

BAIT

by

Steve Nazarian

stevenaz226@comcast.net

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FADE IN:

EXT. SALTWATER MARSH - MORNING

A beat up station wagon with handicap plates is parked on the side of a dirt road lined with trees. The road leads to a

EXT. WOODEN BRIDGE

About thirty feet long. Five ropes are tied to the bridge's guardrails. Each rope leads down into a stream running underneath the bridge.

Near the center of the bridge a large blue cooler and a long crabbing net rest beside a plastic bucket.

At the far end of the bridge a frail OLD MAN (75) leans over one of the bridge's guardrails. He is dressed in his Sunday's best. A faded Red Sox cap sits atop his head.

One of the ropes glides gently between the old man's fingers as he stares down at the murky water below.

The old man waits. Squints his eyes. A disappointed look.

OLD MAN
Slow day, Matilda. Bait's losing
its bite.

VROOM! VROOM! VROOOMMMMM!

The old man's head cocks up at the sound of an approaching motorcycle. He eyes the dirt road, grabs his cane, limps over to the next rope.

EXT. SALTWATER MARSH

The motorcycle's tires skid to a stop beside the wagon.

A black leather boot kicks the bike stand down.

The motorcycle shifts as the weight of its rider gets off.

THE BIKER (35) looks out at the bridge and the old man. Removes his helmet. There is a scar from the corner of the his mouth to his ear.

The helmet slams down on the seat of the bike.

EXT. WOODEN BRIDGE

The old man glances at the approaching biker.

He is huge. Six feet tall. Two hundred pounds. Long black hair. Dressed head to toe in leather.

THE BIKER
How goes it, old timer.

The biker removes his jacket. His arms are covered in freaky looking tattoos.

OLD MAN
Slow.

The biker lumbers over to the plastic bucket. Kicks it.

INSIDE THE BUCKET

several large Blue Crabs stir. Their arms extend, pinchers flaring, clearly unhappy about being caught.

The biker takes a pack of smokes and a lighter out of his jacket and rests the jacket on the bridge's guardrail.

THE BIKER
Doing alright for your age.

The biker kicks the large blue cooler.

THE BIKER
You got any beer in here?

THE OLD MAN
Bait.

The biker smirks, disappointed. Lights his cigarette.

OLD MAN
Matilda and I used to fill that
bucket by noon.

The biker glances up from the cigarette lighter's flame.

THE BIKER
She here now?

The old man gives up on the rope he's checking and shuffles over to the next one.

OLD MAN
She ain't.

The biker takes a long drag from his cigarette. Exhales.

THE BIKER
Just you and the crabs.

OLD MAN
Yup.

THE BIKER
All alone. Middle of nowhere.

OLD MAN
Yup.

The biker strolls over to the old man. Leans on the guardrail beside him. He's so big he blocks out the sun, casting the old man in shadow.

THE BIKER
I passed a sign about 5 miles back.
Said there was gas.

OLD MAN
No gas around here. Used to be a
station. Sign's still there.

THE BIKER
False fucking advertising.

OLD MAN
I suppose.

The old man crosses to a rope on the opposite side of the bridge.

The biker turns and leans his back against the guardrail. He crosses his massive arms.

THE BIKER
You got any money?

OLD MAN
Nope.

THE BIKER
How 'bout that shit can wagon over
there? You got any in there?

OLD MAN
Sorry.

THE BIKER

I've been riding a long time. I could sure use a few bucks when I find some gas.

OLD MAN

I told you I ain't got none.

The biker turns, leans over the guardrail, looks out at the beautiful yet ominous surroundings.

THE BIKER

You know... bad things happen in the middle of nowhere. People go missing.

The old man looks up from his rope... was that a threat?

THE BIKER

Heard a hitchhiker went missing a month ago. And a couple of kids camping a few months before that.

The old man heads for a new rope... near the foot of the bridge. Eyes the station wagon on his way.

THE BIKER

Authorities are hoping for the best. But the chances of them being alive are slim and none.

The old man checks the rope but his focus is on the biker.

THE BIKER

Doesn't take a brain surgeon to realize someone in the area has taken to killing. Someone strong. Probably male, young, maybe a drifter...

The biker turns around. A big shit-eating grin.

THE BIKER

... or a biker.

The old man freezes. The biker clearly has him on edge. The old man fishes into his pocket for something.

OLD MAN

Yup. I heard as much. There was a story in the paper and a deputy came by the house asking if we seen anyone suspicious.

The old man pulls a small pocket knife out. Unfolds it. Heads for the biker, knife in hand...

The biker is now the one on edge. A nervous laugh.

THE BIKER

Now me myself I'm not one for stereotypes. Shit. Just about anyone can take to killing.

The old man stops at a rope just before the biker. Uses the knife to shorten the slack end of the rope.

OLD MAN

Yup.

The old man snaps his knife shut. Pockets it with the cut off piece of rope.

The biker relaxes. Grunts. Takes one last drag off his cigarette. Ashes it into the guardrail.

THE BIKER

I'm just saying: A man needs to be careful out here. You never know who you might run into.

The old man walks past the biker on his way over to the next rope. As he passes the biker reaches into his back pocket...

OLD MAN (O.S.)

That's why I carry a permit.

The biker's hand freezes.

THE BIKER

Damn. You packing, old timer?

The old man checks his rope. No bites. Turns to the biker.

OLD MAN

Never leave home without it.

The biker notices the old man eyeing his hidden arm.

The biker pulls his hand out slowly... revealing a comb.

The biker smiles, another nervous laugh, raises his hands a la "don't shoot". Runs the comb through his hair.

THE BIKER

What kind of heat we talking about?

OLD MAN
Peacemaker.

THE BIKER
S.A.A.? Shit. You a good shot?

OLD MAN
Killed seven men in the war. Could
of killed seven more. Damn
claymore took my leg.

The old man pulls up one of his pant legs, revealing a
prosthetic leg. Strapped around its ankle is a gun.

THE BIKER
Fuck me. That must of hurt.
(beat)
My daddy did a tour in Nam.

The old man nods, lowers his pant leg. Leans over the
guardrail. Spits. Looks out at the water.

OLD MAN
Used to walk this stream barefoot
with mine. He would scoop the
crabs up with a net when they went
for my toes.

The biker chuckles. Joins the old man at the guardrail.

THE BIKER
You use traps now.

OLD MAN
Yup. Never was much good with a
net. Too busy watching my toes.

THE BIKER
No shit. I would be too.

OLD MAN
Matilda was good with a net.

The biker glances thoughtfully at the nearby crabbing net.

OLD MAN
I'd tie a chicken leg to a string.
Lure them in. Trick is to let 'em
eat a bit. Let 'em get
comfortable. Let 'em think they
are at the buffet, not on it.

The biker laughs.

OLD MAN

Yup. Sometimes they'd spot me.
They can see your shadow on the
water. But they'd never see that
net creeping up behind them.
Matilda was so quiet. You'd never
know she was there.

THE BIKER

Sounds like you two made a good
team.

The old man nods, sniffles, wipes his arm across his eyes.

THE BIKER (O.S.)

Name's Ray.

The old man takes RAY's outstretched hand and shakes it.

OLD MAN

Charlie.

CHARLIE sighs. Looks out longingly at the water.

CHARLIE

After Matilda got sick... things
changed. Seemed like soon as she
stopped coming here the crabs did
too. Damn cancer takes everything.

Ray nods, absentmindedly touching the scar on his face.

RAY

Took my old man too. Watching him
wither away... I almost missed him
being strong enough to--

Ray turns around, spooked by something.

RAY

You hear that?

Charlie just stares at him, confused.

RAY

Thought I heard something. Sounded
like crying.

Charlie sighs.

CHARLIE

I sometimes hear Matilda crying...
but it's probably just the wind.

Ray turns backs, leans over the guardrail. Laughs.

RAY

Yeah. It's probably just the wind.

The rope in Charlie's hands jerks... ever so slightly... just enough for Charlie to feel it.

Charlie squints. Waits. His eyes widen. He licks his lips.

RAY

Got something?

The rope jerks again between Charlie's fingers.

RAY

You still use chicken legs?

Charlie shakes his head, "No".

CHARLIE

The few crabs left here are real
picky eaters.

Charlie grabs hold of the rope with both hands.

RAY

Hey, you need help--

Charlie yanks up sharply on the rope.

UNDERWATER

The steel trap slams shut on its unsuspecting prey.

BACK ON THE BRIDGE

Charlie pulls the rope up swiftly, hand over hand.

RAY

You sure you don't need a hand--

Charlie lifts the dripping trap up over the guardrail and slams it down on the bridge's floorboards.

Ray grins, impressed with Charlie's vigor. The old man is not as weak as he looks.

Charlie kneels beside the trap. Looks up at Ray. Makes a shooing motion with his hands.

CHARLIE
Family secret.

RAY
What? The bait?

Ray grabs his nose, getting a whiff of it. Recoils.

RAY
Jesus Christ! Whatever it is it
stinks!

CHARLIE
Go on. Get.

RAY
You're serious? You ain't gonna
show me?

CHARLIE
It's time for you to depart.

Ray laughs.

RAY
Crazy old loon. Must be one hell
of a secret.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE
Oh... it's a doozie.

RAY
Oh come on, Charlie! Show me! I
ain't leaving 'til you do.

Charlie sighs.

CHARLIE
Alright, Ray. But if I show you...
I'm gonna have to kill you.

RAY
Fine. Kill me you old bastard.
I'm dying to know.

CHARLIE
If you insist...

The crab trap springs open.

Two Blue Crabs gnaw on a half-eaten human hand.

Ray steps back.

RAY
What the fuck--

SHTICKKKK!!!

Ray's eyes bulge. A thin line of blood trickles from his mouth.

Ray looks down at his chest. A dark red spot blossoms as blood seeps into his shirt.

The tip of a knife pokes out through the center of his chest.

Sunlight dances off it. It disappears back into his chest.

Ray falls to his knees, revealing an old woman, MATILDA (75), standing behind him.

Matilda looks as feeble and unimposing as Charlie, except of course for the giant hunting knife she's holding covered in Ray's blood.

Ray looks up at Charlie.

RAY
Charlie?

CHARLIE
You're on the buffet, Ray.

Charlie raises his cane above his head. We notice for the first time it is stained with blood.

CHARLIE
A man needs to be careful out here.
You never know who you might run
into.

Charlie brings the cane down hard. A sickening CRACK as it collides with Ray's skull.

Ray slumps over in a heap on the dock. Blood pools around his massive and now lifeless body.

Charlie tosses the cane aside. Reaches his hand out to Matilda. She takes it as she steps over Ray's body.

MATILDA
I cried during the part about me
being sick. Will you really miss
me that much when I'm gone?

CHARLIE
I miss you that much when you're
under the bridge.

MATILDA
Oh, Charles.

The two homicidal lovebirds embrace.

MATILDA
I was so worried he heard me and
was going to get away.

Charlie puts a finger to Matilda's lips. Kisses her softly.

CHARLIE
There, there, Matilda... he never
saw you coming. They never do.

CUT TO:

SPLASH!

The steel trap comes to a rest on the stream floor.

Ray's severed head sits impaled on a spike in the center of
the trap.... eyes still bulging... probably more worried
about his missing toes than the approaching Blue Crabs.

FADE OUT.