kitten!

A swish of velvet curtain and KITTEN NATIVIDAD saunters in.

KITTEN

Someone holler?