

Elm Street: Pilot

By

That's So Craven

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FADE IN

EXT. ELM STREET - NIGHT

"ELM ST" reads the rusted green and white road sign.

The metal pole it stands on tilts to one side, leaning toward the empty road.

Behind the sign lies the suburban neighborhood of Springwood. Tall ash trees line the sidewalk. Houses of various styles sit silently in darkness.

Not a single light is on; not even the streetlights. Curiously dead in the middle of night, it could almost be a still picture but for:

ANN MATHERS (18), dressed in a white silk nightgown, walks down the middle of the street. She treads cautiously, but not with fear. This place is more a curiosity than anything.

She comes to the corner by the sign and stops. She looks left then looks right.

SCREEEECH!

She turns to see a FIGURE. Cloaked in darkness, he wears a trench coat and a distinctive black fedora. He sits atop one of two crumbling stone pillars securing the rusted metal gate of "SPRINGWOOD CEMETERY".

The gate slowly swings open... SCREEEECH.

ANN

What do you want? What am I supposed to do?

A SHOVEL materializes out of thin air and lands with a clang at her feet. The Figure speaks in a familiar menacing growl.

KRUEGER

Dig up the past.

EXT. SPRINGWOOD CEMETERY - NIGHT

Ann carries the shovel through the graveyard, seeming to know where she's going. She stops at a gravestone marked:

"FRED KRUEGER (1935-1968) It is better to be feared."

She raises the shovel, ready to spear it into the dirt-

KRUEGER

Not that one. Not yet.

Krueger, still shrouded in darkness, now stands on the branch of a gnarled oak tree. His razor-clawed hand comes up, pointing a single blade at...

A gravestone two rows up and one column to the left. Freddy Krueger's green and red sweater is draped over it.

Ann goes to it and wipes the sweater off.

"HEATHER GARDNER (1964-1968)"

Ann looks to Krueger. Krueger nods.

She plunges the spade into the dirt-

INT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

-and wakes in bed. Morning light shines through a nearby window. Next to Ann...

ROD LANE (22), handsome, bad-boy type, sleeps peacefully next to her.

EXT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Ann, backpack slung over her shoulder, stands at the base of a staircase leading to a room above the garage. She holds her phone to her ear, seeming stressed at the conversation she's having.

ANN

(to phone)

Midterms are in a few weeks, but
I'm not too worried ... I don't see
how you could help, Mom ... Is Mike
still sleeping there every night?
... Then I'm still sleeping here
... I do miss you it's just- Mom?

She pulls the phone away from her ear. "CALL ENDED"

The door at the top of the stairs opens and Rod comes out dressed in a leather jacket and carrying a biker's helmet.

He descends the stairs, rubbing his tired eyes.

ROD

You know, you get good grades, do
you really have to go to school
every day?

ANN

You know, you live above your parent's garage, do you really have to not work ever?

He heads to a nearby motorcycle and hops on.

ROD

You want me to be a bank teller or something? Wear suit and khakis?

ANN

If it gets you out of your parent's house.

ROD

(puts on helmet)

If I were the guy you wanted me to be, you wouldn't want to be with me.

ANN

That's not true.

ROD

Oh yeah? Then why aren't you dating that dweeb from your journalism class? I mean, you two have "so much in common".

Ann glares at him.

ROD

He doesn't have a motorcycle, does he?

Ann walks off toward the road.

ROD

Where you going?

ANN

I'm walking.

ROD

You're gonna be late.

ANN

Whatever. My grades are good.

And she's gone. Rod takes his helmet off and tosses it to the ground.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

FOUR STUDENTS sit in the front of the class. Ann is one of them. We'll know the rest in a moment.

MR PEDERSON (38), young face, the kind of teacher that girls crush on, stands facing the chalk board.

"SOCIAL ACTIVIST JOURNALISM" is writ large on it. Pederson turns to face his students.

PEDERSON

"Social Activist Journalism". I have just one question for you kids... Who the hell wrote this on my chalkboard?

They all laugh. Ann exchanges accusing looks with...

SETH (18), a bit awkward, but not the dweeb Rod described.

PEDERSON

Seriously, when I went to the bathroom I had an entire class worth of notes written out detailing source verification, the difference between primary, secondary and tertiary sources, and how mainstream news media outlets decide when to break big stories. And someone erased all that useful information and replaced it with "social activist journalism". Why?

SETH

Maybe with how crazy the world is, making a difference is all that really matters.

PEDERSON

You wanna be an effective change agent? Do your background research. Verify your sources. You release a story with a bunch of holes and half-truths, you'll only hurt the cause you're trying to help.

MALCOLM (17), black, physically unimpressive, but with a fierce intelligence in his eyes.

MALCOLM

What if the truth is bad?

PEDERSON

Explain.

MALCOLM

Black people don't do as well on IQ tests. You think it's good for me to have people walking around knowing that.

PEDERSON

(sympathetic)

Do you think that's the whole truth? You think that one fact is everything that matters about your people? Does it even pertain to you as an individual?

MALCOLM

No.

PEDERSON

Then your story's incomplete. Do more research. Fill in the holes.

ANN

But what constitutes the whole truth? Do you want us to discover the secrets of the universe before we go to press? How do you know if the truth is dangerous?

PEDERSON

That's a really good, tough question that every journalist struggles with. Which is why I wrote a bunch of crap on this board that was supposed to help you answer it.

KIKO (16), a peppy Asian girl who just happens to wear an American flag T-shirt that reads "These Colors Don't Run".

KIKO

But why should we be held to these standards when the mainstream media can publish whatever they want?

SETH

Boo!

KIKO

Unproven collusion. Clinton lost cause of Comey. Or was it the Russians?

MALCOLM
Fox News is a hundred times worse.

KIKO
George Soros!

ANN
Infowars!

PEDERSON
ENOUGH!

The class falls silent. Pederson sighs.

PEDERSON
So, I'm thinking for this next
issue of our *local school*
newspaper, no more politics.

They all start to object.

PEDERSON
It's only temporary. There will be
other issues and plenty of time for
you to write a really in depth
opinion piece about how a national
fast food chain should change its
name to "Burger Person".

SETH
(points to Ann)
That was her idea.

ANN
It was Burger QUEEN! And only for
Women's History Month.

KIKO
It's not Women's History Month. No
one wants to hear about chicks.

MALCOLM
Burger Queer? What?

Pederson looks over his students with a touch of bemusement.

PEDERSON
Yeah, I think this will do you all
some good.

EXT. SPRINGWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

Ann walks up to the open gates of Springwood Cemetery.

It looks radically different in real life. The pillars of the gate are bright white marble as opposed to crumbling stone. The gate itself is shiny, refurbished, without a speck of rust on it.

And yet deep in the cemetery stands a gnarled oak tree, identical to the one from Ann's dream.

THE GNARLED OAK - MOMENTS LATER

Ann looks down at a headstone: "HEATHER GARDNER (1964-1968)"

She pulls out her phone, about to take a picture-

CHARLES (OS)

What do you think you're doing?

Ann turns, startled to see CHARLES GRAY (late 50s), dressed in dirty overalls. The grounds keeper.

ANN

Oh, um, I'm taking a picture.

CHARLES

Yeah, I can see that. Why?

She looks to the gravestone, thinking fast.

ANN

My name is Ann Gardner. I'm doing ancestry stuff.

CHARLES

(skeptical)

Oh, is that true?

The question triggers something in Ann.

ANN

No. I'm sorry, let me start over. My name is Ann Mathers and I'm writing a story for the school newspaper.

CHARLES

About a four year old who died fifty years ago?

ANN

Not exactly. Are you the groundskeeper here?

CHARLES

For thirty years and counting.

ANN

Do you know anything about Heather Gardner?

CHARLES

It depends what you're asking for.

ANN

Do you know of any connection she may have had with Fred Krueger?

Charles' face goes white. He turns and starts walking.

CHARLES

Have a good day.

ANN

She was murdered the same year Krueger died.

Charles starts back toward her angrily.

CHARLES

Who the hell is talking to you about Fred Krueger?

ANN

It's an urban legend.

CHARLES

It's an urban legend no one tells anymore. Trust me, I'd know. Who's telling you stories about Fred Krueger?

ANN

My aunt.

CHARLES

I wanna have a word with her.

ANN

She's several states over. She doesn't live here anymore.

CHARLES

Figures. Only someone so far away from Ground Zero could be stupid enough to let that name leave their lips.

Ann's cowed. She struggles to speak.

ANN

It's just a puff piece so far. I'm looking for an angle.

CHARLES

Kids died. A lot of 'em. No one wants or needs a new angle on it.

Charles heads off again, shouting back over his shoulder.

CHARLES

Find a new story. There's gotta be something more important in this world to write about than Fred Krueger.

INT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

The room is draped in darkness. Rod, looking decidedly less hip in jeans and a wife beater, sits at a desk reading something on a laptop. Reading quite intensely, in fact.

Behind him, the door opens silently. A blurred Figure enters and approaches... slowly, carefully...

ANN

BOO, motherfucker!

Ann jabs him in the side playfully and Rod twirls around, nearly decking her.

ROD

Jesus Christ! Where did you come from?

ANN

The cemetery. What are you doing on my computer? I hope you're deleting the cookies. I'm getting tired of typing in Washington Post only to have it auto complete as "wet teens licking".

ROD
I'm not looking at porn.

She looks over his shoulder.

ANN
You're reading my Fred Krueger
research? Oh my God, you're scared
of Freddy Kruger. That's so cute.

ROD
(defensive)
No, I'm scared of you, you freak.

Rod gets up and walks to the fridge where he proceeds to
grab a beer.

ROD
Is that stuff all true? Did that
really happen in our town?

ANN
Apparently.

ROD
How is it that I never heard of it?

ANN
I guess the adults are kinda touchy
about it.

ROD
And what about the dream stuff?

Ann looks at him inquisitively as he pops open his beer.

ANN
Are you asking me if Krueger killed
people with nightmares?

ROD
(still defensive)
No. I'm just curious how a rumor
like that even gets started.

ANN
(shrugs)
It's hard to say. No one wants to
talk about it.

ROD
But you're gonna get to the bottom
of it?

ANN
Faster than you get to the bottom
of that beer.

Ann closes her laptop.

ROD
Hey, uh. I did some job searching
today.

Ann looks up, expectant.

ANN
Oh? Any luck?

ROD
Yeah.

He seems reluctant, and she's immediately holding in a grin.

ANN
Tell me.

ROD
... The Dixie Queen

ANN
Oooooo! You are gonna look so cute
in that paper hat.

He rolls his eyes as she runs over and plants a kiss on him.

They hug. Then she opens the fridge and pulls out a beer for herself, holding it up like a toast.

ANN
See what you gotta do to get me to
drink with you?

They clink their beers together.

EXT. ELM STREET - NIGHT

Ann, in her white silk nightgown, walks Elm Street again, not sure where she's going.

A CREAKING and Ann looks over to see...

1428 Elm Street. Nancy Thompson's old house. The door swings freely back and forth.

Ann heads up the walkway, nearing the porch when Krueger, still wearing a trench coat, fedora and hidden in darkness, emerges from the front door.

KRUEGER

Any red letter headlines yet?

ANN

No one will talk to me. I need more help.

KRUEGER

I already gave you the name. Why should I do all the work?

ANN

Your my subconscious. I own you.

KRUEGER

Your subconscious?

Krueger lunges forward, claws fan out within inches of Ann's face. She barely flinches. Krueger huffs.

KRUEGER

You kids used to be so much easier to scare.

ANN

I guess you haven't seen what goes on in our schools these days.

KRUEGER

Oh, I've seen it. I'm jealous. Who needs a psychopath with claws when you already kill each other by the dozens every day?

He leans in close, the first hint of his scarred face peaks out from underneath the fedora.

KRUEGER

But I aim to even the score.

ANN

Heather Gardner. She was your last victim?

KRUEGER

Was she?

ANN

She was killed the same year you were.

Krueger chuckles.

KRUEGER
Before or after I was?

She considers the question.

ANN
So someone else was killing
children?

KRUEGER
Unless you believe I could kill
after death. Tell me, Ann. Do you
believe that?

INT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

BUZZZZZZ. Ann and Rod sleep next to each other. Rod tosses.

BUZZZZZZ. The phone next to Ann lights up. She wakes and
reaches for it: "Text Received"

She looks to Rod, who turns, still sleeping.

She swipes her code and the message comes up:

"Re: Heather Gardner. Outside now"

She frowns, then gets out of bed and heads to the window.

POV OUTSIDE: A Silhouetted Figure wearing a trench coat
stands at the end of the driveway.

Ann puts her slippers on, heads to the door, but stops just
before opening it.

She pinches herself. Then pinches herself again, harder.
Satisfied, she exits the apartment.

EXT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ann walks toward the Figure at the end of the driveway. As
she nears, he steps forward into the light revealing...

Charles, bags under his eyes. He looks tired.

She stops some distance away.

ANN
Did you follow me here? How did you
get my number?

CHARLES
I saw it in a dream.

ANN
Bullshit. If you have something to say about Heather, then say it.

CHARLES
How did you get her name?

ANN
It's called a hunch.

CHARLES
Bullshit. You saw it in a dream.

Ann goes quiet.

CHARLES
He's talking to you, isn't he? He gave you that name and he gave me your number.

ANN
Did Krueger have an accomplice?

CHARLES
He wants something from us but we can't give it to him.

ANN
Was he framed?

CHARLES
He wants to be feared. To be feared he has to be known again.

ANN
Was there a cover up? Is that why no one talks about any of this?

CHARLES
To hell with your story. None of that matters.

ANN
What matters is the truth.

CHARLES
Christ. You're just so fucking "woke" aren't you?

Charles closes the gap between them. Ann stands her ground.

CHARLES

Let me put this in terms you might understand. Krueger is like Vladimir Putin. Or some Russian spook operative. He is feeding you this story intentionally and you are lapping it up because it makes you feel like a real live journalist. But he doesn't want justice. He wants to be unleashed!

Fear creeps into Ann's eyes. This guy is crazy or worse.

ANN

We're done here.

Ann heads back toward the garage. Charles follows.

CHARLES

Please just kill the story.

ANN

If you don't leave I'll be forced to call the co-

Her head's yanked back suddenly as Charles loops a shoelace around her neck and pulls tight.

Ann claws at the lace, struggling to breathe.

CHARLES

I'm sorry. But once he's done with you, he'd kill you anyway.

He pulls so hard her feet leave the ground. Her slippers fly away as she kicks her legs.

Her struggling grows weaker. After a few moments she goes limp and still.

Charles releases Ann and she crumples to his feet.

He looks down at her for a moment, queasy and shaken, then heads up the stairs.

INT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door swings open. Charles makes his way to the bed. There Rod sleeps, shirtless with the blanket covering his lower half.

Charles sets the shoelace down next to Rod.

CHARLES
Sorry, kid.

Rod GASPS. His eyes pop open as FOUR GASHES slash across his chest. Blood seeps from them.

He screams, his eyes fixed on something in front of him; something only he can see.

Then his throat RIPS open, spraying blood all over Charles.

Charles staggers back, in shock. He stares at Rod's now lifeless body.

An unseen force pulls on Rod's body and it disappears behind the bed.

Now, a SCRATCHING sound.

Charles walks around the bed to see the same unseen force using Rod's blood soaked hand to write on the wall:

"KRUEGER DID IT"

CHARLES
No.

He lunges forward and furiously wipes at the message.

A RAZOR KNIFE pierces the wall and his hand along with it.

He jumps back.

MORE SCRATCHING. From all around... the same messages carved in the walls and ceiling, over and over.

"KRUEGER DID IT" "FREDDY'S BACK"

He stands there frozen... then thinks of something.

EXT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Charles bounds down the stairs, over Ann's body and over to Rod's motorcycle.

Beside it is a gas can. He grabs it.

INT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Charles soaks the room in gasoline. The bed, Rod, the laptop... everything.

He tosses the can aside, grabs some scrap paper from the nearby desk and heads to the oven.

SCRATCHING sounds through everything:

"KRUEGER DID IT" "FREDDY'S BACK" "NEVER SLEEP AGAIN"

He lights the scrap paper from the stove top burner and sets it on the floor.

The room ENGULFS immediately.

EXT. ROD'S GARAGE STUDIO APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Charles runs down the stairs, over Ann's body and flees to the end of the driveway, disappearing around a shrub.

After a moment the sound of a car starting and peeling off.

Flames begin to eat through the walls above the garage. The stairs leading to the apartment have alighted as well.

Ann lays motionless beneath the inferno...

-then GASPS awake.

She takes deep, ragged breaths, coming back to her senses. Soon she notices the fire. She cries out...

ANN
(just air)
Rod!

But her vocal chords are shot. She struggles to her feet, moving toward the stairs when-

A WINDOW EXPLODES, showering her with broken glass.

The STAIRCASE collapses. Flames bellow out from the collapse, briefly ensnaring Ann before dying away.

She stumbles back to the end of the driveway and falls to the concrete, powerless and in tears.

EXT. SPRINGWOOD - NIGHT

A Bird's Eye View of the town. Silent. Peaceful.

The raging fire is just a flicker near the horizon.

We PAN DOWN slowly, closer and closer to the ground until we come to a street sign. This one is not old. It's not rusted, or tilted or green.

Standing tall, it's a simple, refurbished black and gold sign reading:

"ELM ST"

FADE OUT