

THE SILENT BOW WOW

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. REX ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Atop a modern one-story building sits a pair of large plastic animals: a Maine Coon cat and a Golden Retriever. The sign under them reads: "Rex Animal Hangout."

A red 1935 Auburn Speedster roars down the street and stops at the curb. The open two-seater with a vee windscreen and boat-tail draws attention the way a black hole draws planets.

RUD VALEK (40), a big man who fills most of the cockpit of the Auburn, gets out, and the released tension on the suspension sends the car up a couple of inches.

Rud straightens his tie, shoots the cuffs on his Zegna jacket, and strides to the entrance.

INT. ANIMAL HANGOUT - LOBBY - DAY

At the front desk is Ms Castle (60), a grandmotherly woman with an iron grip. She smiles when Rud enters.

MS CASTLE
Good morning, Mr Valek.

RUD
'Morning, Ms Castle.

His eyes fall on a man trying to disappear into the chair he's on. ERNIE is a disreputable looking man in his 50s.

RUD (CONT'D)
You lost your shirt at the track,
again, didn't you, Ernie?

ERNIE
I can pay you back if you stake me
to one more race!

RUD
My book is closed to you. Ms
Castle, show him what we do to
people who welch on their debts.

Ms Castle stands and gives Ernie a shark's smile.

ERNIE
No, you can't! Please!

Ms Castle grabs his arm and drags him through a side door.

INT. DOG ROOM

On one side of the large bright room is a bank of spacious cages holding dogs of every description. On the other side are a few dog runs, where dogs are scampering about. The BARKING is deafening.

Rud enters room and stands there, glaring. One by one, the dogs notice him and shut up. SILENCE. He walks down the aisle separating the two sections, eyes taking in every dog.

EXT. ANIMAL HANGOUT - BACK LAWN - DAY

A large expanse of grass, trees, and benches. A video camera on a tripod is set up, waiting for Rud. Rud and a sketchy older man, FREDDY, walk out the back door of the facility.

FREDDY

So I ran into Murphy last night and he said Old Man Brule is gonna try to lay off a big bet on you.

RUD

I'm not covering his ass again.

Their attention is drawn to a gate as it's thrown open and an unruly Great Dane steps through. Holding its leash is a hulky young man, LOGAN. Freddy doesn't like the looks of the dog.

FREDDY

Gotta go, boss.

Rud nods and Freddy disappears. Rud takes the dog's leash and Logan takes position behind the camera.

RUD

You seen Doc Adams, Logan?

LOGAN

Yeah, boss. Said she's following up a lead on Floppy Disk.

Rud nods, positions himself and the suddenly docile dog in front of the camera. Logan signals and Rud starts talking.

RUD

Hey, everyone. If you're looking for a nice dog to fill your house with joy and laughter, this Great Dane ain't for you. Bruiser is more of a scare-the-robbers-and-Jehovah-Witnesses type of dog....

INT. ANIMAL HANGOUT - LOBBY - DAY

Rud enters from the dog room in time to see Ms Castle holding the front door open for Ernie, who has a cat cage in one hand and a bag of supplies in the other. A big mean tomcat in the cage is making low-pitched GROWLING sounds.

ERNIE

Mr Valek, you can't make me take this monster home!

RUD

You're just fostering our client, Ernie. Soon as you pay off your debt, you can return it. Oh, and our vet, Doc Adams, will be making regular welfare checks to make sure you're treating Muncher well.

ERNIE

Muncher?

RUD

Yeah. Don't be surprised if he goes for your face when you're sleeping.

Ernie groans and tries to keep the cage as far away from him as possible as he walks off.

MS CASTLE

You really are a good man.

RUD

No, I'm not a good guy. I only set up this animal shelter because it was my sister's dying wish.

The desk phone rings and Ms Castle hurries to answer it.

MS CASTLE

Rex Animal Hangout.

(listens, nods)

She's found it, Mr Valek.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DANIELLO TAXIDERMY - NIGHT

Rud is picking the lock on a door next to a window that features a variety of stuffed animals. DOC ADAMS, a lithe, attractive woman of 30, is keeping a nervous lookout.

RUD

How did you find out Floppy Disk had died?

DOC ADAMS

The pure-bred Beagle registry listed him as deceased two days ago. And I remembered Mr Pemberton's house appeared in Architectural Digest last year.

RUD

That's right! And one of the pictures showed a room full of stuffed animals.

The door clicks open.

DOC ADAMS

Yep. So I called all the taxidermy shops, and here we are.

RUD

You're amazing, Doc.

DOC ADAMS

(pleased)

Thanks, Mr Valek.

RUD

Rud. You don't have to come in.

DOC ADAMS

When did I start working for a squeaky clean outfit?

RUD

You're right. I'm not a good guy.

INT. DANELO TAXIDERMISTRY SHOP - NIGHT

The FLASHLIGHT BEAM in Rud's hand picks out a variety of STUFFED ANIMALS in the dark room.

RUD

Frank keeps saying Floppy Disk holds the key to his boss's murder.

DOC ADAMS

How is a dead dog going to free your brother from prison?

BACK ROOM

Spotlighted in the FLASHLIGHT BEAM is a handsome STUFFED BEAGLE. Rud unfastens the dog collar, reads the tag:

RUD
 "Floppy Disk. 3478 Wolcott Dr."
 (beat)
 Wait, that's on the South side, and
 Pemberton lives on the East side.

His fingers work their way over the collar, stopping at a slit on the underside. His finger inches its way in...and pulls out a SMALL KEY. The key is suddenly lit up by the LIGHT from Doc's cell phone.

DOC ADAMS
 That address is to a private mail
 box service.

INT. REX ANIMAL HANGOUT - RUD'S OFFICE - DAY

Rud and Doc are seated on opposite sides of the desk, staring at a padded envelope on the desk. Doc's nose twitches.

DOC ADAMS
 What is that horrible smell?

RUD
 That's my candle of the day: "Nitro
 in the Night." My favorite candle,
 though, is "Napalm in the Morning."

Delaying no longer, Rud rips open the envelope and out spills a floppy disk. Rud slumps back in his chair and lets out a big sigh. Doc Adams claps. After a few seconds, she speaks.

DOC ADAMS
 Hey, Rud? How come you named this
 shelter after your dog and not your
 late sister?

RUD
 Huh? Rex isn't the name of a dog.
 It's the name of my favorite razor.

DOC ADAMS
 That's...dumb. Why not name it
 after your sister. It was her
 dream, afterall.

RUD
 It never even occurred to me.
 (on her look)
 I told you, I'm not a good guy.

FADE OUT.