

One-Horse Town

by

Michel J. Duthin

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - DAY

A deserted road crossing the Sandhills region under the summer sun.

On the winding road where heat waves rise up, a white convertible Oldsmobile from the 70's appears at on horizon.

The over used and worn car crawls along.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Behind the wheel, THEDA (25), short hair, brunette and wearing sunglasses, drives with inexperience.

Her red scarf flutters in the wind.

The young woman's frail physique contrasts with the red leather seat of the huge car.

Theda hums along to the Country song played on the radio.

Something draws her attention.

A hundred feet ahead of the car, in the middle of the road, she notices a shining spot.

The closer Theda gets, the more the spot shines like gold.

She slows down and finally stops the car ten feet from the shining spot.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - DAY

Intrigued, Theda cuts the engine and the music stops. She gets out of the car.

She raises her sunglasses to her forehead.

As she steps to the shining spot, Theda realizes it is a piece of metal.

Gold.

A studded necklace --

With a scorpion on it.

Theda kneels by the necklace and picks it up.

In the palm of her hand, the scorpion appears to radiate.

Theda stares at the jewel with a satisfied smile, gets up, and is about to step back to her car, when --

An unusual noise is heard.

She lifts an eyebrow and listens.

A groan --

It appears to come from the right side of the roadside.

Inquisitive, Theda scans the surrounding.

She spots a trembling bush and notices a hand emerging from behind it.

EXT. - DESERTED LANDSCAPE - DAY

Theda runs to the bush. She finds a MAN in his late fifties, lying on the ground, injured, grinning, with a bloody temple.

Unshaven, his torn shirt is open, showing his bloody chest.

THEDA

Sir? Are you okay? Did you have  
an accident?

MAN

(struggling)  
Help -- Get some help --

THEDA

What happened?

She tries to help him get up, but, the man is too heavy for her.

Theda's sunglasses fall to the ground.

Theda gives up and leans over him.

MAN  
(hardly)  
It hurts -- My sister --

He notices the stud necklace in Theda's hand.

MAN  
(hardly)  
Cora --  
(he grabs Theda's arm)  
Quick --

Theda starts to panic.

She gazes at the man, at her car, at the man again --

She stands up and runs back to her car.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Theda enters her car.

She slams the door.

Very nervous, she turns the key, but in her panic, she doesn't change gear and the car engine stalls.

She has another try.

The engine jams again.

At the verge of the nervous breakdown, Theda slaps with both hands on the wheel.

THEDA  
(yelling)  
C'mon! Ya son-of-a-bitch!

She doesn't realized that the necklace is still around her hand.

She deeply breathes out and turns the key.

The engine finally starts.

She turns a last time to the man, and shoots off at top speed, the screeching tires on the burning road.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - DAY

The Oldsmobile speeds down the narrow road.

The tires skid when she drives around corners, sometimes crossing the edge of the road, leaving clouds of dust.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Theda drives into a very small town and pulls into the driveway of the first house she drives past.

It's a small and decrepit gas station from the 50's with old Mobilgas-style pumps. In front of a wooden barn, a rusty tow-truck with a damaged fender is parked.

Theda gets out of the car and spots a pay-phone.

She paces over to it and picks up the receiver. The phone cord has been cut off. She puts down the phone.

Theda enters the gas station. She emerges the stations seconds later and comes back to her car.

She leans in the drivers door and honks three times.

No one appears.

Theda honks twice again.

The GAS STATION ATTENDANT, a woman in her late forties, steps out from the barn, wiping her greasy hands on a filthy towel.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

Hey! What's the rush?

Theda rushes to her.

THEDA

(out of breath)

Ten miles away -- on the sideroad --  
An injured man needs help -- You got  
a phone?!

GAS STATION ATTENDANT  
Calm down, please. Tell me what  
happened? An accident? Are you  
injured?

THEDA  
(out of breath)  
No, no. Not me! That man --

The gas station attendant stays very serene.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT  
Man? What man?

Theda is about to speak when a YOUNG MAN, a typical  
Redneck, steps out of the barn at his turn.

YOUNG MAN  
(to the gas station  
attendant)  
Cora?! What the fuck is --

GAS STATION ATTENDANT  
(to the young man)  
I haven't the slightest idea.

Theda turns to the woman with hope in her eyes.

THEDA  
You're Cora? Your brother is up  
there. He needs help. He's badly  
injured. He sent me. What a  
coincidence!

The gas station attendant freezes as she sees the necklace  
on Theda's hand.

She gazes up at Theda.

The young man joins them.

YOUNG MAN  
What does she want?

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

(still staring at Theda)

She just had an accident. She said she knocked my brother over with her car.

(sighing, to the young man)

He's not dead, you dick.

Theda stares at her as if she was some kind of lunatic.

The young man disappears into the gas station.

THEDA

(confused)

No, no! You didn't get it --

The young man steps back with a large piece of tarpaulin he lies on the ground in front of Theda's Oldsmobile.

He picks up a large wrench by the pumps and, with a powerful strike, blows up the right headlight.

The glass explodes and shatters on the tarpaulin.

THEDA

(crazed)

What the fuck are you doin'?!

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

(very quiet)

Like I said, you had an accident. You knocked my brother over.

(a beat)

And you killed him.

Theda steps back, horrified.

THEDA

You -- I -- No!

Theda turns back and sprints up the road.

EXT. SMALL TOWN ROAD - DAY

Out of breath and panting, Theda looks to the first house in view, half a mile away.

A gradual engine noise can be heard behind her.

Theda tries to run faster.

She turns back for a second.

The tow truck drives towards her on the road.

Theda accelerates her stride.

Sweat runs down her temples.

The engine noise gets closer.

Theda cannot help peeping back again.

The young man is driving the tow truck towards her. The gas station attendant is on the passenger seat.

Theda can see them through the muddy windscreen.

The engine roar gets closer --

And closer --

Theda has almost reached the path leading to the nearby house --

The tow truck is on her and knocks her over.

Theda bounces on the tow truck hood, rolls over the roof, and crashes on the ground like a dislocated marionette.

Her face slams on to the road.

Silence comes back.

Two car doors slam O.S.

Theda's eyes are open wide. Blood trickles from her mouth.

Four feet appear by Theda's inert face.

She doesn't move.

In her hand, the stud necklace is still between her fingers.

A greasy feminine hand picks it up.



GAS STATION ATTENDANT (V.O.)

It's mine.

FADE OUT:

SUPER:

"I AM THE LETHAL ANIMAL TO WHOEVER I BRUSH

MY HORNS ARE CALLED VIOLENCE AND HATE"