

THE COLLECTOR

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. RANGER STATION - NIGHT

A black pickup truck parks along a chain link fence that surrounds an oversized antenna. Behind the fence, a small bricked building lies partially hidden by trees and brush.

JERRY, 50's, donning a yellow raincoat, exits the truck.

INT. RANGER STATION - NIGHT

Small and quaint. Numerous pamphlets of all sizes displayed neatly on the front desk. Faded red walls throughout.

CHARLIE, 40's, sits at a desk, and holds tight on the CB radio clicker stationed in front of him.

CHARLIE

Phil, can you hear me? Over.

He releases the button, static sounds reverberate from the small radio.

Nervously he reaches into his front pocket, pulls out a pack of cigarettes and fumbles them to the ground.

CHARLIE

Shit.

He ducks under the table, grabs the cigarettes, unaware of Jerry standing behind him.

JERRY (O.S.)

Charlie.

Startled, Charlie BANGS his head on the table.

CHARLIE

Son of a bitch!

He sits back up in his chair, rubs his head.

CHARLIE

Damn it, Jerry. You can't sneak up on me like that.

Charlie lights a cigarette. Jerry unzips his raincoat, hangs it on a hook along the back wall.

JERRY

I thought your shift ended over an hour ago?

CHARLIE

I can't get a hold of Phil. He was supposed to take over.

JERRY

That doesn't sound like him. He's normally very punctual.

Charlie hands the radio clicker to Jerry.

CHARLIE

Here, you try. Nothing but static on the other end.

Jerry holds the radio up to his mouth, clicks.

JERRY

Phil, this is Jerry, can you hear me?

He releases the clicker, sounds of static filter out. Attempts to call Phil a second time. Same result.

JERRY

That's odd. Hard to believe the radio would be interfering like it is.

Jerry grabs his raincoat, heads for the front door.

JERRY

I'm going to my truck.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Jerry holds the CB clicker to his mouth.

JERRY
Charlie, can you hear me?

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Loud and clear.

JERRY
(presses the clicker)
Good, I'm going to try Phil again.

Jerry changes the dial output on the CB radio, tries Phil.

JERRY
(presses the clicker)
Phil, this is Jerry. Can you hear me?

The same static sound as before. He changes the dial back to Charlie.

JERRY
(presses the clicker)
Charlie.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Any word on, Phil?

JERRY
(presses the clicker)
I got nothing. If it's alright with you I would like to go out and try to find him.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Might as well, I'm late as it is.

Jerry starts up the truck, pulls away.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Jerry's truck stops at the edge of a small clearing.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Jerry reaches out, grabs a hold of a small searchlight mounted on the side of the driver's door.

He flashes into the darkness, images of trees come into view. He continues to move the light around until he comes across the back of a brown truck. The driver's door is wide open, the back window shattered.

Jerry flashes beyond the truck and steadies the light on a white car that's parked along the edge of the woods. From his view the car looks to be intact.

He holds the searchlight stationary on both vehicles as he steps out.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

He trudges along, flashes the ground with a flashlight.

A red dot appears on a small rock on the ground. Jerry bends down and touches it. Blood soaks into his skin.

As he heads closer to the vehicles, the number of blood drops increase every couple of feet before they finally stop at the back of the truck.

A bloodied hand print stretches from the rear bumper to the driver's door.

Jerry flashes inside the truck. Blood splattered across the front windshield. More blood along the dashboard.

A CB radio on the floorboard, torn apart, wires exposed.

His face exudes terror as he heads for the white car. He flashes inside the vehicle, empty. Scans the front end of the vehicle, finds more blood smeared across the hood.

A drop of blood falls from up above, lands on his arm.

Jerry flashes above into the night sky. Scared, he drops the flashlight and runs to his truck.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Jerry grabs the CB radio, calls to Charlie.

JERRY
 (presses the clicker)
 Charlie!

CHARLIE (O.S.)
 Have any luck finding, Phil?

JERRY
 (presses the clicker)
 Call the police! Call them now!

CHARLIE (O.S.)
 Jerry, what's going on?

Jerry ignores Charlie, drops the CB radio to the floorboard, and directs the searchlight above the vehicles.

Three bodies hang from their necks, roped to a tree limb. Each of the individual's hands and feet bound together with duct tape. Their shirts soaked with blood.

JERRY
 Oh, dear god.

INT. SAMMY'S BAR - DAY

A few PATRONS sit along the bar, each with a drink in front of them. Others sit in booths towards the back. A small T.V. blares from above the bar counter.

A WOMAN news reporter talks live on the air.

NEWS REPORTER
 ... police are still trying to piece together the events that lead to the mysterious deaths of Park Ranger Phil Dutton and Tahoe residents John and Emily Sims.

SAMMY, 50's, turns the T.V off, then pours a beer from a tap and hands it to CARL, 40's, who leans against the counter sucking on a toothpick.

SAMMY

Fucking sad what happen to the three of them.

CARL

That's no way to go out. Could you imagine what they must have gone through. Just thinking about it makes me sick.

DARREN, early 30's, athletic build, walks in and sits down next to Carl. He sets down a smart phone on the countertop and waives to Sammy.

DARREN

Barkeep, I'll take a beer. None of that light shit.

Sammy begins to pour a beer. Carl eyeballs the phone.

CARL

Is that one of those smart phones?

DARREN

Yeah, it was a gift.

Sammy places the beer in front of Darren.

CARL

A gift, huh? Someone must really like you?

Darren takes a sip, licks the foam off his mouth.

CARL

Would you mind if I took a look at it? I've been thinking of buying one for my daughter.

Carl places his hand on the phone.

DARREN

Look it, buddy. If you don't remove your hand from my phone I'll remove it for you.

CARL

Carl.

DARREN

What?

CARL

You called me, buddy... The name is Carl.

Carl rotates the toothpick around in his mouth.

DARREN

Look buddy, I didn't come here to talk to the local asshole so if you don't mind, direct your conversation somewhere else?

Darren rips the phone from Carl's hand.

CARL

Sorry man, just making small talk. You don't have to be so rude.

Darren finishes his beer, stuffs his phone in his coat pocket and heads to the -

BATHROOM

Darren stands at a urinal, relieves himself when Carl walks in and stands behind him.

CARL

Hey, asshole. You disrespected me in front of my friend when I was trying to be nice to you.

DARREN

Fuck off. I'm trying to take a piss.

CARL

I don't give a fuck what you're doing?
You and I have a problem that needs to
be settled... Maybe a phone in exchange
for your face not getting pounded on
would be a start.

Darren zips up his zipper, flushes the urinal. Carl places his hand on Darren's shoulder. Darren grabs Carl's hand and bends it upwards, causes Carl to fall to his knees in pain.

CARL

Alright, buddy! I give. I was just
fucking with you.

Darren kicks Carl in the stomach.

CARL

You couldn't let it go. Had to keep
opening that faggot mouth of yours.

Darren grips a hold of Carl's head and slams it against the tiled floor several times. Blood sprays on the ground.

Carl spits out teeth as Darren picks him up, carries him to an empty stall and dips his head into the toilet.

Darren holds him down for a few seconds then brings his head back out.

DARREN

How does that feel? Had enough you
fucking asshole?

Carl mumbles out words.

DARREN

What? I can't hear you.

Darren looks possessed as he throws Carl's head back in the toilet and holds him down. Carl's arms and legs flail around before finally his body comes to a stop. Dead.

Darren bends down, picks up Carl's toothpick and puts it in his pants pocket.

Darren unlocks a small window above the toilet, climbs out.

EXT. SAMMY'S BAR - DAY

A BUM, 30's, sits against a wood fence, and takes notice of Darren.

BUM
Ditching your bar tab, mister?

DARREN
Something like that.

The bum approaches Darren.

BUM
Can you spare a dollar, mister?

Darren ignores the bum, tries to walk by when the bum reaches out and hugs him.

DARREN
What the fuck are you doing? Get off me, you asshole.

Darren pushes the bum to the ground and runs away.

The bum sits up and watches Darren disappear around the corner. He stands up, opens his hands, and smiles. It's Darren's smart phone.