

The Bizarro Run

written by

Rob Herzog

Chicago, Illinois
robherzog@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

A man runs alone in the dark.

EXT. CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

STEVE CRANE, 30, strides down the sidewalk with track-star grace.

His earbuds buzz with upbeat music that blends with the crickets and cicadas.

The iPod Steve carries glows with the time: 3 a.m.

There's not a soul in sight. The lights are out at every house that Steve rushes past.

STEVE
(softly to himself)
Dig. Go. C'mon.

The word "marathon" glistens on Steve's sweaty blue shirt.

STEVE
Three weeks. Just three weeks.

Steve glides past a house adorned with gargoyles. Their faces sneer into the night.

STEVE
Go. Move. Believe.

One house that Steve rushes past has a playground set in the side yard. The swing creaks back and forth in the breeze.

Steve doesn't notice what's coming his way.

Lurching and swaying toward Steve at the other end of the block is a shadowed figure--an ugly smudge exposed by the dim streetlights.

The person moves like puppet being jerked by its strings.

Steve lopes forward. A few leaves crunch underfoot.

Steve's stride breaks just the slightest bit as he registers the wayward shadow coming his way.

Eighty yards, sixty, forty...the figure starts to take shape.

This is SIG MUDD, of indiscernible age. His coat is rotten yellow-orange tweed. He leans against a club-like cane.

A hood covers Sig's head, concealing most of his face. He has a cigar nub in his mouth, and heavy, noxious smoke swirls.

Steve and Sig cross paths. Steve veers into the grass, yielding the sidewalk completely to Sig.

Sig's face shows just a little--the skin is like a rotten peach.

He sneers and thrusts his cane at Steve's ankles.

Steve almost goes down. His ear buds pop out.

STEVE
Dammit--Dammit--

He whirls furiously towards Sig.

STEVE
Dumb-ass--You crazy--

Smoke swirls around Sig's head.

STEVE
You could've broken my ankles.

Steve steps closer.

STEVE
You hear me?

Sig grunts. Something rattles. His cheeks sound like they're full of marbles.

STEVE
My Achilles could've blown out.
What then? You know how hard I've
worked? How much I've sacrificed? I
got a race comin' up. But you
wouldn't know about things like
that, would you?

Sig hacks up a loogie and spits it at Steve's shoe. The spit has a slick, purple sheen. A small remainder drips off Sig's bottom lip.

Steve steps back, repulsed.

STEVE
Christ.

Another step back.

STEVE
What's your problem?

Something rattles inside Sig's mouth.

STEVE
Crackhead. Hood-rat crackhead.

Steve places his earbuds back in his ears.

STEVE
Go to hell.

Steve darts off. Sig just watches, smoke swirling his head.
Steve quickly gets back on his training pace and mutters.

STEVE
Unbelievable. Just unbelievable.

He takes a deep breath.

STEVE
Okay, it's done. Focus. Get back in
rhythm.

He runs quietly for a block and then glances casually over
his shoulder.

He's not alone.

Rushing behind Steve at an incredible speed is Sig. He burns
down the sidewalk like someone shot out of a cannon.

The speed is almost supernatural: a bat out of hell.

STEVE
Ah, crap.

Now Steve shifts into full throttle. His six-minute mile pace
turns into a sprint.

Arms and legs pump. Footsteps get louder from behind. A
glance back...

Sig is only ten feet away. He slobbers and spits and grunts
as he runs. His mouth clicks.

Six feet...five...four...now the slobbery breath is against
Steve's neck.

Steve can't separate himself, no matter how hard he runs. Sig
matches him stride for stride. Steve cries out...

STEVE

Help! Hey!

Sig reaches out and grabs the back of Steve's shirt, but Steve twists free.

Then Sig swings his cane/club and strikes Steve's neck. Down he goes. He yells out again.

Sig pounces. He's a blur: purple tongue, veins, slobber.

Steve's earbuds pop out--energetic music flows absurdly from them.

Sig raises his cane, ready to strike.

A light comes on.

Two fuzzy pink slippers come into view.

They belong to MRS. ABERNATHY, 65, a thin woman with large glasses. She wears an over-sized pink robe.

MRS. ABERNATHY

Get off my grass, you hijackers.
You ain't wanted here.

She points a handgun at them. It looks like a cannon in her small hand.

MRS. ABERNATHY

This's my house. It ain't yours.

Both Steve and Sig stare. Sig points his club at her.

Boom! Mrs. Abernathy's gun roars.

Dark blood sprays all over Steve's face: Sig's blood.

Steve squirms loose, dashes off, and doesn't look back.

His earbuds dangle from the iPod chord. Another upbeat song.

Blam! A second gunshot sounds. A scream follows.

A few lights flip on from some houses in response to the noise, but Steve doesn't stop.

STEVE

Go. Go. Keep going.

He pants heavily and races down the block.

STEVE
Go. Run. C'mon. Fast.

Steve takes a quick glance behind him. Nobody is there.

STEVE
It's okay. See. You lost him.

Steve looks again. This time, there's a shadow at the end of the block.

Steve scrambles. He stutter-steps. He trips.

Sig runs toward him...faster than ever.

Steve only manages a few meager strides before Sig pounces.

STEVE
(gasping)
Oh. Please. No. Why? Why?

Sig spits black and purple snot into his face.

Then he drags Steve into a nearby bush. They're not visible anymore.

Horrible snarling and screaming emit from the bush. It shakes.

Then Steve staggers out, bloody. He runs a few steps, but falters.

Sig is upon him again, and drags him out of view.

More horrific snarling.

Steve's iPod skitters across the sidewalk, the earbuds still attached and emitting music.

Then Steve's running shoe skitters across the sidewalk...

...His detached big toe bounces close behind.

Something sloshes and splatters...

--and then a giant glob of blood and guts lands on Steve's running shoe.

The energetic music from the iPod flows for another moment, and then it wavers and dies completely.

FADE OUT

THE END.