

The Felonious Monk

By

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FADE IN:

INT. MONASTERY - DAY

We're deep inside the depths of a dank catacomb somewhere in some place we were never meant to be.

The only signs of life are a flickering candle, a MONK with his back to us, and a lifeless body resting on a stoic wooden slab.

MONK

We were one.

Though we still haven't envisioned his face, the monk's pain-infused voice hints at his gravitas. A single drop of water spots the wooden slab.

As our meager visibility wavers, the monk extends a hand to touch the reposed cadaver, he then slowly exits.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

The monk is kneeling in front of an altar with an ABBOT casting an enormous, yet silent, weight down upon his cloaked shoulders.

A solemn chant echoes throughout the large room we're now inhabiting as more monks quietly file into this sacred space.

As the chanting stops, the steady voice of the abbot fills our ears.

ABBOT

We pray deeply and with our hearts
set open for you in light of your
loss. We ask that the scourge out
there never be permitted passage
beyond these walls. For ours is a
place of solitude; of quiet
reflection and peace...

As the abbot's voice fades under, the monk rises from his knees and briskly exits the room. As he leaves we are greeted by a plain black casket holding the dead teen.

As the monk clears the exit the abbot appears torn as he struggles with his own emotions.

The chanting rises into our audible range anew as our vision becomes black.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Light footfalls scrape across the old stone floor until they stop in front of a shut door with light emanating from it.

A deeply veined hand raps on the door. We wait. Then the door slowly waves open.

INSIDE THE ROOM

The monk returns to his chair in front of a castoff school desk. The door closes.

An old box spring anchors a corner, a worn footlocker rests at its foot.

The abbot steps further into the room staring at the uncovered back of the monk's head.

ABBOT

You have been with us for a year now. And in that time I have noticed a remarkable transformation in your character. No other who has come to us seeking refuge and salvation from the suffering of the world has ever made a greater change. To now squander all that you have become would be a devastating decision; one we sincerely hope that you will avoid making.

Silence.

ABBOT

But of course, that decision must be made by you and only you know what the outcome will be.

Longer silence.

The abbot then turns and faces the door. But he pauses momentarily before he departs.

ABBOT

I do hope you will decide to do what is right.

He exits.

For the first time, we see the monk's face. A long healed scar trails down one side of his weathered face. His dark hair beginning to show signs of his years.

He tries hard, but he can't control the flood of tears surging from his eyes. After a few moments, he hesitantly cranes his head upward.

MONK

(through sobs)

He didn't ask for this. He was just...he was just a kid. Why? Why him and not me? Talk to me -- talk to me! Why my son?

Then, in an instant, the monk is on his knees in front of the worn footlocker. He flings open the latch and rifles through the contents.

A few moments pass before he stops and pulls out a family picture. Emotionally spent and trembling, he collapses onto the cold stone floor. His eyes never leave the picture.

We go black.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

The monk cuts a path straight through the bustle on the sidewalk and into a dingy storefront. The sign on it reads: GOLD RUSH PAWN SHOP.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

It's your typical inner city fence's palace fully equipped with a snow filled TV screen, a lazy dog that won't bite and a diverse collection of worthless tchotchkes.

The man behind the counter doesn't bother to look up from his bag of food when he hears the bell over the door chime.

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER

Never thought you'd be stupid enough to do that again.

MONK

Never thought I'd have to be.

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER

Whatta you want?

MONK

I need your help.

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER
Can't help ya 'til I know what it's
for.

The monk begins pacing the long cloudy glass showcase touching a few items as he goes.

The man behind the counter looks up, following him with his eyes.

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER
Well it sure as hell aint down
there.

The monk stops, turns and looks directly at the man behind the counter.

Without a word the man behind the counter lifts a menacing black handgun from the dingy display case and places it on the counter top.

MONK
I can't pay you for it.

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER
I aint askin you too. I just want
you to promise me you'll put one in
him for me too.

They lock eyes as the monk walks over to the spot where the gun is. He palms it. The man behind the counter presses his own hand down on the monk's

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER
Family's gotta stick together. Most
of the time it's all you got in
this world.

They both withdraw their hands and the man behind the counter walks around the counter and they embrace.

MONK
(while hugging)
Thank you.

They embrace each other like that as we pull back.

INT. DRUG HOUSE - DAY

This dilapidated living room has seen much better days.

A group of four YOUNG THUGS is sitting around a trash littered living room smoking, drinking and blasting music.

A loud knock draws one of the toughs to the door.

At the door, just as he peeps through the peephole, another BOOMING knock startles him. He looks back into the living room, but no one seems to notice or even care much.

LEAD THUG

Douche bags.

He peels the door open with a quick flourish showing us the fresh faced scrawny teenager waiting on the doorstep.

LEAD THUG

What?

SCRAWNY TEENAGER

Can I get some...

LEAD THUG

Fucking amateur.

He leaves the door and walks back inside the living room returning after a second with a small baggie in tow. He shows it to the teenager.

LEAD THUG

Is this what you were trying to say
Mumbles?

SCRAWNY TEENAGER

Yeah. How much is it?

LEAD THUG

What the fuck are you a cop?

The scrawny teenager throws a quick look to either side of the porch.

SCRAWNY TEENAGER

No man, this is my first one, so
I'm kinda nervous.

LEAD THUG

Why ya nervous? Afraid mom and
dad'll kick your ass if they find
out you like to kick it?

The scrawny teenager reaches into his hip pocket, pulls out some crumpled bills and shoves them at the thug.

SCRAWNY TEENAGER

Yeah. Look, I gotta go, so can I just have it now?

The thug sizes the scrawny teenager up for a moments before handing over the baggie of drugs.

LEAD THUG

Go on, get the fuck outta here.

SCRAWNY TEENAGER

Thanks.

He retreats swiftly. The thug eyeballs his take, the fleeing teenager, then shuts the door.

Just as the door lock clicks the monk, dressed in street clothes, appears on the sidewalk in front of the drug den; seething behind a cold stare.

And our view slowly becomes...

INT. MONASTERY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sitting in the same chair staring endlessly at the family picture is the monk, now in his robe. He holds that posture for a few more moments then reaches down and slides the rickety desk drawer open.

THE GUN

Black and menacing even in its stolid state, rests heavily in his palm.

IN THE DOORWAY

Stands the abbot; silent, drawn in as the monk gently caresses the cold metal's sleek lineaments.

Then, sensing the extra presence in the room, the monk whips around, gun in hand. But the abbot doesn't budge. Instead he breathes deeply and says...

ABBOT

(softly)

I have no other choice.

Pause. Then the abbot turns and walks away. The monk shifts his eyes upward and speaks quietly...

MONK
Please forgive me.

As our light dims, the monk sits there holding the gun.

INT. BRISTOL HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Besides the slick new flat screen hanging on the wall, this place is a real dump.

RODRIGO, an aging desk attendant, greets a young couple too caught up in their anxious lust to hear the house rules.

Rodrigo hands over a room key and smiles knowingly.

RODRIGO
(back to his program)
Yeah, see ya in a few...

As the drone of the television set overtakes us, the monk enters through the front door. Rodrigo immediately rises from his seat when he catches sight of him.

RODRIGO
What, no more rooms in the
monastery?

He tries to eek a laugh out of the monk, but it's useless.

RODRIGO
How long willya need it for?

MONK
Until I leave.

RODRIGO
Good thing I can read minds,
otherwise I'd be shit outta luck.

MONK
How much is the room?

RODRIGO
(a once-over)
For you, fifty a night. My dad was
a religious freak, so was my mom,
and my old lady.

MONK
What happened?

RODRIGO

Oh, you mean why am I working in the lobby of this fine establishment instead of being somewhere thumping a bible against some wayward soul's noggin?

No answer, just a telling look.

RODRIGO

(shuffling papers)

Well, I own this little beauty. Thirty five years runnin. Seen a lot of shit go down in here.

MONK

Imagine that.

RODRIGO

Try living through it.

MONK

Answer my question. Why are you here?

Rodrigo searches for the right words to say, then he looks the monk square in the eyes.

RODRIGO

What else am I supposed to do?

With that the monk hands Rodrigo a bill, accepts the room key and walks away leaving Rodrigo to contemplate his life.

EXT. ROOM 45 - NIGHT

At the door, the monk pauses, looks around, then enters.

INSIDE

Typical roach motel chic.

The monk takes a precautionary look around the room before he takes a seat in the small chair by the window. He draws the curtain open on the desolate night and gazes skyward.

And our view from behind the monk becomes one with the dark sky in front of us.

INT. DRUG HOUSE - DAY

A familiar scene.

Through a front window one of the thugs spots the monk coming up the walk.

SECOND THUG
Hey, check this guy out.

THIRD THUG
Who is he?

SECOND THUG
(laughing)
Your dad.

The lead thug walks over to the window and throws the curtain back. He then moves to the door and swiftly swings it open bringing him and the monk face-to-face. They lock eyes.

LEAD THUG
No cops allowed, gramps.

The other thugs cosign their agreement with laughter.

MONK
You guys wanna party?

He then reaches deep into his jacket and pulls out a wad of cash and hands it to the lead thug. The lead thug looks at it incredulously and steps aside allowing the monk to enter.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A heaping bag of marijuana and a saucer covered in white powder arrive in front of the monk.

LEAD THUG
That's top of line shit you're looking at, my friend. It don't get no better.

MONK
Sit down.

The lead thug and the other two look at each other quizzically. He sits.

LEAD THUG

You sure you wanna do this?

SECOND THUG

Yeah, I mean, you're kinda old.

The monk shoots daggers through the lowlife and he quickly cans it.

MONK

You rollin'?

The lead thug whips out a pack of rolling papers, unzips the bag of weed, breaks a measure off and stuffs it into the paper. Lighter, inhale, smoke. They each take deep tokes.

SECOND THUG

How's it feel?

THIRD THUG

Look at him, he's stoned off his old ass already.

SECOND THUG

Nice, more for me.

He takes a deep pull from the joint.

MONK

You guys remind me of myself about ten years ago.

LEAD THUG

Oh yeah? How's that old man?

MONK

(chuckles)

Believe it or not, I used to sell this shit too. In this same house.

The three thugs all share a look.

The monk rises from his seat and begins pacing.

MONK

I remember sitting here for hours, days, getting high with my wife. She loved it more than I did.

(pause)

She didn't make it. Killed herself with an overdose of my stash.

(longer pause)

After that, I swore that I'd never touch the shit again...

(turns to the thugs; laughs)
Well, so much for that one, eh?

LEAD THUG
Hey man, I aint really got time for
this trip down memory lane, so
either smoke or get the fuck out.

MONK
You have something better to do?

SECOND THUG
Man's gotta make a living, you
know?

MONK
Sure.

The monk returns to his seat and picks up the saucer.

MONK
Beautiful stuff you got here.
Colombian snow?

LEAD THUG
...Yeah...

MONK
I thought so. You know -- you gonna
hit a few or what, tough guy?

The lead thug begins portioning out a few lines of the
powder.

MONK
My son, great kid, used to hang
around here. Said he did it because
he felt loved here, said you guys
were like brothers to him.

With that the lead thug stops what he's doing and rises from
the his eat next to the monk.

LEAD THUG
What the fuck is this some fucking
set-up?
(pulls out a gun)
I'll fucking blast your old ass,
man. I mean it.

The monk, undisturbed, relaxes into his seat.

SECOND THUG

(to the lead thug)

Put that shit away, dude. We can't afford another one right now.

LEAD THUG

No, I think grandpa here needs a lesson in etiquette.

He walks over to the monk, glares down at him, then mops his face with the gun. Then again. But the monk shows no signs of pain.

The third thug comes over and grabs the lead thug pulling him away off the monk.

MONK

What did he do? Talk too much? Short with a payment? Or maybe you're just a real badass motherfucker?

LEAD THUG

Get him the fuck outta here before something bad happens to him.

MONK

(stands)

Something bad? You mean like someone gets shot and dies? Is that bad enough for you you worthless piece of shit -- is it?

LEAD THUG

Fuck you!

MONK

You have no idea how much I miss him everyday. You took his life. Beat. And you destroyed mine.

The lead thug breaks free from the third thug and approaches the monk; they're nose-to-nose. Then,

BAM

A single shot rings out. Then another. The lead thug slowly falls to the floor; eyes wide; mouth wide open.

The other two thugs look down at their dying friend, then up into the barrel of the monk's handgun.

SECOND THUG

No --

BAM. BAM.

The second thug drops to the floor. Two more shots echo through the room dropping the third thug to his knees and eventually his face.

As the last gasps of breath seep out of the thug's lungs, the monk clips his gun, says a silent prayer and watches as they continue their descent into the great beyond.

FADE TO BLACK